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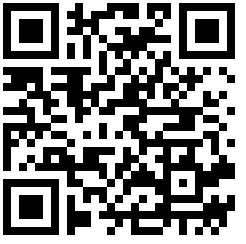

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 418. FOR WEEK ENDING JANUARY 2ND, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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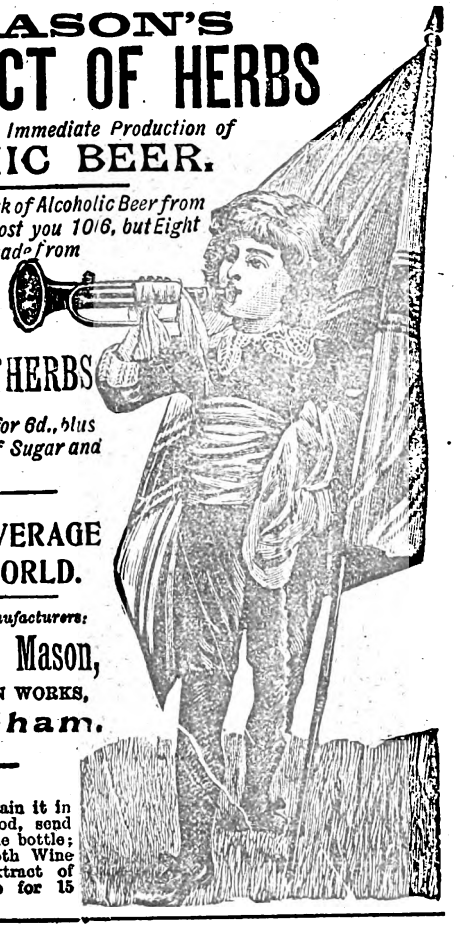

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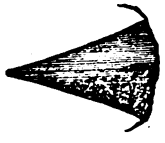

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No. 418.] [ONE PENNY.
For the Week ending January 2nd, 1897.

TEMPER AND MUSIC.

I.

"ARE you the inspector?"

"I am acting inspector for the night, sir."

"Can I speak to you privately for a few minutes?"

"Certainly, sir; if you'll just wait until I get a man here."

"My name is John Mayburn; I live at 2, Weston Square. This evening my wife and I had a tiff over some trivial matter—I really forget what it was about. We patched it up in the orthodox manner, and all was as usual until I, like a fool, reverted to some tabooed topic. My wife retaliated with interest, and smarting under the stings she was rubbing in one after the other, I forgot myself, and like a brute openly accused her of having more than a *penchant* for a man whose name I need not mention. She threatened to leave me, and I laughed at her, and—on my honour I only pretended to dare her, but she has gone.'

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"Oh, she'll come back soon, never fear, sir. Maybe she's home now."

"I am not so sanguine on that point. It is three hours since she left the house—and she took a lot of things with her, including all her jewels."

"Has she any relations near her, sir, or some friends she could stay the night with?"

"I don't think she has a single relation anywhere; at least, I have never heard her mention the fact, and we have no friends in London."

The sergeant acting as inspector had in his time been told similar tales. Some had turned out *bonâ fide*, others what he termed "frosts," one a murder. He looked this man hard in the face, and the mental calculation resulting from the scrutiny was that it was a real case or uncommon fine acting.

"I don't think much can be done to-night, sir; you see it is on the stroke of midnight, but you had better give me a description, and I'll see it sent to headquarters and they will circulate it. The men that come off night duty shall be questioned, and the ones going on told to make what inquiries they can. I don't know what else can be done. If she doesn't turn up by morning I would put a line or two in the papers. I will take her description down, sir."

"I don't exactly know how to describe a person."

"'Age, height, hair, complexion, clothes, the linen mark,' is our style, sir."

"She is twenty six or seven, about medium height, dark hair, pale, good mouth and teeth—dressed, I think, in dark brown or black coat and skirt, black hat with a few red flowers and things on it—patent boots. You see I did not think for a moment that she was really going, so took no notice."

"Well, sir, I hope you'll find her at home when you get there. In any case I should like you to call here as early as you can in the morning."

"Thank you, inspector, I will be here in good time."

"Humph!" mused the inspector, "men take their gruel very differently. Some come and expect us to turn night into day for 'em, as if we had the sun on tap. While some of 'em again, like this chap, go and make blithering idiots of themselves, and cause a shindy, and think we can bring their wounds together, like sticking-plaster. I'm sorry for this chap though. When they're quiet like him, you can always put a bit on it that it's a case of bein' hard hit."

To reach his house Mayburn had a mile of straight road to traverse, but crossed and re-crossed it a dozen times ere reaching home. He couldn't have defined his feelings as he let himself in—no, not if every earthly desire were at stake. He half-expected to find that his wife had returned, yet felt a dull, sinking sensation at his heart—a pain that became more acute when he knew he was alone.

He sat down determined to think of the best things to do, and the likeliest place his wife could have got to, but think! His mind was chaos. All he could understand was that his wife had left him through his brutality; and he loved her, positively adored her. What could he do? Wait. Ah yes, sit down and act the stoic. It is a mere matter of will power, but when a man is gradually working himself into a frenzy there is but one means of supplying a safety-valve, and that is walking, or running if you like, until, exhausted, nature collapses. The limited space of a room Mayburn found unbearable, so grasping a hat and jamming it tightly on, he quickly got into the street, and began the race against his mind. Without the slightest idea of destination, time, or his whereabouts, Mayburn kept on, as thousands of men have before, until the wearied body and mind united in their demand for rest.

Everything that was possible had been done, even to supplying the police with photographic duplicates, and yet it was six o'clock the next evening and no tidings. Mayburn was making a pretence at eating. He was really gazing at his printed message in the agony column of an evening paper, and wondering if *the* people ever saw those messages. After contemplating for some minutes, his attention was drawn to a paragraph at the bottom of another column:

FOUND DROWNED.—The dead body of a well-dressed woman was picked up by the river police this morning near Westminster Ferry. No papers or effects were found that might enable the police to trace the deceased's relatives, but she was dressed in a black coat and skirt, black stockings, and underclothes marked M.M. The body was taken to the mortuary pending identification.

"Madge! My God! I am a murderer."

As the policeman on duty at Westminster Bridge was going his rounds that night, he noticed a man leaning over the coping in a suspicious manner, so accosted him with the customary: "Move on, sir, please."

"I wasn't contemplating suicide, officer, I was envying those who have the courage to do it."

II.

"Oh, you positively must come, Mrs. Danvers; there will be quite a collection of lions, I can assure you, and we don't often have such golden opportunities in Liverpool."

"No, that is true, but it is such a bother, and I suppose I'm getting too old to care."

"Rubbish, too old indeed. Besides, that man who writes those charmingly sad stories, you know, will be there. What's his name?"

"Do you mean Saunders?"

"Yes. He wrote 'Coming'—a peculiar title, my dear, isn't it? and awfully sad, but very pretty. By-the-way, have you noticed that he always makes his heroines out such exquisite musicians? He is fond of music himself, I'm certain."

"Talking of music I had a strange experience to-day."

"Had you, dear? Do tell me all about it."

"I had occasion to go to my agent's this morning, and, contrary to custom, sent cook out to make a few household purchases. I met my agent by accident in Princes Road, consequently wasn't away from the house more than ten minutes. You can imagine my astonishment on my return to hear someone playing on the piano. It was my housemaid!"

"What impudence! Really, I don't know what servants are coming to. I should have dismissed her on the spot."

"I didn't. The front door was open and I crept softly to the drawing-room door, and stood there spell bound."

"You don't say so?"

"She was playing a most difficult piece of Chopin's, and I listened, and enjoyed it, and as she finished was about to enter the room and gently reprimand her, when she began playing the most dreamy thing I ever heard. I could have stayed there for hours listening, but she stopped suddenly, and I heard she was crying, so I crept out of my own house as quietly as I had entered."

"Dear me, most remarkable. Well, I must run away now, dear; remember I shall call for you and drag you to the Fishers' to-night."

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True to her threat the vivacious Mrs. Tarrant called to drag her victim to the great gathering of celebrities at the Fishers', but though the sightseers or hunters found the lions charming, the one supposed to have the finest mane in the company soon came to the conclusion that the whole show was insufferably slow. The Fishers were excellent types of the genus snob, and as the young author who wrote sad stories had to listen to the vapid conversation of three Fishers one after the other, he wished they had sailed away to the west before he had turned up, and utterly bored, made his excuses and left.

The night was fine and he was in no hurry, why not take a stroll in the park. No sooner thought of than acted upon, and Mr. Saunders strode out, only to reach the park gates to find them closed.

Few people cared to have their plans thwarted, but when a decision is suddenly made to do or see something in particular, it is the one thing for the moment that will give pleasure, and Mr. Saunders, vulgarly human, muttered a naughty word because he couldn't enter the park. Debating in his mind what to do, he stood there for some time, until the faint sound of music settled the question for him, and unwittingly he walked in the direction whence it came, and stopped opposite the house, listening.

Lost in reverie, he lived in the atmosphere of another world; scenes recurred to his memory that he had long wished were dead. It made him miserable and sad, yet he felt fascinated and showed no inclination to move until the last note had died away. As he turned to retrace his steps he met Mrs. Danvers face to face.

"So this is your press of work, Mr. Saunders, eh?"

"Must I admit that I was horribly bored by my host's daughters, and was glad of any excuse that would get me out? You were walking this way I think, Mrs. Danvers; may I see you to your house?"

"This is it, Mr. Saunders, thank you."

"Is it really? Do you know I've been at this gate quite half-an-hour, listening to some member of your family playing the most exquisite music."

"I have no family. You must have heard the housemaid."

"Hardly that, Mrs Danvers, it was a touch above even the latest up-to-date slavey."

"It is perfectly true; she plays simply divinely. Come in for a cup of tea to-morrow and you shall hear her."

The air must have been faintly tinged with frost, or some exhilarating wave passing over the southern part of Liverpool the next afternoon, for Mr. Saunders admitted to himself that it was ages since his spirits had been so buoyant, and the brisk pace he kept up soon took him to Bentley Road, where he found Mrs. Danvers gathering the last flowers of autumn.

"The musical maid will be bringing tea in just now, but as she doesn't know that I am aware of her accomplishment, can you suggest any means of getting her to play?"

This was a poser for Saunders, who thought the programme was all cut and dried.

"I can't just at the moment; perhaps if we wait a little an idea may occur."

"At all events we must have our tea first. I cannot do without mine, and really I often prefer my cup of tea in the afternoon to any other meal, I was going to say."

A gentle tap at the door, denoting the arrival of that delicious beverage, put a stop to any further remarks being made on the subject, and as the maid entered Mrs. Danvers looked in her direction, possibly with the idea of getting some inspiration concerning the forthcoming musical performance, certainly never anticipating what was to happen.

The approach of tea was heralded by a piercing shriek, the dropping of the tray and its contents, and the collapse of the housemaid.

Mrs. Danvers clutched the arms of her wicker chair and sat appalled, for Saunders had risen from his seat only to fall back into it fainting. She thought he was dead.

Contrary to the prevailing idea, it is at critical moments like this where a woman's nerve does not desert her. A second or two's frightened gaze, and Mrs. Danvers and the cook—who had come to see what was the matter—carried the maid to the nearest bedroom. Restoratives were applied, but nothing seemed capable of wresting her from the dead faint, and Mrs. Danvers was contemplating sending for medical aid, when Saunders walked deliberately into the room, pushed the cook to one side, and calmly lifted the lifeless form of the housemaid and kissed her—not once merely but several times, and the efficacy of the new treatment soon became obvious, for the patient sighed once or twice, then slowly opened her eyes, and Mrs. Danvers and the cook heard:

"My husband!"

"My darling wife!"

Mrs. Danvers at once beckoned to the cook, and the two left the room.

When the heart is light and happy, how beautiful everything seems, an indescribable charm pervades the very atmosphere, and, sunshine or rain, the world appears a glorious panorama, with no such things as partings or sorrow.

To such a world Mr. and Mrs. Mayburn awoke next morning. At the first glimmer of consciousness it all seemed like a dream, but the warm, gentle pressure of loving lips soon dispelled that nightmare.

"Oh, Jack, my own dear Jack, will you ever be able to forgive me, and forget that I ever left you?"

"My own sweet wife, it is I who have to be forgiven; can you for——"

Nothing further was actually said, but somehow a complete understanding was arrived at. Perhaps the method of interruption was partly, if not entirely responsible.

Jack, of course, explained how he had taken it for granted that the hapless creature found by the police was his wife; and she in her turn, why she preferred the menial duties of a servant to the unending drudgery of a governess.

"Tell me just once more, Jack, that you never meant what you said that night, and that you are sure I have been true to you."

"You know I never meant it, sweetheart. Oh, I was mad and wicked, but God knows I've been punished."

"You poor dear; well, let us forget the past and live only in the present and the future."

"Kiss me, my beloved."

And the compact was sealed.

C. ENGLAND COWAN.

One rode a horse, the other rhododendron.

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The Story of Mag.

JUST above this little mountain village there is a place known as Lost Creek waterfall. The name is not a specially romantic one, but it has at least the merit of describing the place which it designates.

Lost Creek is a typical mountain stream that comes roaring, brawling down the mountain until it reaches a certain high cliff, over which it plunges in a graceful, quivering column. It throws up a shower of silvery spray from the rocks below, but instead of flowing on down the surface of the mountain it plunges into a dark, small-mouthed, subterranean cavern and is in all verity "lost" to human sight, as the name implies. Occasionally a wayfarer will throw a stone inside and listen to the hollow thud, thud, as it seems to bound from ledge to ledge into the awful darkness of the earth's interior.

Almost half a mile farther down the mountain the stream emerges from its underground course as abruptly as it disappeared. There are vague rumours that soldiers, hard pressed by their foes, traversed this awful passageway during the dark days of the War, but these are only rumours, and no one now cares by actual test to prove or disprove their possibility.

Only one person is really known to have passed through this journey, and that one brought no news as to its mysteries. The lips were sealed for ever, and the eyes, unwavering, stared up at the sun above them. The memory of the awful exit gives the subterranean passageway a horror deeper than its own, but the self-engrossing heroism of the entrance gives the waterfall a grandeur greater than that of its rocks, purer than the snowy whiteness of its foam, and more soul-refreshing than the coolness of its spray.

Tom Houston was one of the pleasantest, most industrious young farmers on that slope of Cumberland mountain, and Mag Lassiter was one of the wildest, most worthless of the mountain belles. The neighbours all said a great deal of good about Tom and very little of bad, beyond the fact that he was rather easily influenced. The best that could be said about Mag was that she was pretty and full of life, and that she generally stuck to her friends through thick and thin—as long as she cared to.

As to the evil said about her, there was almost no end to it.

The whisperings that connected her name with certain moonshining operations could hardly be included under this head, for public opinion on the mountains in those days was far from unanimous in declaring such things evil. Far more serious were the rumours that she had used the power of her beauty to lure numerous young men on to destruction. Many rather serious misdeeds were supposed to have their origin with her influence, but nothing definite was ever known about them. When she first began to make friends with Tom Houston, everybody said that no good could come of it. Several of the older men and women took it on themselves to warn Tom, but he refused to be warned. As usual, the voice of youth and life and beauty had more influence than the voice of old age and experience and ugliness.

The crash came sooner than anyone expected. One night, at a dance, Tom called out the two Dickens' boys, and, seemingly in cold blood, shot them dead.

The Dickens' boys were members of one of the most prominent families on the mountain, and the excitement which followed the killing was intense. Everybody remembered that Mag had formerly had a fierce quarrel with the elder of the brothers, and that he was said to be the only young man on the mountain who had successfully resisted her wiles. Everybody suspected that the murder was instigated by Mag, but nobody knew it. Only Tom Houston could know it, and it was recognised by all that Tom would never tell. Besides, after the killing, Tom had fled and was now somewhere in hiding.

There was reason to believe that he had not gone far

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"Gimme fifty dollars."

away, but it was hard to find him. The mountain was thoroughly aroused. The prominence of the murdered men and the cold-bloodedness of the deed made everyone feel an interest in bringing the slayer to justice. Pickets were scattered in a line that surrounded the whole of the mountain where Tom was supposed to be hiding, but still the task was no easy one. The mountain side at that place was so full of deep ravines and holes in the rocks, that a dozen men might easily elude anything but the most careful search. Still, it was only a question of time.

One evening, several days after the killing, Mag walked into the sheriff's office at Jasper. Without even glancing at the group of loungers hanging about as usual, she looked defiantly at the sheriff and addressed him in harsh, strident tones, very unlike those in which she generally spoke.

"I've come to tell you that your men has got Tom Houston penned safe an' sound," she said. "Thar ain't no possible way out for him. I guess you already knowed that, though."

"I sorter guessed it," replied the sheriff, as he chuckled and looked round in some uncertainty.

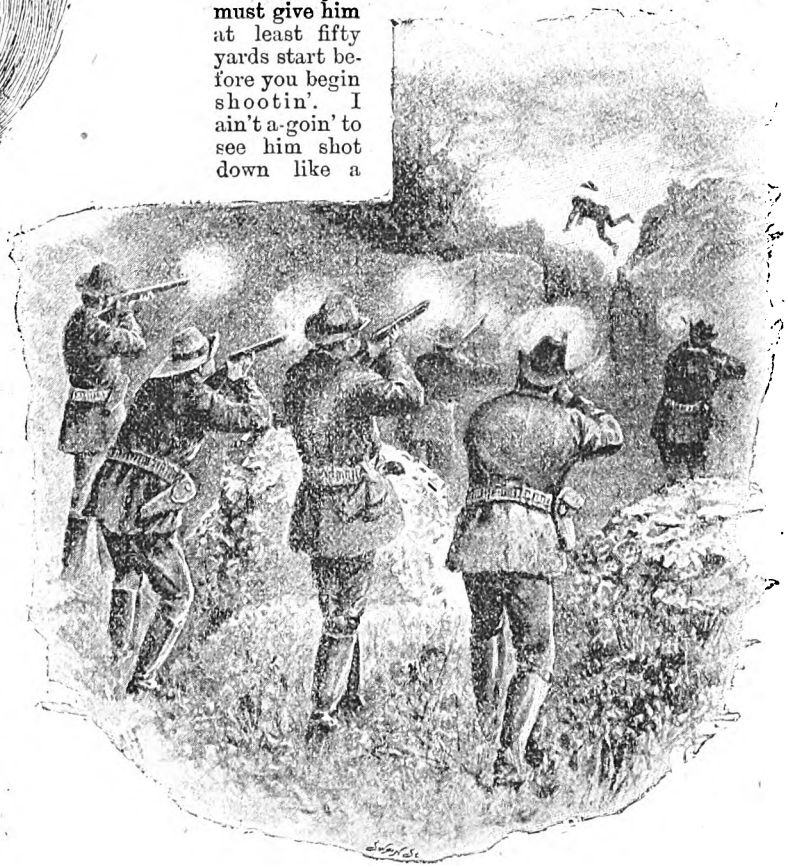
"Ef you think you'll have an easy job to take him you're mistaken, though," continued Mag. "That mounting is as full of little gullies an' holes as an old kitchen is of rat holes, an' no man in Tennessee knows 'em better than Tom does. It may be a month before you catch him. Besides, Tom's got shootin' irons, an' he knows how to use 'em, too. There'll be the devil to pay before you take him unless you get help."

"Help?" repeated the sheriff rather vaguely. "Ain't I got half the men on the mounting to help me now? What kind of help do you mean?"

"Gimme fifty dollars, an' I'll take you right where he is to-morrow mornin', an' I'll gyarantee he don't fire nary shot neither."

The sheriff uttered a low, long-drawn whistle of surprise, and the longers about the office exchanged remarks in an undertone. They had always known "that gal was no good, but darned if they'd ever have believed she was low down enough to get a fellow into trouble an' then sell his life to the officers for fifty dollars, darned if they would."

"There's some conditions about it," continued Mag haughtily and without heeding these comments. "Them fifty dollars must be in my hand in bills in the mornin' before I budge any step of the way. After I take you where he is you must give me two minutes by the watch to talk to him before you do anything. Then, if he tries to run, you must give him at least fifty yards start before you begin shootin'. I ain't a-goin' to see him shot down like a



The figure made a final leap.

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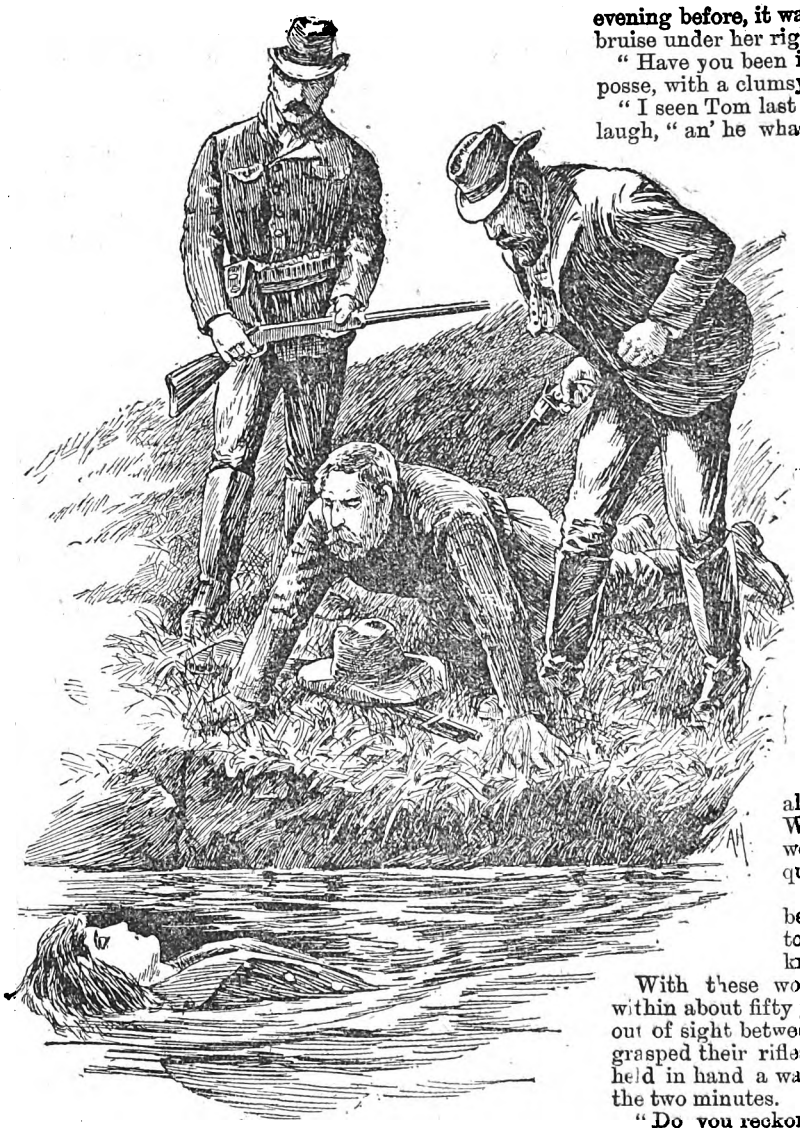

The watchers gazed at the placid features.

dog without no chance at all. After it's all over I'm goin' to leave this here country myself, an' you've got to promise me that nobody'll try to foller or to see which way I've gone."

"I don't blame her for that last part," whispered a bystander, winking significantly.

The sheriff thought the matter over. He went out and talked to several of the friends of the murdered man about it. All agreed that Mag's plan, though an unspeakably base one on her part, might result in saving several weeks of time and possibly several human lives. Perhaps it was the cheapest way out of the difficulty. Old man Dickens readily agreed to furnish the money. The result of the consultation was that Mag was informed that her terms were accepted.

The next morning, before sunrise, when Mag met the sheriff's posse at the meeting point agreed upon the evening before, it was noticed that she had a big, black bruise under her right eye.

"Have you been in a scrape, Mag?" asked one of the posse, with a clumsy attempt at jocularity.

"I seen Tom last night," replied the girl, with a forced laugh, "an' he whacked me in the eye with his fist an' cussed me for gettin' him into trouble, as he said. I didn't mind the lick—but the cussin'."

Here the girl's voice quavered, and those nearest to her thought they saw the glimmer of a tear in her eye.

"I soon made it all right with him though," she continued, regaining her self-possession. "But I didn't tell him what a nice lot of visitors I was goin' to bring him this morning. He, he!"

There were some black looks exchanged and some remarks made in an undertone as to the baseness of the girl's treachery, but she deigned no reply until she came within hearing of the Lost Creek waterfall, to which reference has been made before.

"Call in all your pickets," she exclaimed imperiously. "Tom's mighty nigh here somewheres, an' you is such pore shots that you'd better have a lot of men ready to shoot."

The pickets had spent the night before on the mountain as they had also spent several nights preceding. Word was now sent out, and all of them were summoned down to the spot in question.

"Now stay where you are an' remember about them two minutes you promise to give us—for our last interview, you know. He, he!"

With these words Mag cautiously advanced until within about fifty yards of the fall. Then she stepped out of sight between several large boulders. The posse grasped their rifles and waited in silence. The sheriff held in hand a watch with which to tell the passage of the two minutes.

"Do you reckon he's been hidin' all this time in that hole?" asked one man in a low whisper.

"What do you reckon she's a-sayin' to him?" asked another.

Then all was quiet save for the "tick, tick" of the sheriff's watch. When the time lacked but a few seconds of being out, a woman's figure hurriedly glided from behind the rocks and hastened up the mountain side. The left hand pressed a handkerchief to the eyes, but the right hand pointed backwards towards the rocks. Scarcely a moment later a man's figure emerged and made a wild dash for Lost Creek waterfall.

Perhaps it was the recollection of their promise, or perhaps it was only the suddenness of the apparition; at any rate, not a shot was fired until the figure made a final leap before disappearing into the deep, dark hole into which the water fell. Just as it was poised in mid-air, half-a-dozen rifles rang out loud and clear. High above the multitudinous mountain echoes, which they awoke, a wild, shrill scream arose. Every man in

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the posse rushed pell-mell to the black hole, but when they peered into its depths nothing was to be seen and nothing was to be heard save the roar of the fall and the swish of the foam.

"Those rocks on that side would give a fellow plenty of foothold," remarked one man to the sheriff. "Air yo' a-goin' in?"

"Naw!" answered that official. "I ain't hankering to run afoul of Tom Houston's shootin' irons in the dark."

However, he put his face in at the dark opening and shouted, "Surrender!" though his voice was well nigh drowned by that of the water. Then very cautiously he pushed a big revolver into the darkness and pulled the trigger. A long, cavernous bellow was the only response.

"Jeeminy!" he ejaculated. "It sounds like a million of devils might live down there."

Then a sudden thought seemed to strike him.

"See here," he shouted. "About half of you fellows run down the mountain—quick, an' stand guard at the place where Lost Creek comes out again."

His meaning was comprehended in an instant, and about half the posse dashed away to execute his orders.

"So that was Mag's little game, was it?" continued the sheriff. "She thought I'd call in my picket lines an' then Tom could slip out the lower end of this hole—guess nobody knows it better than him, an' she'd have her fifty dollars besides. She was sharp to get her money beforehand. I wonder where she is now?"

She was nowhere to be seen. It seemed that during the tumult she had slipped away unobserved. The sheriff made no attempt to follow her; perhaps he remembered his promise not to do so.

"It don't make no difference," he remarked. "We've got Tom in a hole this time sure, with both ends of the hole guarded. It's only a question of a little time now. If we don't drive him out, we can easily starve him out. I think some fellow winged him when he jumped anyhow."

That night three men with rifles in their hands stood guard at the lower opening of the underground passageway of Lost Creek, and three stood at the upper one. The next day they were relieved by others, and so it continued for a full week. Tom Houston did not appear. One afternoon at the end of this period Tom's big peaked slouch hat floated out into the sunlight at the lower entrance. The watchers examined it with all the eagerness of intense excitement.

"Somethin' else is goin' to float out pretty soon now," exclaimed one in an awestruck whisper.

Sure enough, not half-an-hour later "something else" did float out.

"Look out! It's comin'," exclaimed the first one who saw it.

As it reached the first faint rays of daylight the watchers peering in could recognise the well-worn suit of "butternut" jeans which Tom Houston had been used to wear. When it reached the full light of day, they saw that a wealth of soft brown hair had fallen back from the marble brow of a woman.

They had to take a second glance to realise that it was Mag. The old, radiant beauty was unconquered even by death, but the old look of haughty defiance was gone, and in its place was a look of tender restfulness that was new to them. The only sign of a struggle was the black welt on the face where Tom had struck her when she went to him to unfold her plan for saving his life. As the watchers gazed at the placid features the various details of her self-sacrifice came to them one at a time.

"I bet she had him hid in this place all along," whispered one. "The only trouble was that the lines was drawed so tight around that she couldn't get him out."

"She changed clo'es with him mighty quick that evenin'," said another.

"Tom slipped off with her clothes on, but I bet she had some others hid out somewheres for him to put on. I wouldn't doubt but she gave him them fifty dollars to go on. Lord knows where he is by this time—in Halifax mebby."

HERBERT FLAXMAN.

RESULT OF POST-CARD COMPETITION. No. 25.

THE Provincial Guinea last week was won by Mr. F. Hutchinson, Church Street, Bingham, Notts; and the London Guinea by Mr. W. H. Holton, 26, Holles Street, Newcastle Street, Strand, W.C.

POST-CARD COMPETITION.—No. I.

NEW SERIES.

A Prize of Two Guineas is offered to the reader of SHORT STORIES who sends us the best anagram on the words, "A Happy New Year."

Competition closes on Monday, January 4th.

Post-cards only, please.

Jumbled Story Competition.—26.

ON page 15 appears a story, each line of which is numbered. The lines are all in their wrong position, and the prizes mentioned below are offered to those who write on a sheet of paper the numbers of the lines in the order most nearly correct. The title is jumbled up, and should be correctly given *and pasted on the paper containing the effort.*

The conditions are jumbled in the following paragraph as an example. The correct order of the lines is given in line 10.

1 SHORT STORIES on or before *Monday,*
2 awarded to the readers whose solutions first
3 *JUMBLED STORY.*
4 Four Prizes—one of £5 and three of £1 each—are
5 *January 4th,* and envelopes must be marked
6 correct. In the event of a tie, the prizes will be
7 reach this office.
8 All attempts to be delivered at the offices of
9 offered to the readers whose keys are most nearly
10 4—9—6—2—7—8—1—5—3—12—11—13—10.
11 a sheet of paper the figures in the order they
12 Competitors in doing the story should write on
13 believe to be correct, thus:

£2 is offered to the first of the readers living in Ireland who succeeds in forwarding the correct, or most nearly correct, solution.

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THE APPLE TREE.

A Study of Murder.

JACQUES was not a bad sort of fellow, although somewhat hasty and little disposed to resist a first impulse. A hard-working student-at-law, imbued with Schopenhauer's philosophy, life was a perpetual struggle for him; his penniless condition obliging him to give lessons, and, as often as not, go dinnerless and supperless to bed.

Still, life had not absolutely soured him, and at heart he remained a good fellow. The burden of existence, however, at this particular moment began to seem almost too heavy for him to bear, and at times he rebelled against his destiny in a way—as the sequel will show—that was perhaps slightly exaggerated.

One summer's evening—it was a Saturday—both purse and stomach being empty, Jacques, being filled with rage at the thought that he would, for lack of a few napoleons, be unable to take part in an excursion planned for the morrow, started off through the streets of Paris, going on aimlessly and steadily straight before him, right through the suburbs, till he finally found himself, at eight o'clock at night, on a long, bare road in the plain of Aubervilliers—a road that looked like a white chalk line on blank darkness.

Then, as ill-luck would have it, great drops of rain began to fall, and peals of thunder burst forth. Jacques was no coward, neither was he troubled by conscience; indeed, he cared little about the thunder, but he was annoyed at the rain drenching his clothes—valuable from a monetary point of view—and his skin, frail protection against pneumonia. No shelter within sight, right and left of the road; nothing but the bare, gloomy plain.

At last he saw a tree—a lonely apple tree—a good-natured sort of tree that bent over on one side rather like a tipsy man with his hat askew. Jacques greeted the tree with affection, and crouched under its protecting branches.

The storm increased. Jacques felt exasperated against his bad luck. He felt as though Nature itself rose up against him, and he shook his fist at the dark skies.

"Brr! Brr! What weather!" growled a fresh arrival, taking refuge also under the tree on the opposite side of Jacques, whom he had not noticed. This man had evidently been dining, and seemed to be a horse-dealer who had just concluded a bargain, for he muttered between his teeth:

"This is jolly, indeed. Nice fellows those, making me drink and then going off with my carriage. Fancy having to walk home in such weather, and with a lot of money, too."

Jacques was not a bad fellow; it seems necessary to repeat this, for some doubts may perhaps arise on that point.

Hearing the muttered observations of the stranger, and convinced that even with the most exquisite and insinuating politeness he would fail to obtain a loan from him, Jacques softly went round the tree, seized him by the throat, and, being very powerful, strangled him. This preliminary affair accomplished, he took the man's purse, emptied it into his own pocket, threw it on the ground near the body, and, as it was getting late, started off in the direction of Paris.

The apple tree, which had remained motionless during this episode, now started off in his wake.

It is not strictly customary for an apple tree to follow a man who has just strangled another; it would, therefore, be somewhat unjust to Jacques to accuse him of cowardice on the pretext that he was slightly surprised.

Hearing behind him a trailing sound of roots on the road, he turned and saw the tree.

"Dear me," he said; "how muddled my brain is! Want of habit, no doubt. Shall soon feel all right."

He resumed his walk, and the tree continued to follow.

"Either I am mad," thought Jacques, "or what is now taking place is some unexplained manifestation of natural forces. I shall soon find out, for it is not likely that the custom-house officers, who are sensible men, will allow an apple tree to pass by without notice."

At the city gates, the officials did not even move aside. The apple tree did not seem to heed them, and Jacques and the tree found themselves, one behind the other, in the streets of Paris.

Jacques resumed his meditations.

"Thus," he said, "it is evident that this apple tree is the visible form of remorse, just as Banquo appeared to Macbeth, and the Commander to Don Juan. This hallucination is the more extraordinary that I do not feel any remorse. Really, this tree has a disregard for all tradition, Never mind; I have got the money. I shall sleep soundly, and to-morrow morning the apple tree will have returned to its proper place. You may consider yourself a failure, my dear fellow!"

He had, you see, a calm mind, and knew how to rise to an emergency. He hurried on, not to escape from his apple tree, which appeared to have indefatigable roots, but in order to get sooner to bed.

At last he reached his hotel—Rue de Seine. As he paused at the door he wondered if the tree would come in also, and felt a kind of interest about it, as he reflected that the narrow passage would certainly crush its branches.

He rang, opened and closed the door. The apple tree remained outside. Jacques smiled, not that the tree bothered him, but he thought of his landlady, who objected to strangers at night.

In his room, Jacques, by the glimmer of a candle, counted his money, and found that the little operation had brought him in some nine hundred francs. It could not be considered a bad business.

Suddenly he felt a pang at not having thought of his apple tree, which, in truth, had most discreetly played the part of avenger, and, raising the blind, he looked out of the window. The tree was on the pavement, calmly gliding up and down. Jacques noticed that it even politely moved aside to allow people to pass.

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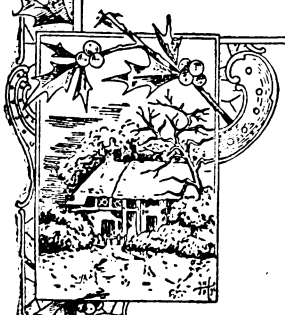
ONE
Rode a Horse
THE OTHER
Rhododendron
A £20 Prize
See current number of *Pearson's Weekly*.



Jacques went to bed and slept soundly.

At nine o'clock he awoke. Some one was loudly knocking at his door. He rose, his eyes heavy with sleep. His friends had come to fetch him for the projected excursion which had necessitated this acquirement of funds. Joyfully he opened to them, and they began joking while he dressed. He slipped some gold pieces into his pocket and gaily went downstairs.

The apple tree, which was respectfully waiting on the pavement, immediately began to follow him like a well-trained lackey. Jacques smiled to it, like an old acquaintance. The whole party went off and took a morning glass. Jacques treated the others, and the sight of his money was hailed by joyous acclamations.

"Waiter," said Jacques, "give my apple tree a glass."

The waiter, not understanding, looked annoyed; he thought he was being chaffed. Jacques roared with laughter; he thought, however, that the tree had, by a slight wave of a branch, made a gesture of refusal. No doubt it was a sober tree, or at least one that took nothing in the morning.

The party decided upon going to Nogent-sur-Marne. Jacques suggested taking a cab to the station.

"Now you'll have to stir your stumps," said Jacques to his apple tree, giving it a friendly nudge.

Impossible. The apple tree stood on the edge of the pavement while they clambered up, then it followed the cab at a jog trot. Leaning out of the window, Jacques watched it. At one moment he uttered a scream. His tree had nearly been run over. Luckily it was able to get out of the way in time.

"What on earth is the matter with you?" inquired his friends.

"Don't mind me," he replied; "it is my apple tree."

"His apple tree—his apple tree again!"

At the station the tree did not lose its way. Jacques began to think it was really cruel to wear out his tree; he was getting quite fond of it. But he was soon reassured, for the apple tree got on to the platform—without a ticket, the scamp!—and, keeping up good traditions, remaining at the side of the carriage, prancing like a body-guard following a king's coach.

Jacques, however, absorbed in his apple tree, rather neglected the amiable ladies of the company, one of whom, having a tender feeling for him, reproached him with his inattention.

"Are you jealous of my apple tree?" he said laughingly.

"Apple tree! apple tree!" all his companions began singing to a popular tune. They even improvised words which Jacques feared might wound his apple tree. But the tree maintained a calm and well-bred impassibility.

On arrival there was a terrible crush; Jacques almost lost his apple tree, but it is most convenient to have a tall friend in the crowd. He saw it cleverly extricate itself, and faithfully resume its post.

They all went to a restaurant on the banks of the Marne. Jacques now really felt uncomfortable; was it not most improper, anti-democratic, for him selfishly to seat himself on a comfortable terrace and leave his apple tree alone on the road, strolling about, with its branches crossed behind its back? Nevertheless, Jacques did not dare to move.

The talk grew loud, merry, and noisy, wine flowed freely, and Jacques felt a delightful sensation of comfort after the period of sad privations he had recently gone through. He even became rather over-excited, but that was really excusable; not every day do you strangle a horse-dealer, nor have an apple tree kicking its heels in front of your eating-house. His excessive boisterousness was therefore to be excused; moreover, his friends of both sexes did not fail to keep him company. Generously he flung a glass of champagne on to the boughs of his apple tree.

"Let us hire a boat," said his companions, "and go to the island."

"No, no," cried Jacques tearfully; "perhaps it can't swim!"

"Who—what—cannot swim?"

"My apple——"

"Apple tree! Apple tree! This is a joke; bravo!"

Jacques flushed. Would these fellows never understand? He looked at the apple tree to ask its opinion, and thought it did not seem to dread a little swim, glad, no doubt, to refresh its roots.

The boat was unfastened. The tree jumped gracefully from the bank and floated on the water. Jacques followed it with his eyes, ready to hold out an oar if necessary.

In the evening Jacques was abominably drunk. He screamed to his friends:

"You annoy and bore me! Your society is odious to me! I shall go off with my apple tree."

They laughed, strove to detain him, but in vain. The ladies, vexed, pouted. He, ungrateful fellow, did not care a bit. It was pitch dark; he went along the bank, accompanied by his apple tree.

For hours Jacques wandered on, following his apple tree, and at last it led him back to the plain of Aubervilliers. There the apple tree stopped; it was at home.

* * * * *

The next morning, as two gendarmes were riding over the plain of Aubervilliers, the private said to his comrade:

"Look at that apple tree, where the horse dealer was murdered! There is something hanging to its branches, and it is not apples!"

They approached and examined the apple tree.

The thing which was hanging from its branches was a body.

The body was the body of Jacques.

LE VIER.

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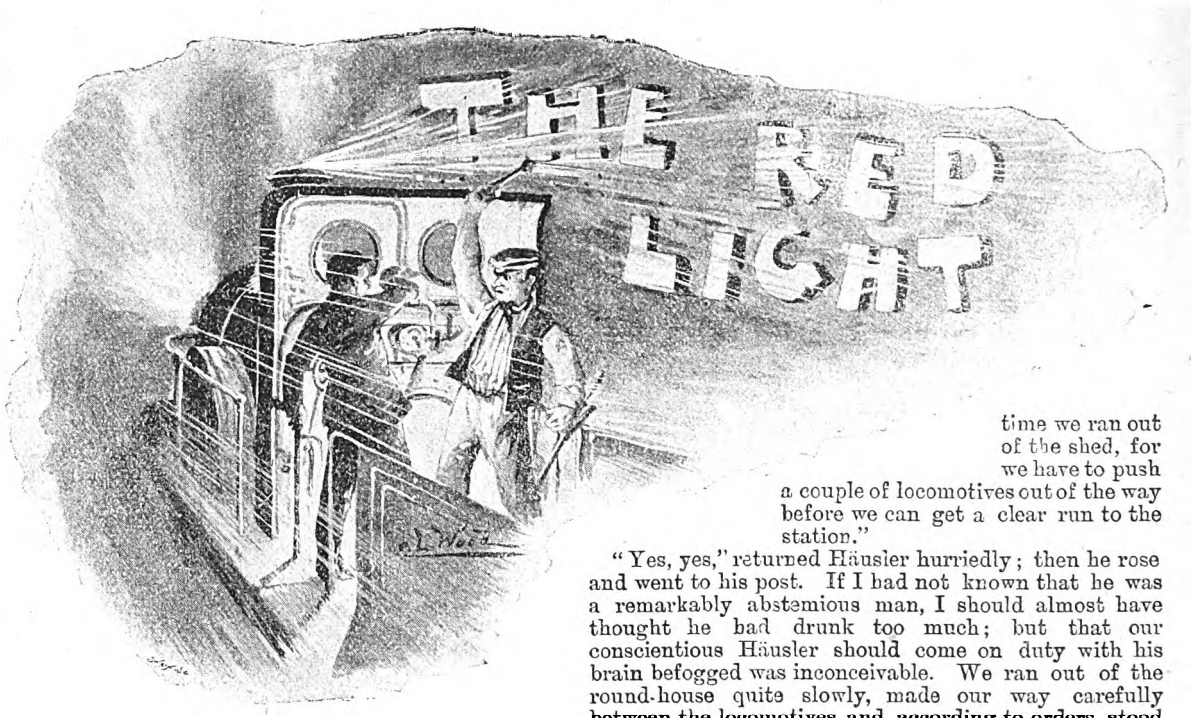

Two years ago I qualified as stoker, and together with the driver, Häusler, ran the Berlin-Vienna express on the Berlin-Falkenberg division. Our train left the Central Station at 5.30 in the afternoon, and on that particular day I was in the round-house at three o'clock to see that the fires were good and everything in running order. According to rules, the driver had to be in the round-house an hour before the departure of the train, and usually Häusler complied with the greatest punctuality.

Nevertheless, to-day it was a quarter to five and still he had not come. I tried the sandbox, the two steam pumps that force the water from the tender into the boiler, and saw diligently to the fire, which required to be in the best possible condition if we were to make the required run of ninety-one minutes in the given time. We could not allow ourselves full speed until we had passed the station Grosz-Lichterfelde. Then there were still almost sixty-two miles in a stretch, and only at the larger stations through which we passed was it necessary to slacken our speed.

It was nearing five, and still no sign of Häusler. I had come to the conclusion that he was ill or that some accident had happened to him, and was just on the point of going to the superintendent of the locomotive house and reporting the case to him when I saw Häusler approaching in considerable haste. He gave me a hurried nod and merely asked if everything were ready. Then he mounted the locomotive and tried all the valves for himself, but while at other times he made this most important inspection of the locomotive with great care, to-day he did it hastily and with a lack of attention. In the midst of his inspection he stopped suddenly and seated himself upon the tool-chest which is attached to the tender. For a good five minutes he sat staring blankly before him; then he laughed outright and asked me again: "Is everything ready, Max?"

"Of course, Herr Häusler," I replied. "It's about time we ran out of the shed, for we have to push a couple of locomotives out of the way before we can get a clear run to the station."

"Yes, yes," returned Häusler hurriedly; then he rose and went to his post. If I had not known that he was a remarkably abstemious man, I should almost have thought he had drunk too much; but that our conscientious Häusler should come on duty with his brain befogged was inconceivable. We ran out of the round-house quite slowly, made our way carefully between the locomotives and, according to orders, stood outside the station at ten minutes before the train was to start, not having coupled as yet. We had a good head of steam and all the valves let off the superfluous vapour.

"How is your wife?" I asked to rouse Häusler from his lethargy.

"My wife?" he asked with a start. "She is very well, very well, she knows nothing yet."

"Has something unpleasant happened to you, Herr Häusler?"

"Unpleasant to me? No, I know of nothing. Did I say anything? It was only a way I have of talking, and my wife must not know about it."

Two great tears rolled down his cheeks, but he turned quickly away to hide his sobs from me. I was at a loss to understand his behaviour, but, after a few seconds, he turned to me again and his face was calm, even sinister.

"Don't you feel well?" I asked.

"Oh, yes," he replied hastily, "I am very well, very well indeed."

The three strokes of the bell announced the time for departure; the twice-repeated signal of the guard gave us the order to start. Häusler woke out of his reverie, gave the whistle of response, and then, as deftly as ever, he set the train in motion.

Unless some accident should occur we would make our ninety-one minutes. It was exactly 7.1 when we at last pulled up in Herzburg, and punctually at 7.11 we steamed into Falkenberg. We were uncoupled and ran upon a siding, four minutes later the train sped on its way. We ran our locomotive first to the water crane, and filled for the return trip; then we took in coal and ran upon the turn-table to be set right for the whole run. Lastly, we ran across on a siding, and after Häusler had fulfilled his duty as driver he went into the engineers' house to rest a bit.

I had to stay upon the engine, but could take a little

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turn off for relaxation, thanks to the polisher. The fire and boiler were kept low so that it did not go out and could be brought to a full heat a half hour before starting. The machine could not run away, for it stood on a "dead" track and the pressure of steam was lowered so quickly that I was safe in leaving it to the care of the polisher.

It was an hour after our arrival, when I went into the engineers' quarters and hunted up Häusler in the large waiting-room. The engineers' room in Falkenberg is fitted up with tables, chairs, and some sleeping couches. There is a small library at hand from which one can inform himself by various technical works, and Häusler formerly made use of this library to study different treatises on locomotive construction, the science of mechanics, and so on.

To-day I found him busy writing. There were, besides ourselves, two drivers who lay upon the couches asleep. Häusler wrote with a speed which I was not accustomed to see in him. He nodded to me as I entered, and went on with his writing. I thought I noticed that the letter upon which he was engaged, and which already covered at least three octavo sheets, concerned large sums of money, and the name Rothschild, too, I observed repeatedly.

I asked Häusler whether he would not take a little something in the way of refreshment. He was never, as I have said before, inclined to be dissipated; but he was accustomed to drink at least one glass of beer and eat a trifle, because he did not get home to supper until eleven o'clock. To-day, however, he refused, explaining:

"I have no money. I shall, in fact, have to go hungry, for I cannot eat again. Everything is gone, quite gone."

This manner of talking naturally struck me as strange. It was not intended as a joke, for Häusler did not look as if he could joke. But if it were meant in earnest it gave me cause to fear for Häusler's reason, and the uneasiness which had taken possession of me increased.

I could only stay in the engineers' room long enough to get a bite to eat and a glass of beer; then I had to go back to my engine to start the fire into fresh life and get up the pressure of steam. I threw coal into the fire-box, raked the fire until it burned briskly, and had steam up again in a short time. When it came time to run across to the metals where we were to be coupled to the Vienna express, I sent the polisher to Häusler, for the latter, contrary to his custom, did not appear of his own accord. He did not test the working of the feeding pumps or valves either, as was his wont. He seemed to-day to rely entirely upon me and my conscientiousness.

The train came promptly into Falkenberg a little before nine o'clock, and the change of locomotives had to be made as quickly as possible. The train was full of passengers, and had over a dozen carriages.

As far as Herzberg we ran at a normal rate in twelve minutes. Then to Jüterbog we had fifteen minutes, and I noticed the constantly growing agitation on the part of Häusler. He talked to himself, flung out angry words which sounded sometimes like a curse, gesticulated violently with his hands, and seemed to forget entirely where we were.

Through the three intervening stations to Jüterbog we ran at a terrific rate, with no slackening of speed. I did not dare to call Häusler's attention to the gauge, for on this point he was very sensitive; but when, before reaching the Jüterbog station, we received the telegraphic signal to slow up, and Häusler did not mind in the least, I stepped up beside him and turned the lever a little myself, for otherwise we would not under any circumstances have been able to bring the train to a standstill in the station. Whereupon Häusler closed the regulator himself and kept his place doggedly at the step.

At 9.52 we pulled out of Jüterbog, and fourteen minutes later drew up in Lückenwald. Contrary to his deportment on the preceding trip, Häusler had become very quiet, but his face darkened perceptibly, and when, shortly before coming to the station, I reached for the throttle, thinking that Häusler would again forget to slow up the train, I received from him a rough push, and his voice was raised to almost a scream as he called to me: "What do you want? That is my business!"

The stop of a minute at Lückenwald was utilised by me to put on fresh coal; then we sped away again. Nearly thirty-one miles, that is, half the run to Berlin, now lay before us. Häusler was at his post. Suddenly he laid hold of my arm and said:

"Did you see him?"

"Whom?" I asked in astonishment.

"He looked out of the coupé in Falkenberg," said Häusler. "He comes from Vienna, and I've got him this time."

"Whom do you mean?" I asked, naturally surprised.

"Rothschild," said Häusler. "He is coming from Vienna to carry off the gold that he has stolen from me, and now he intends to carry me off, too. But I have got him fast this time. Throw on coal. We need steam!"

I opened the door of the fire-box and saw that enough coal had been put on.

"It's not yet time to throw on more, Herr Häusler!" I exclaimed.

In a rage he seized the wrench by means of which one opens the self-closing door of the fire-box, and exclaimed angrily:

"Shovel in the coal, I need more steam. I am going to run straight through Berlin, directly into the sea. There I will drown Rothschild, and then he shall not take my gold again. Will you obey me or not?"

Häusler seized a double-screw wrench which hung within reach, raised it aloft, and looked as if he would strike me down. I threw on coal until Häusler cried:

"Enough, for the time. But look after the fire; I need sixty atmosphere pressure. We are going to run three hours yet, without stopping."

Any man is likely to find it uncomfortable to be alone with a person in whom he suddenly discovers traces of insanity. But the matter becomes somewhat graver and more complicated when one is in the company of a madman upon an express locomotive which is forging ahead with a velocity of fifty-six miles an hour. I will add, here, that I did not tremble for my own life, but I thought with terror of the three hundred passengers behind us, who had no suspicion of the danger which hovered over them. The driver, out of his mind, as it appeared, standing close to the brink of insanity, and determined, under no circumstances, to bring the train to a stop at the terminal station at Berlin, but to forge ahead with it; that is, to cause a catastrophe in which probably half the passengers would meet their death.

Of what use was it for me to try to force Häusler from his position at the decisive hour, and bring the locomotive to a standstill? He would strike me down if I merely reached out a hand. I looked at his eyes, flaming with anger, as he watched me suspiciously. I

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might gesticulate, and call ever so loudly, to draw the attention of the officials in the station through which we passed. It would be of no avail, for only one man could stop the train, and that was Häusler, the mad driver.

At first I was as one paralysed; but then I told myself it was sheer cowardice to give everything up for lost. I would gladly have talked to Häusler, but I knew not what I ought to say. I should only provoke him by opposition, and to begin an indifferent conversation—that was a task to which I did not feel myself equal. Nevertheless, I must do something to divert his attention from me. He continued to regard me with the suspicion that is peculiar to all demented persons, and only ordered me now and then in crisp words to throw fresh coal into the fire-box. The iron wrench he held firmly, and every time he gave me the command to throw on coal, he raised it threateningly. It was necessary for me to calm him and distract his attention because my aim was to get possession of the two screw-bars which lay in the chest behind me. There was no other possibility of saving the train and passengers than to strike Häusler down at the critical moment.

God knows it came hard enough for me to fell to the floor like a wild beast a man whom I honoured and loved. But when it was a question of the rescue of three hundred human beings, there could be no room for hesitation.

Ludingsfelde was passed; we had nearly fifteen miles yet to make, and, before I slew, perhaps, twenty minutes of time.

I shall never forget how frightfully absurd, in spite of the horror of the situation, I seemed to myself when I addressed to Häusler the remark:

"It is cooler than usual this evening."

Häusler cast a look of distrust upon me and was silent.

"Your wife will be waiting for you at the station," I remarked, as calmly as possible.

"That's no matter!" he exclaimed. "I shall run through, I shall run straight through at one stretch into the North Sea. I shall not stop again."

"Won't your wife wonder at it?" I asked, as innocently as I could.

"Of course, she will wonder," said Häusler, laughing. "But when she sees Rothschild in the train she will wonder no longer. She will know then that I am going to drown him. Besides, we shall return at once. She will only be kept waiting half-an-hour."

We flew past Groszbeeren without lessening in the slightest degree the speed of the train. We were nearing Grosslichterfelde, where, owing to our being ahead of time, we might easily find a Berlin local standing on the metals. The train had been announced from the last station, and the signal "open" was up. Enveloped in a thick cloud of dust, which had been whirled up by our wild flight, we rushed through this place also. The engine, as it passed through Herztucke and Weichenkreuze, seemed to make veritable leaps.

Like a vision Lichterfelde, with its houses, flew past, and we sped onward towards the large Berlin station whose hundreds of lights gleamed far ahead of us.

I looked out towards the right, and thought I could not be deceived when I noted in the far distance the red light of the danger signal for our train. We stood on the verge of catastrophe; in a few seconds not only my own fate, but that of the three hundred passengers behind me would be decided.

Plainly I saw the signal "stop" for our train; the station was not free to us.

I could feel that my hair was standing erect on my head with fright and apprehension. I became in a certain sense, insane myself.

With mad swiftness we were nearing the danger signal. I seized Häusler's arm and cried with an awful voice in his ear:

"Red light!" (*roth Licht.*)

Häusler stared at me, and then cried:

"Rothschild! Where is he?"

"Red light, there ahead!" I shouted again, with all the force of my lungs.

"Rothschild, there ahead!" said Häusler after me.

Then with a piercing yell he suddenly broke away and swung himself out upon the narrow gallery which runs along the locomotive's boiler, and is provided with a railing. He supposed, in his madness, that his enemy, Rothschild, was there in front of us, and wished to get at him. I tore the heavy screw-bar out of the tool chest; then I sprang into the empty place. I dared not shut off the steam at once, lest the train should close up on itself like a hand harmonica, and a fearful disaster be the result. Gradually I pushed in the throttle, and noticed that the train was running slower. I turned on the steam for the air-brakes, and heard directly the grinding and rumbling of the brakes. Then I shut off the steam—the train came to a stop close to the danger signal.

Again I heard the piercing yell from Häusler, who had crouched on the front of the locomotive. I saw him raise himself and leap from the engine; then he sprang up and ran shrieking away between the shining rails.

Not a human being on that train had any intimation of the danger which had threatened us. Out of the station came the Leipzig express headed towards us. With this train, which was closely packed with passengers as is usual at that hour of the evening, we should have come into collision at full speed in the station.

Our train received the signal to go ahead and I steamed slowly into the station. We arrived ten minutes ahead of time. The inspector hurried up at once with the guard and demanded an explanation; they were amazed to find me alone, and I was so overcome by all that I had gone through in those last few moments that I could with difficulty give them the desired information. Frau Häusler was naturally surprised when she did not see her husband, and I could not keep back the sad news that he had gone insane.

I was myself so broken down mentally that I remained off duty for several days by direction of the Company's physician.

When I reported for duty once more, I learnt that Häusler, who was stark mad, had been captured in the station that same night, and the following morning had been taken to a lunatic asylum. The cause of this outbreak of insanity in him was the loss of his entire savings. He had intrusted them to a small banker, and the latter had absconded with all his deposits.

Oscar Klauzman.

OWING to the Christmas Holidays, this number of *Short Stories* goes to press before the result of Jumble Story No. 23 is known. The names of the winners will appear next week.

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An Ingenious Swindle.

THE diamond merchant from Kimberley—his name was Colomb—was tossing the third officer for drinks in the smoking-room of the *Hun*, which vessel, her bow pointed for Madeira, seemed inclined to make a record run. The latter lost. "Just my luck," he exclaimed, as he signed the wine card. Graham, the lawyer, always loquacious, promptly took him up. "Luck," he said scornfully, "luck, there is no such thing. It is an effete superstition, and should go the way of witches, spirits, evil eyes and kindred nonsense which civilised people no longer believe in."

Colomb, sipping his whisky, looked at him over the rim of the glass. "I don't agree with you," he said slowly as he set it down. "I believe in luck; it's a possession some people have and some haven't. My luck has been good through life, without it I should never have pulled through some tough places I've been in. I've only made one big mistake," he continued after a pause, his face lighting up as some reminiscence came into his mind, and that by a most wonderful piece of luck—for one can call it nothing else—was, as it turned out, the most fortunate thing I could have done."

"Let's hear the story," said someone.

"Well, I don't mind trying. I'm not a professional story-teller you know, gentlemen. I don't think I've ever told one in the smoking-room yet. It's a little adventure I had last year, and it occurred on board a Union boat."

The third officer said he was very sorry he couldn't stop to hear the story, but his watch began at twelve and he wanted a couple of hours' sleep, so he finished his whisky and left. The rest of us made ourselves as comfortable as possible, and prepared to listen with some curiosity, for Colomb did not often expand like this. He was a man of middle age, though his hair and moustache were yet jet black. From a boy he had been in the diamond trade, and was accounted one of the best judges of stones living, and wonderfully successful in all his dealings.

He now leaned back in his seat, put his hands in his trousers pockets and, apparently addressing the wall opposite him, began:

"I was in Johannesburg when last autumn I received a hint that a certain merchant in Durban was rather hard up and would most likely sell a fine parcel of diamonds he possessed and which he had bought with the intention of keeping. I had never been in Durban before, for, as you all know, there's no diamond trading there, but from what I heard I judged it would be worth a visit, so off I went next day. The railway was not open then beyond Charlestown, so I had to endure the coach, which brought back to my mind reminiscences of when Kimberley was without a railway. I reached Durban and saw my man, and after a long palaver we did a deal. I took his diamonds and paid him £6,000 for them. They were a very fine parcel, De Beers stones, and I got them pretty cheap. Then I went straight to the Universal, which is my bank, though never having been at Durham I had never done business with that branch before. I give them to the manager myself to keep till I went away, and saw them locked up in the strong room.

"'When will you call for them?' said he as we went back to his private room.

"'Why,' said I, 'I sail for Cape Town in the *Grecian*. She will leave, I believe, on Thursday morning. The *Gallio* is in too, rather queer two of the G's being together, isn't it?'

"'Yes,' he replied; 'I believe the *Gallio* sails to-morrow morning at day-break. You call for the diamonds yourself, of course?'

"I said 'yes,' and went off to book my passage in the *Grecian*. I had one old Kimberley friend settled in Durban with whom I was going to spend the evening, but he was unable to put me up, so to avoid trouble I made arrangements to go straight on board the *Grecian*, and took my portmanteau down to the harbour. She had arrived from Delagoa Bay, and was, of course, almost empty. I chose a deck cabin on the port side, unpacked my bag, and made things comfortable, then, telling my cabin steward I should not be back till late, went on shore again. The *Gallio* lay berthed next us, for she was sailing for Delagoa Bay next morning. I knew her captain slightly, and thought of calling, but my cab was waiting, so I didn't, but drove back to the town. It was rather early to go to my friend's and I stood at the corner of West Street, hesitating what to do, when I recognised that old rascal Speckels coming along the pavement arm in arm with another man. Speckles was a Kimberley man with a shady reputation. He had already undergone one imprisonment for T.D.B., and was strongly suspected of still following that dangerous but highly remunerative calling.

"'Hullo,' said I, and he stopped.

"'Ach, Meester Colomb. I hope I see you well.'

"'Why, what brings you here?' I inquired.

"'I am taking one holiday from beesness.'

"'And who's your friend?' I went on, looking at the other man, and noting that he wore dark spectacles and had a black beard. I had really no curiosity about either of the men, and merely spoke because I had nothing to do. The man in dark spectacles bowed to me but said nothing. Speckels said:

"'Mine friend, he is just from Hamburg last week, and knows no Eenglish.'

"'Good heavens,' said I, 'a German and knows no English! Your friend is a remarkable man.' I would have gone on chaffing the two men, but they took off their hats again and moved on. Presently I took a rickshaw to my friend's house, and in the course of the evening mentioned having seen Speckels.

"'That fellow is a rascal,' said he, for he knew him in his Kimberley days, 'but very cute. Too clever for the police to catch. He's up to no good here. What was his companion like?'

"'A dark man,' I said, 'of about my own height, but he wore blue spectacles, so I couldn't make much of him?'

"We played cards after dinner and I stopped late. It was after midnight when I reached the wharf again. I was most desperately sleepy, having passed the previous night in the train. I fell asleep in my rickshaw going down and was only half awake when I scrambled on board. However, I knew where my cabin was and

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entered. Lights were out in the cabins, the ship being in port. I pulled off my coat, collar and shoes, and felt for my pyjamas which I had laid out on the upper bunk. They were not there, the steward must have moved them. I felt on the lower bunk with the same result. I was too sleepy to light the candle or even to strike a match, but scrambled into the upper berth, pulled the sheet round me, and went sound off to sleep.

"I am a heavy sleeper, and it was bright daylight when I awoke. I lay a few seconds in the drowsy half unconscious state in which we always feel when waking from a sound slumber. Then the noise of engines sounded in my ears and I noticed that the cabin oscillated.

"I sat up, yes, the ship was undoubtedly moving. What did it mean? I sprang out of my bunk and ran outside. We were at sea, swiftly moving along, and no land in sight! Dazed and speechless I stared round me when a steward suddenly appeared going along the deck.

"'Where am I?' I said helplessly to him. He stared, as well he might.

"'Who are you, sir? I never saw you before.'

"'Isn't this the *Grecian?*'

"'Lord no, sir. This is the *Gallio*, bound for Delagoa Bay.'

"I laid hold of the railing and cursed myself till I felt better. I was on the wrong ship. I had climbed the wrong companion ladder, entered the cabin corresponding to my own and gone to sleep in it. All my luggage was on board the *Grecian*, which would have sailed before I could get back to Durban. Fortunately the diamonds were safe in the Durban bank. The first breakfast gong sounded as I stood on the deck turning the matter over in my mind. In a very bad temper I went back to the cabin and dressed. Coming out again the humour of the thing struck me, and I could not help smiling, when a voice sounded in the cabin I was just passing. It was Speckels. Glad of someone to speak to, and curious to learn what he was doing on this ship, I pulled the curtain in front of the cabin door away with a jerk and looked in. Speckels and his friend of the previous day were just dressed, and looked up at the sound of the curtain rings running back. I was still smiling as I looked at them, but my smile faded at their extraordinary behaviour at sight of me. Speckels shrieked: '*Mein Gott*,' and fell back against the bunks with a shock which made the woodwork creak. His face turned livid, and he shook as though he had the palsy, while his eyes seemed starting out of his head. The other man turned white, uttered a bitter execration, and saying in good English: 'The game's up,' sat down.

"Now I was utterly astonished at the fright my presence caused them, but I saw it would not do to appear ignorant.

"'The game is up,' I said gravely, wondering to myself what the game was. 'You didn't expect to see me here?' I went on. This was a safe thing to say, for their utter surprise at sight of me would have been visible to a blind man.

"'Ach! dear Meester Colomb,' said Speckels, going down on his knees before me. 'You veel not too hard on me? I have one wife and four leetle children. You will take them back and say nothing and I will make it worth your while. You are one gentleman and will be merciful?'

"'Take them back,' I said sternly—take what back I wondered—'you don't know what you are asking.'

"At this point the other man rose to his feet. His whole appearance and especially his eyes seemed familiar to me, but I could not remember where I had seen him. 'The game's up, Speckels,' he repeated, 'what's the good of whining? Give up the diamonds.'

"'Yes,' said I, 'give up the diamonds at once.'

"It may have been very stupid of me, but even now I did not guess the truth, and when Speckels produced a familiar looking case, it was all I could do to prevent crying out. For they were *my* diamonds, the diamonds I had bought the previous day and handed over to the bank manager. What did it mean? Had they burgled the strong room or was the manager in the plot? Both superstitions were equally impossible. My fingers promptly closed on the diamonds and I quickly ran my eye over them to see that none were missing. They were all there, and I pocketed the parcel and made for the door. 'You two men,' I said, 'had better stop here for the present,' and I left the unlucky thieves sunk in despair.

"Still utterly at sea—in a double sense—as to what had happened and how they had gained possession of the diamonds, I re-entered my own cabin. Then as I stood mechanically looking at myself in the glass over the washstand the explanation flashed upon me. The face and appearance of Speckel's accomplice had been vaguely familiar to me. Those eyes which I had seen somewhere before were now looking at me from the looking-glass. There were my own eyes. That was the explanation, the man's beard was as false as himself and without it he bore a wonderful likeness to me. He had impersonated me in the most barefaced way, and walked off with the diamonds, but my unexpected appearance that morning had convinced them that I had discovered the plot and followed to regain possession of my property. Hence their horror and despair at sight of me.

"Well, I've nearly finished. I had the two swindlers arrested, and my double confessed. He had bought a ready-made flannel suit like mine, made up like me—he had been an actor once—and gone to the bank just on closing time. He said he was going to sleep on board and would take the diamonds then and give them in charge of the purser. The manager had only seen me once, he suspected nothing, and handed them over. It was the boldest swindle I've ever heard of, and but for my mistaking the ships would have been successful."

"Yes," said someone, "but wouldn't the bank have been responsible?"

"They would, but I should have had a lot of trouble to get the money. They would have said I ought to keep my double under lock and key. It would have meant a quarrel with some of the directors who were friends—and useful friends—of mine. And that's not all. The diamonds were of a peculiar shape, and I had a special order for such. As a matter of fact I sold them in a fortnight at a large profit. It was this knowledge that took me down to Durban."

"But," said another listener, "did you find out how the two men knew you were buying these diamonds?"

"No, I didn't, but I fancy they had been watching me for a long time and got wind somehow of what I was after. Well, the two men are safely looked after now, and my double won't impersonate me again in a hurry. Yes, gentlemen, I believe in luck. And now, who's for a rubber?"

CHARLES D. LESLIE.

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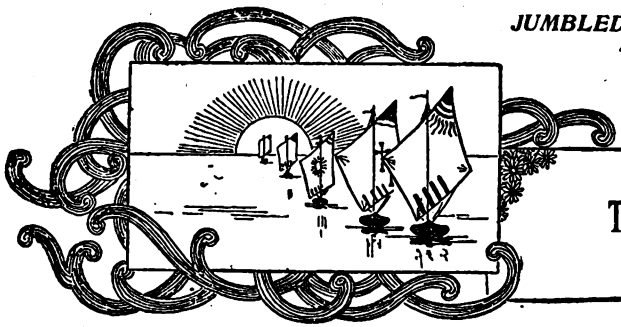
JUMBLED STORY No. 26.]
See Page 7.



THE FORCES ON AYOEII.

The maid knocked at the door.
The girl did not answer.
Alone in her room, she waited feverishly and went suddenly to the door.
Then she threw herself on the cushions again, turned up the lights, and crossing to the writing stage."
He turned on her fiercely.
Cicely put out a soft hand, and stroked her pile of soft cushions.
"I have told you why I do it. It is impossible for jokes in the future. I am going to enter St. Anne's convent. I wrote to Sister Catherine, my aunt, as fair as an angel, as tender as a dove, but as nearly as bad as the tragic love scenes on the hideous devilry beneath it all."
With a gesture of impatience, he turned round, Good Heavens, Cicely, why do you do it? At least remember that you have left me in—the other place."
"Don't scream so, Will," the girl interrupted. she came again to her lonely home. She stood for me to marry, so I may as well treat the matter a moment in the hall, and it seemed that the into a troubled sleep.
"There you go again, making a joke of it all.
"Poor old Will," she said gently.
"Don't. You'll drive me mad. Cicely you are stubborn as a——"
"I cannot. Believe me, I cannot."
Banish the thought, weak woman!
"You can. You know you can. But you won't."
"You are making me dreadfully tired. It is convent? Heaven?"
"You will not, then, Cicely? Remember it is lightly as seriously. I won't be able to make many for the last time, and you say you will not?"
"Then why do you do it, Cicely? Can't you see I have a right to know that."
Man-like, he did not notice the break in the girl's lover's.
He jerked his hand roughly away.
"What are you going to gain by entering this house.
"Well, go to Heaven," he cried, almost shaking up.
He strode up and down the room, kicking his fist at her. "Go. And may it cheer you to prepare your reward."
The door slammed behind him. His steps could throughout the long watches of the night until the breeze played on her heated face, and refreshed her shadow of a man awaited her, with arms outstretched. She is expecting me shortly."
Presently, when her sobs had calmed a little, she held tightly round her neck.
She sat quite still for a moment. The lights in early post should come. Towards morning she fell savagely at the furniture.
Cicely sprang up, her heart throbbing.
She went out herself to post this letter. A cool freak? I don't understand it. There is some slight frame, until it seemed that her delicate body turned them down.
In answer, Cicely wrote this:
"My letters, quick, girl."
The man telegraphed in reply: "Whatever you come at once and comfort you and we shall be very happy. I was a brute to treat you as I did."
A man, flustered, angry, tearing a bunch of violets to pieces, standing before her.
The violets went into the fire, and were burnt He did not see them.
She tore one open eagerly. It was very short, and wept tears of bitter sorrow. Sobs racked her hall door closed, and the girl was alone in the voice. Her great, pleading eyes were fixed on his. Little children ran forward, and clasped her knees, the room seemed to blind her. She rose, and and ran: "Write and tell me everything, I will be heard running down the stairs. Then the that you are ruining both our lives by this girlish do is right. My brave heroine, may the angels and told her that I had finally determined to come. a little. A curious thought occurred to her when with faces upturned to be kissed. Tiny soft arms could not withstand the strain.
So Cicely entered St. Anne's convent.
A pale-faced, slender girl, lying wearily back on a table, wrote this letter:
I had intended that you should leave me for ever as you under restraint. "A little queer in her head," they said. There is some hideous devilry beneath it all, as you say. I have fought against the horrible craving that assails me. Then you came, and I felt that with you I should conquer. Catherine, as you know, entered St. Anne's convent. If you think it would be better, I will lay bare my soul should descend to innocent lives? Now you know everything. That was not the reason. She was an inebriate, and died more worthy to love. And that is why I tried to send you this life, and entering St. Anne's convent for your sake. When I was born the curse descended on me. All my life might have forgotten me, and perhaps found someone else think ill of me, Will, for I love you from the bottom of my soul. Think of me rather as a martyr, who is going out of drinking. My mother had a loathing for intoxicants. The grandmother, as you know, spent the latter part of her life Do you blame me?
First I must tell you a little family history. My mere sight of wine on the table made her faint. Her sister, Then another thought came to me. What if my curse have done, with bitter thoughts in your heart, and then you away so lightly. But I cannot bear that you should always to you, and tell you why I am doing this thing.

CICELY.

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THE QUEEN AGAINST OWEN

BY
Allen Upward
Author of "Secrets of the Courts of Europe," "The Prince of Balkistan," etc., etc.

SUMMARY.

ELEANOR MARGARET OWEN is charged with the murder of her benefactress, Ann Lewis. Charles Prescott, who has known Eleanor since a child, holds the brief for the prosecution. His friend, George Tressamer, is in love with Eleanor, and holds the brief for her defence. The prosecution is vigorously pressed by Mr. Lewis, deceased's nephew.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ASSIZES.

ON a certain day in the month of July our lady the Queen, probably clad in ermine, and wearing on her head that gorgeous specimen of the jeweller's art which, when not in use, may be viewed at the Tower of London for the absurdly moderate sum of sixpence—our lady the Queen, I say, was reminded by her faithful Chancellor that various prisoners were awaiting trial in different parts of England and Wales, and among other places in Mynyddshire.

Whereupon her Majesty, with that constant attention to the welfare of her people which befits a sovereign, at once sat down and wrote, or possibly only signed, a stately document, requiring and empowering Sir Daniel Buller, Knight, one of the judges of her High Court; Sir John Wiseman, Knight, another of the aforesaid judges; Walter Reynold Davies, Esquire, one of her counsel learned in the law; Joseph Robert Pollington, Esquire, another of her counsel learned in the law; and Henry Jones, Esquire, yet a further specimen of her counsel learned in the law, to proceed to Mynyddshire, and there and then open the gaols and try such prisoners as were inside them.

In a similar and not less elaborate document she thoughtfully went on to provide for their hearing, and deciding at the same time any disputes over civil matters which might possibly have arisen among the population of that remote locality since it was last honoured by the presence of such bright visitants. This considerate act on her Majesty's part was, of course, intended to save her emissaries a second journey. Even a monarch in the administration of justice need not be above killing two birds with one stone.

In proceeding to Mynyddshire, however, a very invidious distinction was drawn between the gentlemen mentioned in the Royal Commission. The two first named because they were knights and judges, went down in state, were met at the station by the high sheriff of the county, and escorted by twenty javelin-men in gay attire to the comfortable lodgings prepared for them. The other three, for no other earthly reason than because their position was less exalted, had to get down as best they might, scramble into cabs with their portmanteaux, and put up at a common hotel. How true is the venerable saying: "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath!"

Having thus got an unfair start, the two judges preserved it to the end. They tried all the cases themselves, and their unfortunate colleagues had to be content with what crumbs they could pick up by appearing in court as common advocates.

The Southern Circuit has long been popular with judges. There is a great difference in circuits. The two Northern ones, with their vast populations and immense amount of work, are the bugbear of the puisne judge. The scenery of some of the other circuits is flat, and there is not much amusement going on in the assize towns. But the Southern combines several advantages. It is far from heavy as regards work, the country in many parts is beautiful, and the train service between the county towns is fairly good.

For these reasons the old stagers on the Bench are in the habit of trying to get the Southern Circuit. On the present occasion they had been successful. Sir Daniel Buller and Sir John Wiseman may not have been extremely popular with the Bar, but they were very popular with each other. They came down to Abertaff feeling in good form, Sir John to preside over the civil court, and Sir Daniel to mete out justice to the inmates of the county gaol.

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Not for many years had there been such excitement at assize time in the city. This excitement was due to two causes—the javelin-men and the society murder.

Javelin-men are dying out. In former times, when the office of sheriff was a mark of high social dignity, and before the new-fangled post of lord-lieutenant had usurped so much of its splendour, the shrievalty was an epoch in a county gentleman's career. It was considered almost worth being ruined for. A heavy mortgage was not grudged as a consequence of the lavish splendour with which the office was surrounded. In those days javelin-men were a reality. Clad in semi-military uniforms modelled on the master's family livery, and armed with weapons of an extinct fashion, they simulated the state of vice-royalty. Many a German princelet has enjoyed a less imposing body-guard than an English sheriff of the olden time.

But the railways have killed all that. Everyone now seeks distinction in the Metropolis. County society has become a by-word for the old-fashioned and humdrum, for bad living, bad manners, and bad taste. No one would dream of embarrassing his estate to secure a merely local renown. Hence the decay of the shrievalty. The modern high sheriff looks upon his obligatory office as a duty rather than an honour. He contents himself with the cheap services of the county police force for his retinue, and foregoes the expensive luxury of the javelin-men.

Met at the station by the high sheriff.

There are a few brilliant exceptions, however. The present sheriff of Mynyddshire was one. In the first place, he was master of what in the country is regarded as a colossal fortune. In the second place, he was the founder of his family. Money, therefore, was not an object to Mr. Simon Reynolds. Glory was. His office gave him just the chance he wanted, and he revived his mediæval honours with a willing hand.

Two-and-twenty men, counting the buglers, in gorgeous clothing of pink and yellow hue, accordingly gladdened the eyes of the Abertaffians as they paraded the streets and hung about the court-house. Each man of the rank and file carried a weapon the like of which has not often been looked upon. It resembled an axe with an exaggerated handle, only the back of the blade was prolonged into a formidable spike, while the handle extended beyond into a species of spear-point. Armed with these truly terrific weapons, Mr. Reynolds's faithful henchmen might well strike awe into the heart of the boldest boy in Abertaff. It was felt that they were the principal feature of the assize. The judges, by common consent, took a secondary place. Their robes were fine, no doubt, but their rather ill-fitting wigs formed a poor substitute for the gleaming steel of their rivals. The sober charms of justice cannot successfully compete with the dazzling splendour of arms.

As for the high sheriff himself, in his black velvet coat and frilled shirt-front, he was a very inferior attraction, while his chaplain was simply nowhere. He had his innings for one brief hour in the cathedral, where the judges were compelled to sit as meekly as so many jurymen under a lengthy summing-up; but after that one bright flash he sank into insignificance, and dragged out the remainder of the assize like the stick of a burnt-out rocket, unnoticed and unpitied by all.

Yet even the javelin-men were cast into the shade by the other great feature of the assize week. The crime of murder remains, after all is said and done, the one thing which most fascinates the public mind. And when to murder is added mystery, and when that mystery centres round the figure of a woman, and when that woman is young and beautiful, and in a social position which does away with the presence of squalid details or coarse motives, the public may be pardoned if they take the very fullest interest in her fate.

Indeed, the case of "The Queen against Owen," to give it its legal designation, was of more than local interest. The whole kingdom was excited about the position of the unhappy girl who lay in one of the cells of Abertaff Gaol. Every eye was watching eagerly for the unfolding of the tragic drama in which she was about to play the leading part.

All the great London dailies had their representatives down at the assize town to gather every detail of the forthcoming trial. Already the names of the counsel on both sides were being wired from one end of the country to the other, while in Mynyddshire and in the county town itself the excitement was so great that not the smallest attention was bestowed on any other case that was to come before the courts.

Even the judges themselves were infected with the excitement all around them. Mr. Justice Buller had read the depositions taken before the magistrates prior to leaving town. He had discussed little else with his brother Wiseman in the train. In all their experience, they agreed, they had never met with a case so clear upon the evidence, and yet so unsatisfactory to the mind.

In the presence of the sheriff, of course, the subject was dropped. Nor could it be resumed after dinner. Later on the judge of the criminal court sat down to make notes for his charge to the grand jury on the morrow. In this he dealt with several other serious cases that appeared in the calendar; but his gravest attention was devoted to the

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one that dwarfed all the others. This disposed of, he soon retired to rest.

The formal business of opening the assizes had been gone through on the afternoon the judges arrived. Sir Daniel Buller had been trumpeted off to the Court-house, and had sat with as much patience as he could command—and that was not a great deal—while a rather short-sighted and very fidgety clerk of arraigns, afflicted, moreover, with a severe cough, stumbled his way through the important documents already described. This proceeding was necessary in order to inform the loyal inhabitants of Mynyddshire, chiefly represented by errand-boys and loafers from the neighbouring taps, who their red-robed visitors really were, and what they had come to do.

The wholesale piano warehouseman.

On the following morning, therefore, the judges were free to proceed to work. They drove down to the court at half-past ten, accompanied by the swelling Reynolds and the visibly crestfallen chaplain, and escorted by the inevitable javelin-men, who swarmed about the place all day under the pretext of keeping order.

Sir John Wiseman went quietly off to his own court, and began at once at the unexciting work of trying whether the drippings from a wholesale piano warehouseman's spout had or had not damaged the hats in a neighbouring hat store, and, if so, whether the wholesale piano warehouseman was to blame, and if to blame, how much he ought to pay to the aggrieved hatter. Two of the gentlemen so unfairly deprived of seats upon the bench were engaged in this important case, and it occupied more than half the day.

But it had a rather poor audience. The crowd had rushed into the other court, where the gentlemen of the grand jury were answering to their names as often as the infirmities of the Clerk of Arraigns would allow them to discover whom he was calling. As soon as the necessary twenty-four were sworn, Mr. Justice Buller began his charge.

After a few civil remarks on the state of the county as regarded crime generally, and brief references to some of the other cases, he came to the all-absorbing topic. And now the reporters, who had sat listlessly under the infliction of previous remarks, woke to sudden life, and every word of his Lordship was caught and taken down as eagerly as if it had dropped from the lips of Shakespeare.

And this is what he said:

"And now I come to what is by far the gravest case in the calendar—one of the gravest cases that has ever come before me in my judicial experience. The prisoner, Eleanor Owen, is accused of the most serious crime, short of treason, known to our law. Gentlemen, it is not for you to try whether she is guilty. You have to hear the witnesses who will be sent in before you on behalf of the Crown, and if you are satisfied that they are speaking the truth, and the effect of their evidence on your minds is such as, if uncontradicted, to raise a fair presumption of the prisoner's guilt, then it is your duty to find a true bill against her. From the depositions taken by the magistrates, which have been put before me, I do not anticipate that you will have much hesitation in coming to your decision. The case is entirely one of what is called circumstantial evidence, as such cases most generally are, and must be from the nature of things. Doubtless there are difficulties in the case—many and grave difficulties—with which it will be the duty of this tribunal to deal when the prisoner comes, if she does come, before us.

"The fact that the prisoner is charged with the deliberate murder of her friend—I may almost say her benefactress—with whom she had been living on terms of intimacy for a considerable time, and for no motive that has yet been suggested except a low and mercenary one, is calculated to arouse a natural repulsion in the mind, and to indispose it to believe that the charge is well-founded. But, gentlemen, these things, as they come before you, are matters of evidence. If the witnesses you are about to hear satisfy you that there is a *primâ facie* case made out against Eleanor Owen, that there are grounds for suspicion which she ought fairly to be called upon to answer and explain away if she can, then it is your duty not to hesitate, but to bring in a true bill for murder. And I must tell you, gentlemen, that so far as my reading of the depositions has guided me, this is not a case in which the crime admits of being reduced to any lesser charge. There are none of the elements present which may, and often do, justify a jury in reducing the charge of murder to that of manslaughter. There is no question, so far as I have been able to discover, of sudden provocation, of accident, or anything of that sort. Whoever committed this crime must, if you believe the evidence, have done so knowingly, designedly, and with premeditation, and therefore your finding, if you find against the prisoner, must be one of wilful murder. Gentlemen, I leave you to your deliberations."

With these words his Lordship dismissed the grand jury; and the barristers, in their wigs and gowns, some of them with briefs and a good many with none, came streaming into the well of the court, filling up the seats specially reserved for them, and overflowing into those occupied by their colleagues of the "lower branch." It seems rather hard on the Bar that some mysterious rule of etiquette, which they themselves probably do not understand, should forbid them to enter the assize court till this particular stage in the proceedings. Or can it be that this rule had its origin in the wisdom of their remote predecessors, devising artful means to escape the infliction of a tedious charge without appearing disrespectful to the Bench?

A lull followed. The judge, accustomed to have the eyes of men upon him, calmly betook himself to letter-writing. The high-sheriff, not so accustomed, fidgeted in his seat, looked round and counted the javelin-men in court, wondered how long the grand jury would be, and remembered, let us hope with remorse, the time when he was a grand juryman himself and wasted the time of the county by unnecessary questions to the witnesses. The fact is that the grand jury is played out. Everything for which they originally existed is now done by somebody else. Every case that comes before them now has already been investigated once by the committing magistrates. Their duty is simply to accuse the prisoner, nothing more; and it would be quite sufficient if they would just read the depositions and sign the indictment. But man, brief man, placed on a grand jury, and shut into a room without the interference of a legal authority, delights to show himself off by vain and superfluous inquiry. And hence it was that more than half-an-hour elapsed before the foreman was seen returning into the court with a trumpery indictment for larceny.

The interval had been usefully employed by the Clerk of Arraigns in compiling a petty jury, something in this fashion:

The Clerk of Arraigns (taking up a ticket, rather larger than a visiting-card, from a heap before him): "John Henry Mullerall." (To his clerk, a humble person in plebeian attire, who is popularly believed to know a great deal more about the procedure than the judge and the whole court put together): "Did he answer?" (The clerk hasn't heard him.) "John—Henry" (very loudly) "Mull—oh, I

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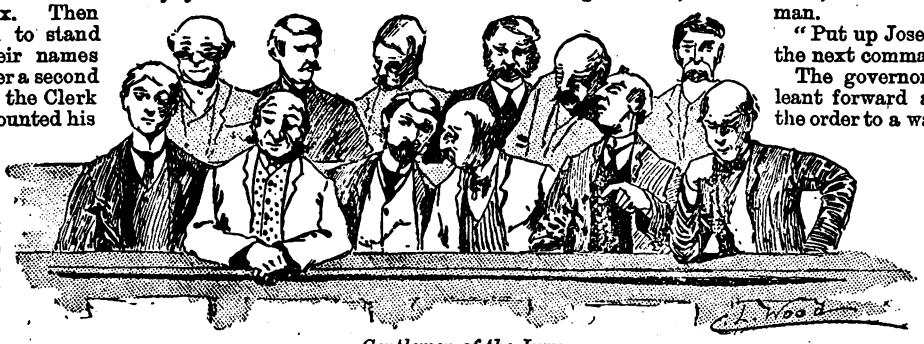
see, it's Muggle"—at the top of his voice: "Mugglewrath!" (testily) "Are you there?"

John Henry Mugglewrath (from a seat close by): "Here!"

The Clerk of Arraigns: "Oh! there you are. Why *don't* you gentlemen answer when you hear your names? Go into the box, please."

After about ten minutes of this sort of thing, twelve respectable inhabitants of Mynyddshire were collected in the jury-box. Then they all had to stand up while their names were read over a second time. Then the Clerk of Arraigns counted his tickets to make sure he had used up twelve, while his clerk counted the jurymen to see that they came to the same number. Then all was ready.



Gentlemen of the Jury.

Meanwhile, those gentlemen at the counsel's table who rejoiced in the possession of briefs made a great show of reading them, and making copious notes and interlineations with pencils of different colours—red, blue, and black. The public were greatly impressed as they watched these young giants of intellect at their work. There they were, mastering the most knotty points with ease, and constructing ingenious arguments, doubtless, as they went along. One gentleman excited the greatest interest, and quite threw his brethren into the shade, by pushing aside his brief and drawing towards him one of the loose sheets of foolscap which the kind forethought of the authorities had provided, and beginning to write on it in an abstracted manner. The onlookers deemed him to be wrestling with an opinion on some weighty question bristling with legal difficulties. They little guessed that he was addressing congratulations to a maiden aunt on the occasion of her approaching birthday.

But what really occupied the minds of the spectators, and kept their lips moving in subdued conversation, was the ending of the judge's charge.

"He has made up his mind that she is guilty," whispered Mr. Jenkins, the stationer from Queen Street, who had come to the court in the capacity of a common juryman, but had not been among the names first selected.

"And I don't wonder at it," replied his neighbour, a farmer from near Porthstone, who had been summoned in the same way. "A bad lot, I'll be bound. Wouldn't say nothing when her was before the magistrates. That looks bad, don't it?"

"Silence!" bawled a javelin-man just behind them, a rebuke which the worthy farmer at first thought was meant for himself. But the word was repeated instantly by other javelin-men, and then he perceived that the grand jury had at last achieved a stroke of work, and that the satellites of justice were merely drawing attention to that fact in their usual impressive manner.

The Clerk of Arraigns now received the document, and proceeded to expound its contents in this manner:

"Gentlemen of the grand jury, you find a——" here he stopped and turned it over to read what was on the back, a task which occupied several seconds; but he completed the sentence as if no break had occurred—"true bill against——" another pause—he was looking for the name concealed amid the mazes of technical phraseology. This time the foreman rashly attempted to help him out by murmuring, "Joseph Hall." The Clerk of Arraigns turned round and glared at him, then resumed his investigation, and finally brought out the name in a tone of triumph as of one who gloried in overcoming obstacles and was not to be baffled by any indictment in the power of man to draw: "Joseph Hall, for stealing a coat of the value of thirty shillings; also for receiving the same, knowing it to be stolen."

He then turned again and bestowed an impatient nod on the waiting foreman, who withdrew, a crushed and miserable man.

"Put up Joseph Hall," was the next command.

The governor of the gaol leant forward and repeated the order to a warder who had already heard it perfectly and dived below, apparently through the solid floor of the court. The next moment Mr. Hall appeared, with easy nonchalance, and leant forward in a graceful attitude on the bar of the dock, while the Clerk of Arraigns proceeded to acquaint him with the crime of which he was accused.

Exhibiting no surprise at this piece of information, which, considering he had been lying under the accusation for two months, was, perhaps, hardly to be wondered at, Mr. Hall in emphatic tones pronounced himself innocent.

"What?" said the Clerk of Arraigns, stretching anxiously forward.

Mr. Hall repeated his sentiments.

"What does he say?" exclaimed the Clerk of Arraigns, appealing to the court generally for assistance.

The response was a loud but confused roar of voices from the junior Bar, out of which the only clear sound that penetrated to the unfortunate man's brain was the word "guilty."

"He says he's guilty!" he remarked to his clerk, in what he intended for an aside, but which was perfectly audible over the whole building.

At this point the judge, becoming impatient, leant over and tapped the Clerk of Arraigns on the shoulder. He turned round.

"He pleads guilty, my Lord," he said, thinking that the judge wished for information.

"No he doesn't, Mr. Hughes. He said 'not guilty,'" answered the judge.

Mr. Hughes was nearly beside himself by this time. Leaning forward in the direction of the prisoner, he shouted fiercely:

"What *do* you say? Are you guilty or not?"

"No," came in tones loud enough for him to hear at last.

"Then *why* can't you speak distinctly? The names you are about to hear called are those of the jurors who are to try you, if you have any objection to them or any of them you shall make it as they come to the book to be sworn, or before they are sworn, and you shall be heard. John Henry Mugglewrath, stand up."

And, leaving this overwhelming communication to gradually make itself clear to the prisoner's mind, the Clerk of Arraigns went on swearing in the jury as hard as he could go, with the assistance of the judge's clerk (who recited the oath) and his own clerk (who handed the testament, as it is called, though really containing only the works of the four Evangelists). It need scarcely be observed that the jurors never came to the book at all. The book came to them.

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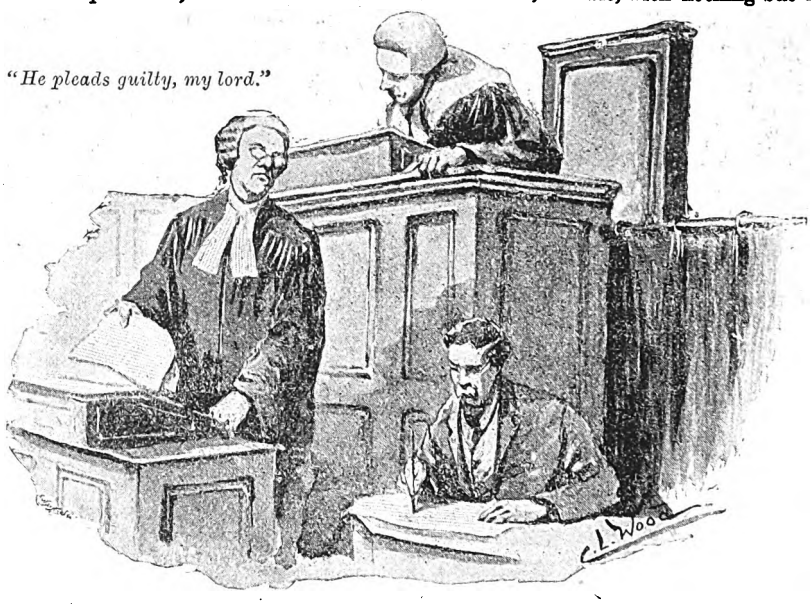
A rather flighty young counsel, who seemed to consider the whole thing somewhat in the light of a joke, or a species of amateur theatricals on a large scale, having presented the case for the prosecution, Mr. Hall was called upon for his defence.

It then came out that the poor man, than whom no more honest creature ever walked the earth, had been made the victim of a truly diabolical hoax. He was sitting reading the newspaper in a public-house, the "Three Hens"—he had not even been drinking, mind, simply reading the newspaper—when a perfect stranger, whom he had never seen before or since, but whom he should know anywhere, came in, with an overcoat (the one produced in court) over his arm.



"He pleads guilty, my lord."

The stranger, with a craft for which an innocent being like Mr. Hall was no match, began by offering refreshments. These consumed, he asked Mr. Hall to do him the favour of pawning his overcoat for him. Mr. Hall then very naturally put the question: Why didn't he pawn it himself?

The stranger replied that he was unfamiliar with pawnshops, that he doubted his ability to make a good bargain, and that he was willing to pay his new acquaintance a commission on the proceeds. This last offer Mr. Hall had magnanimously refused, but out of mere good nature he went forth to do the stranger's bidding. The pawnbroker, however, with a distrust in human nature which stamped him as having an evil mind, called in a passing policeman, and gave this victim of his own kindly disposition into custody.

The sequel was inevitable. The constable was led by the unsuspicious Hall to the bar of the "Three Hens," but the mysterious stranger had gone and left no trace. Poor, humble, with nothing but his good character to rely on, Mr. Hall now cast himself with confidence on the discernment of the gentlemen before him.

The gentlemen had made up their minds already. But they could not give their verdict till the judge had had his turn. Mr. Justice Buller set to and occupied exactly fourteen minutes in telling the jury that there was not much evidence of stealing, but there was strong evidence of the receiving. The jury then occupied exactly fourteen seconds in deciding that the prisoner was guilty of stealing.

It then transpired that this was not the first time Mr. Hall had been the victim of appearances. His trusting nature had led him on six previous occasions to incur the censure of the law. He was, therefore, now bidden to take up his abode where no such temptations could assail him for the next five years.

By this time several other bills had come in from the grand jury, and it had become apparent that the all-absorbing murder would not be tried that day. The audience gradually drifted off, and the remainder of the day's performance took place before a half-empty house.

(To be continued.)

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AN ANIMAL ELIXIR.

The Extraordinary Story of How an Old Man Became Young.

ONE August afternoon, in the year 1870, I met at the outskirts of Berunegui, in the San Blas mining regions, not far from the town of Legutiano, a company of villagers who were following the body of a child to the cemetery. The little corpse reclined upon a cushion surrounded by followers, and, as is customary in that country, was borne upon the head of an old woman. Moved by idle curiosity, I inquired whose child it was.

"No one knows, sir," replied a villager; "it was found, alive and naked, there in the glen some two years ago. It was taken to the house of Gussurrandi and continued, little by little, shrinking, shrinking, and falling away, until it became like a new-born infant, finally ceased to nurse, and died. Stranger still, its face is wrinkled like an old man's, and its fingers are burnt and stained like those of one in the habit of smoking a pipe."

These details aroused my curiosity, and I joined the party in order to obtain a view of the strange corpse. Before it was deposited in the grave, while the women wept and prayed, I examined it. The villager was right; the body certainly presented a most incomprehensible appearance. Imagine a newly-born child, the forehead and cheeks marked with hard, callous wrinkles, the half-opened eyes retaining an expression of marked intelligence, and the upper portion of the thumb and index-finger of each hand yellow and discoloured like those of an old smoker.

The child being buried, I returned with the party to Berunegui to pass the night with the Gussurrandi family, being well acquainted with them.

"What did that child die of?" I asked my hosts.

"Ah, Mr. Richard," replied the wife, "it must have been a case of witchcraft, for a stranger thing never happened. When we first found the child it ate bread, meat, and pottage; afterwards the four teeth it had fell out, it stopped eating, seemed to lose all knowledge of persons and things, and we were compelled to suckle it, and in the last days of its life, it lost even the power to do this. When first discovered it seemed a well-sized child, but it gradually shrunk to half its original size. The expression of its eyes was remarkably intelligent; it acted at times as if it wished to speak, seemed to understand perfectly all that was said, and appeared continually labouring under some mysterious and terrible agitation."

"And you have no idea as to where it came from?"

"Not the slightest. One day, on returning from work, we found it, quite naked, amidst a heap of old clothing. It aroused our pity, we took it in, and cared for it. Among the old clothing there was a bundle of papers and an old pipe."

"Where are these objects?"

"I have them all in a box," replied my host; "but as I cannot read, I have never examined them closely. One day I showed them to the priest, but he told me they were written in Bescayan, and he could not understand them."

"Bring them! Bring them!" I cried excitedly.

"I will bring them, but will you read them all, every bit, to us?"

"Yes, friend Gussurrandi, all, and will make all as plain as possible."

So, after supper, a lamp was lighted and placed at my side, and, after the men had filled and lighted their pipes, and all taken seats around me, I unrolled the bundle of papers given me by my host. It was composed of many leaves of different sizes, ages, and styles of writing. I arranged them in order, and, with ever-increasing astonishment and curiosity to myself as well as to my listeners, read the following:

The 20th of August, 1785, completed my eighty-fifth year, and I found myself in the kitchen of my beautiful home, seated at the table with Don Juan Manuel de Ursubil, a famed Empiric, a man of great ability and recondite knowledge, whom I had known intimately from youth. My children and grandchildren, after celebrating the anniversary of my birth, had retired to their homes. The Empiric, myself, and an old serving-woman who waited upon me, were alone in the house. It was one o'clock in the morning, we had smoked thirty-four pipes of tobacco and drunk five jars of cider, and, though at that time I was rugged as an oak tree and of an exceptional constitution, so much smoking and drinking caused my head to spin.

The Empiric was even worse than myself. For more

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than an hour he talked unceasingly of humours, clavicles, systems, plasters, and other things, of which I understood not a word. I listened intently.

"You do not answer me," he finally said.

"What can I answer?"

"You might say something, man. What are you thinking of?"

"That I am very old and shall not last much longer."

Juan Manuel struck the table with his fist, and with a long laugh, exclaimed: "'Not much longer'—what folly! Why, you can live as long as the fancy strikes you."

"Truly?"

"Surely. I have a secret of everlasting life; but I fear the Inquisition and the priests, if they learnt of it. I would be taken for a sorcerer, and it would go hard with me."

"Juan Manuel, are you telling me the truth?"

"The exact truth. Ah, if I could but find one who did not wish to die."

"You could easily find many."

"You are mistaken. Men are peculiar in their mode of reasoning; they fear death, but they fear more the operation they must undergo to escape death. They would rather die than suffer for a few days."

My brain reeled. This learned man expressed himself with such positive conviction that it already seemed to me that death no longer existed. There was an ineffable satisfaction in the thought.

We drank several more glasses. The old servant was sound asleep, the stocking she had been knitting had fallen from her hands, and the cat was playing with the yarn.

"Why do you not make a proof of your theory upon yourself?" I asked the Empiric.

"What nonsense! How could I operate upon myself when the performance demands all my care, observation, and strength?"

We again relapsed into silence. My eighty-five years weighed heavily upon me, a new life appealed to me too strongly to be resisted. I decided, and rising suddenly cried: "*I do not wish to die!* Dispose of me!"

"Done!" answered Juan Manuel, rubbing his hands with pleasure. "Eighty or eighty thousand years hence we will again drink cider in honour of the twentieth of August."

He rose staggering, seized my arm, and said: "Let us go."

"Where?"

"To my house. This very night all shall be accomplished."

"Let us go then." And in my shirt sleeves, just as I was, we set out, unsteadily, reeling, and stumbling, towards his house.

On reaching his room Juan Manuel lit a lamp, took off his hat and coat, opened a drawer of a table, from which he took an apparatus composed of wires, bandages, tubes, and bulbs with wooden keys, then rolled up his sleeves, pushed a bed from an adjoining alcove into the centre of the room, placed a large copper kettle beside it on the floor, and, turning to me, said smilingly: "Now place yourself full length on the bed, and remain perfectly quiet."

I extinguished my pipe and threw myself upon the bed, stretching myself out as much as possible. The Empiric then produced a lancet, and, after feeling my left arm, made a broad incision in one of the veins. I heard the splashing of the blood as it fell into the cauldron, while Juan Manuel busied himself preparing his strange apparatus.

This must have consumed a quarter of an hour, when I began to feel horribly weak from loss of blood. All effects of intoxication had disappeared. From time to time the Empiric felt my pulse, murmuring as he continued his work: "More—more yet!" I do not know how long a time elapsed, but I suddenly found that I could not move; I was consumed by thirst, but could not make an articulate sound; I could only lie there and listen to the monotonous dripping, dripping of the blood as it fell into the cauldron. My sense of vision, though, had remained remarkably clear and distinct.

The Empiric again felt my pulse. "Good!" he exclaimed; "a little more," and finally, "enough!" and he remained contemplating me for some time in a species of abstraction. Then he bound up the wound, and taking some small pieces of linen moistened in water, he introduced them into my mouth, pushing them into my throat, using for this purpose the wooden handle of a spoon. Then he closed my nostrils with a piece of dampened tow.

"So!" he said, when this was accomplished, "we are progressing finely. Now breathing almost imperceptibly, and with the heart barely fluttering, we shall come within a step of death, but that step we will not take."

My condition was now simply indescribable. I seemed to have no body, for only the head retained warmth and life. A terrible oppression weighed upon my breast, my ribs seemed crushed in, and I felt an intense agony in every respiration as I inhaled a little air through the damp cloths. My head seemed burning, and the slow pulsation of my heart reverberated in my ears like the blows of a hammer.

Juan Manuel, after contemplating me for some time, took a deep drink. "It is necessary," he said; "my nerves must be steady."

He then went out and returned in a short time, carrying in his arms one of his grandsons, a beautiful four-year-old child, who appeared wrapped in profound slumber. He laid the child down beside me and made the sign of the cross over it.

"My plan," he said, communing with himself, "must have occurred to many; but the actual problem is that the regenerating blood shall not come in contact with the air; that it shall pass warm, pure, full of life, and throbbing with power, from the heart of the child to the almost lifeless old man. The old man loses his blood; there it is in the cauldron, weakened and vitiated by the sins and pains of eighty-five years. The child is going to transmit his almost entirely; but it will not matter, for, after eight days, the little that will be left will have multiplied, and the child will be as robust as before. Blood is fire; a single drop serves for the base of a life. I know there are doctors in Salamanca and Alcala who laugh at me, for it is the privilege of men of science to laugh with impunity at others, whether they are right or wrong. But after my friend shall have lived for two thousand years, where, then, will be the doctors of Salamanca?"

He again placed his hand over my heart; it scarcely fluttered and the noise in my ears had died away.

"Now is the time," he exclaimed; "he will feel nothing now."

He then took the strange apparatus from the table and enveloped my neck with its bandages, doing likewise with the child, who still remained without moving at my side. Next, from another vessel he took a dark ointment, with which he smeared the wooden keys of

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his apparatus and also my neck, all but one side, where, by means of a cupping-glass, he had drawn the flesh into a roll. The bulbs were squeezed together, the tubes in which they terminated adhering firmly to my own and the child's neck. Among the wires constituting the apparatus were two long and strong ones which the Empiric, grasping with both hands, gave a sudden jerk, as if he wished to separate them; at the same instant. I felt a sharp pain in the side of my neck and the child gave a terrible start. Then a cloud passed before my eyes, but I could still hear Juan Manuel rubbing his hands with pleasure and murmuring to himself: "It beats, *it beats!*—after twenty years of thought and study—the air does not enter—the priests and doctors are vanquished!"

On opening my eyes on the following day, I found myself stretched upon that same bed. The Empiric was beside me. I endeavoured to speak, but could not; the Empiric placed his finger on his lip and shook his head.

"You now have within your veins," he said, "the revivifying blood of youth. You will begin life at the age of four years. What terrible heat! A hundred and eighteen pulsations! the new blood pours through your veins like a torrent in a millrace. This fever will last for fifteen days, during which time you must take nothing but milk. My little grandson is resting well; in six more days he will have recovered. Ah, my apparatus is a marvel."

At this juncture a knock came at the door, and my old servant, Maria Anton, entered.

"What has become of my master?" she asked.

"Here he is; a little indisposed because in accompanying me home he stumbled and——"

"That terrible cider!"

"No, Maria, it was owing to the darkness. Two of his ribs are displaced, but inside of fifteen days he will be all right."

Maria Anton, thus reassured, departed.

"Poor old woman," mused the Empiric; "how many of your granddaughters will have to wait upon your master!"

For many days the Empiric paid me hourly visits, feeling my pulse, giving me milk, and talking to himself. My condition was very peculiar. My whole body was burning with a feverish heat, and I experienced a general trembling, with light pains in the chest, back, and ribs on drawing a breath, but felt a sensation of restful satisfaction when the air was expelled *from* my lungs.

By degrees my strength returned, and at the end of twenty days, accompanied by Juan Manuel, I returned to my own house.

"I believe your life is now assured for another epoch," he said, as he approached my door; "but you must be careful, as it is, of course, exposed the same as before to disease and violent accidents. I have merely lengthened your days by renewing the vital element which sustains life; what you should do is to be silent and watchful."

Some time passed, and my health and strength became enviable, save for that strange, persistent pain in the breast accompanying each respiration. Yet I could never convince myself that Juan Manuel had succeeded in his undertaking, but looked upon the operation as a grave indiscretion, committed while we both were intoxicated, and I expected to die at the usual age of mankind.

Five years later my face was more ruddy, my pulse stronger, my appetite and strength doubled, and, strangest of all, the bald portion of my head was again covered with beautiful grey hair and the wrinkles on my hands had disappeared. Juan Manuel, then just turned seventy, was mad with exultation; he would spend whole hours smoking and contemplating me with all the affection and interest of an artist looking at his work.

"What puzzles me," I said, "is that constant pain in my breast."

"And me also," he replied; "I have been thinking of that for three years without being able to discover the cause. It seems to me that after five years my grandson's blood should have become accustomed to flowing through your veins."

After three more years, my face was still rosier, my health and strength greater; in fact, my wonderful vitality terrified my friends. On my hundredth birthday I entertained all the relatives who had assisted at the celebration of my eighty-fifth—that is, all save some eighteen, who had passed away.

The Empiric, meanwhile, had aged greatly, and his health was visibly failing from day to day, only in his eyes still gleamed the old expression of vivacity and satisfaction.

One morning, very early, he came to my house, and, shutting himself in my room, said to me:

"You are now convinced?"

"Yes, my friend, *entirely* convinced."

"Well, then, we must wait no longer. I feel very old, and, to tell the truth, the idea of dying does not suit me, holding, as I do, life in my hands. But there is a difficulty in the way. We cannot continue living here to repeat and exploit my discovery; they will persecute us relentlessly. It is, therefore, necessary for you to make a great sacrifice for me. Let us go to France."

"To France?"

"Yes. There we shall enjoy our marvellous conquest; there I shall initiate you into my secret. You will operate upon me, and a thousand years from now we shall be able to give an account of ourselves."

"I owe you this second life, and will obey you."

I collected some gold I had laid by, bought two good mules, and, under the pretence of paying a vow to the Virgin of Aratte, took the road to the frontier.

We established ourselves in Bordeaux, and Juan Manuel began to instruct me in his secret. My intelligence, far from weakening, seemed clearer than ever; and my eyes, which had been far-sighted, had become strong and regular. Still, sometimes I felt a vague pain on thinking I should never die. Juan Manuel was astounded; my hair was gradually turning black, and my appetite becoming daily more enormous; but his consternation was complete when I one day told him I had become enamoured of the daughter of our hostess, Mdlle. Busant, and was inclined to marry her. As all the world knows, the entire city was aroused when the news went out that I, an old man of a hundred and six years, was going to take a wife. They pursued me, caricatured me, besieged me—our house became a perfect Babel.

"Your madness may cost us dear," the Empiric said to me with great sadness. "Now that I am ready for you to operate upon me, you have doubled your age, and soon all France will be talking about you. I am profoundly disgusted with you, and feel like abandoning you and dying myself, if you do not listen to me. Will you hear me?" continued the old man, beginning to weep.

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"Yes," I replied, "I am all yours."

"Well, then, abandon this Mdlle. Busant, forget this insensate love, and let us flee from here."

"But whither?"

"To any of the American colonies; and as soon as we land, you will operate upon me."

I separated therefore from my aggrieved little lady as diplomatically as possible, leaving her a magnificent present, and, almost in secret, we set out for Vera Cruz in an English vessel. During the tedious passage we entertained ourselves by conversing amicably, always, though, upon the same theme.

"What I cannot explain," said the Empiric, "is your complete and entire regeneration. After my wonderful operation, it was natural that you should have retained your aged appearance, grey hair, baldness, etc., indefinitely, the new blood merely maintaining your actual state. But it has been exactly the reverse; you are younger, stronger, and more full of life each day."

"As for myself," I answered, "what annoys me is this complete revolution here in my breast."

"I have not forgotten that, either," said the Empiric; "night after night, I have revolved it in my brain until I felt as if I were going mad." And once again Juan Manuel resumed his discussion of his apparatus, plans, hopes, and glory.

One afternoon as I was enjoying a siesta he came to me with dilated eyes, pulled me from my bed, and dragged me on deck to a solitary spot, where, seizing me by the neck, he made a careful examination of the scar left by the famous operation. At its conclusion he fell into my arms completely overcome, saying as he wiped away a tear: "Well, we have done it."

"What?" I interrogated.

"*That cursed drink!* Horror, horror, and a thousand times horror! You are the most unfortunate of men, my poor friend!"

"What are you saying? What have you discovered in me?"

Seizing me by the hands he dragged me back to our cabin.

"At last," he exclaimed, "I have found the explanation of the pain of your abnormal respiration—of your astonishing regeneration. When, on that never-to-be-forgotten night, I injected the blood of my grandson into your veins, I was a little—a little——"

"Exhilarated, eh?"

"That's it, exhilarated. That unlucky cider! You scarcely lived, your veins were empty after the great bleeding. On performing the operation, I lanced the child in an artery, and—oh, *curse* of drunkenness!—in you I opened a vein. The action of your heart was so weak, *the rush of new blood reversed it.* Through your veins rushes arterial blood, and through your arteries venous blood flows. No wonder there were pains in your chest. Your heart and lungs act contrarily. Your circulation is reversed, and you live the reverse of all men. Your organisation is being reconstructed exactly contrary to what happens to all other men—while they journey towards old age, you travel towards infancy. You are not a hundred and six years old, you are only seventy-four, eleven years younger than I, because we must count backwards from the day of the operation. Oh, forgive me, forgive me!"

"But, man," I said, "what of all this? I feel well; what can happen to me?"

"Unhappy man, you will be seventy years old, then fifty, forty, and, after——"

"But can you not correct this?"

"*Impossible!* Your case is one that no doctor or scholar has foreseen, one no book refers to, one no man has imagined or believed possible. For you there is no scientific precedent or explanation; you are a living paradox, an absurd positive, and an impossible reality. It was a case of malpractice on my part. You will operate upon me without drinking, of course—after two days of clear water, you understand—and then we will see if, after observing, you can remedy the evil. But, ah me! it is impossible. We can do nothing but weep." And large tears flowed over the old man's wrinkled cheeks.

One night, a little before reaching Vera Cruz, our vessel foundered in a fearful tempest. The Empiric clasped the box containing his precious apparatus, I lashed myself to a spar, and for two hours we were the playthings of the furious waves.

"I can do no more," cried the poor old man.

"Courage!" I called to him, "do not die now when you are on the threshold of immortality. Courage! We shall soon reach the shore."

"Impossible!" he answered; "take it," and he pushed the box towards me.

"Hold out one hour longer," I cried, and at the same moment a mass of water buried us in an abyss. When I came to the surface, buoyed up by the spar, Juan Manuel de Ursubil and his box had disappeared for ever.

A short time afterwards a launch from Veru Cruz picked me up, together with the other survivors of the wreck.

In Vera Cruz I joined a caravan of muleteers and set out for the City of Mexico, where I purchased an estate and two servants with the gold I had preserved in a belt clasped round my waist. There, in reading and contemplation, I passed fifteen years. I never worked at anything. I said to myself: "Unlike other men, I do not need to make provision for old age, for, when I am a child, there will surely be some blind man whom I can serve as a guide. And when I become a mere infant, some good woman will be found who will suckle me at her breast." At my forty-fourth year—that is to say, the one hundred and twenty-first counting from my birth—I was strong and erect, had lost all wrinkles, my eyes were bright, and a full black beard covered my face.

My servants were wont to say their master dyed his hair, and the ladies of the quarter murmured that the Señor Bescayan seemed to grow younger daily. There was one ripe blonde of some thirty years whom I thought seriously of marrying, but always on reflection I saw the impossibility of it. "In a little time," I considered, "she will be of my age and I of hers, and eventually my children will be older than I. I cannot love, nor marry, *nor live*; my moral torment is insufferable. It is best to terminate it at once."

As the speediest means of ending my life, I set out in the capacity of a volunteer with the soldiers sent by the viceroy against the Indians. But though I always fought in the posts of greatest danger, the bullets and arrows of the enemy respected me. I could not achieve death.

After peace was made with the savages, I, with some others of my companions, remained in the forest devoting our time to hunting. Among those simple people my adventures, knowledge, and great experience soon earned for me the nick-name of "Yhokero Oytcho," which means "The Great Liar."

For twenty years I remained in these forests,

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accumulating during that time, almost without effort, a very large amount of money. But to me this great wealth possessed no value. There was only one thing which offered me any consolation, and which still linked me to my old life; this was the habit I had retained of smoking the old and grimy pipe of my Gussurrandi home.

Wearied at length by this savage life, I separated from my good companions of the forest and repaired to New York, with the intention of laying my case before the most learned doctors of the country, explaining as much as I could of Juan Manuel's apparatus and submitting, if necessary, to a new injection. I was a hundred and forty-one years old when I presented myself before the eminent physician, R. Clark Maxwell.

He, on hearing the object of my consultation, put on a strange face; examined my body, my papers, my recollections of so many years, felt the old scar on my neck, and had me make a drawing of the apparatus of the Empiric; then he shrugged his shoulders, elevated his eyebrows, pursed up his lips, stuck out his tongue, and concluded by telling me to "call again to-morrow."

I called the next day and submitted to a new examination by several other doctors whom Maxwell had called in. Then I placed myself under their care for twenty days, while they experimented upon me with various kinds of diet, bled me, and submitted the blood to analysis and countless proofs, and finally took me before a sort of medical congress, whose members, after a heated discussion, decided that I was insane, my papers recollections, and my entire history but the product of a diseased imagination, and also declared Dr. Clark Maxwell, who espoused my cause, of unsound mind. This conclusion was arrived at by means of the ballot-box.

On reaching my hotel, I found the doctor's bill. This seemed to be the only subject upon which they were unanimous; they valued their services at £5,000. After paying them religiously I found myself worse off than before the consultation, my condition weakened, my abnormal existence without remedy, and my purse considerably lightened.

I took passage again for Spain, convinced that the poor Empiric knew more than all the doctors, and determined to realise the dream of my life, to die in my own land, at my old farmhouse.

As soon as I landed, two police agents arrested me and conducted me to gaol. It seems that a travelling companion of mine, seemingly an honest man, and to whom I had loaned some money during the trip, informed the captain of the vessel that I was a notorious thief fleeing to Spain with the funds of a great American association. I protested and gave proofs before the tribunal of my innocence, but as I could produce no witnesses, and as they found me possessed of a large sum of money, justice closed her eyes, or rather opened them too much, for I was thrown into a cell, and the court began to pile up sealed documents bearing upon my case.

They would not listen to me, but sent out to all parts of the country for information concerning me; and meanwhile I remained in prison for a long—a very long—time.

At last it happened to occur to someone to order an inspection of the prisons. The gaoler, supposing me a madman or a very dangerous criminal, had placed double doors upon my cell, and served me through a hole in the lower panel. When the door was opened he fell back with a cry of alarm. He had imprisoned a man of thirty years, tall, ruddy, and with a full beard, and now found a youth of eighteen or twenty, with scarcely a hair on his face, clad in the loosely-fitting rags of an old suit of clothes. I was again taken before the tribunal, and learnt that I had been confined for eighteen years, and that every penny of my money had been expended by justice in ascertaining the truth.

The result of the investigation was that I was not myself; that the prisoner of the thousands had escaped, leaving me in his place. The gaoler was declared an accomplice of the substitution and imprisoned, leaving me at liberty, after vain endeavours to ascertain who I was.

Thus it was that on foot, almost begging alms, I returned to the place of my birth. I inquired, without telling who I was, for my sons; they showed me my grandsons, already married. After seeing my house and orchard, and all the places made dear by the remembrance of past pleasures, filled with a profound sadness, I fled as if ashamed. Had I told who I was, no one would have believed me; they would have imprisoned me or sent me to a mad-house, even my own descendants.

I returned to Madrid, and for eleven years was a servant, match-seller, news-boy, boot-black, and I do not know how many other things. During this time I continued writing my memoirs and smoking my old clay pipe. My intelligence remained, and still is, clear; but each day I write worse, and believe I will end by being unable to form a letter. In 1863 I was seven years old, or it might be a hundred and sixty-three. To-day I am six, have been reduced to less than half my total height, my second teeth have fallen out and been replaced by my first or infantile set, and my head is covered with beautiful auburn hair. My power of understanding is being annihilated, together with my strength and childish tendencies.

Walking, walking, and suffering greatly, I have returned to my native land. I say that I am an orphan and poor, and they give me alms at every house. Yet, even though a beggar, it is consoling to live beside the house where one was born. . . . . (Here the manuscript is very illegible, and further on, in letters scarcely legible, it says): It is impossible for me to hold the pen or write one letter beside another. I do not know what will become of me; I only beg that some day, when I am found and am unable to speak or eat, that I may be carried to my house of Gussurrandi, because I wish to die in it.

JOSÉ ANTON.

While I read the women had risen terrified, making signs of wonder and terror, and crossing themselves often. As I finished they exclaimed in a chorus: "Blessed St. Barbara! It is impossible to believe that! *Impossible!*"

Gussurrandi consulted me as to what he should do in the matter.

"Nothing," I said. "Quiet the women and forget all about it."

All the women dreamt that night that the Empiric Juan Manuel, completely intoxicated, had fastened his apparatus on their throats.

OSMUND WARDE.

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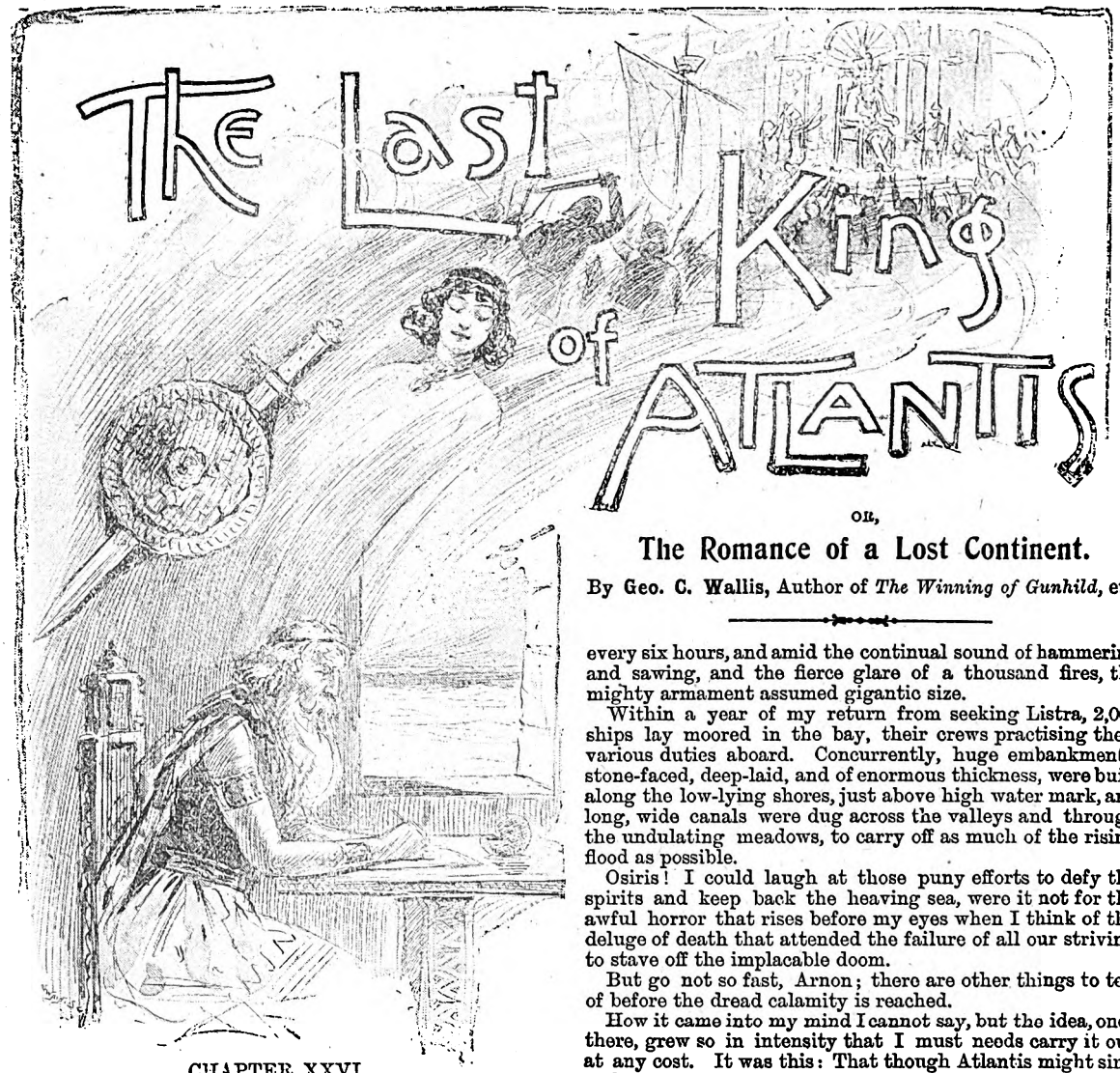

OR,

The Romance of a Lost Continent.

By Geo. C. Wallis, Author of *The Winning of Gunhild*, etc.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE FATE OF THE FLEET.

I was not back at Kronos long before I knew the extent of the sea's uprising. From north and south, and east and west, came word of the fearful damage. Harbours, villages, towns, harvest fields, and cane brakes, all round the coast, were now beneath the breakers that curled, a hundred thousand strong, upon the daily lessening shores. In places the earth cracked, with one part falling faster than the rest, and great convulsions shook the land, overturning buildings and trees, and reducing many towns to heaps of shapeless ruin.

The terror of the people grew greater week by week, and month by month, and but for the hope that I held out to them in the huge fleet I was preparing, all law would have been at an end, and riot, and plunder, and madness, would have reigned supreme.

As it was, I ruled a little longer. A king with a staunch army and a great fleet, but the king of a daily diminishing domain.

Day and night, without cessation, the building of ships went on, fresh bands of workers relieving the tired artisans every six hours, and amid the continual sound of hammering and sawing, and the fierce glare of a thousand fires, the mighty armament assumed gigantic size.

Within a year of my return from seeking Listra, 2,000 ships lay moored in the bay, their crews practising their various duties aboard. Concurrently, huge embankments, stone-faced, deep-laid, and of enormous thickness, were built along the low-lying shores, just above high water mark, and long, wide canals were dug across the valleys and through the undulating meadows, to carry off as much of the rising flood as possible.

Osiris! I could laugh at those puny efforts to defy the spirits and keep back the heaving sea, were it not for the awful horror that rises before my eyes when I think of the deluge of death that attended the failure of all our striving to stave off the implacable doom.

But go not so fast, Arnon; there are other things to tell of before the dread calamity is reached.

How it came into my mind I cannot say, but the idea, once there, grew so in intensity that I must needs carry it out at any cost. It was this: That though Atlantis might sink under the waters altogether, the highest parts would not be very far beneath the surface, and some lasting monument erected at the highest part would serve to denote its position, and keep up its memory among the nations.

And where, thought I, was a better place to build this monument than in Kronos, where the land had scarcely sunk at all? and what could I build better than a massive, cemented, stone tower, wide-spreading at its base, and tapering slowly as it rose to the sky?

My thought grew into action, and from a vacant space near the city uprose the giant tower, the mightiest work of man that ever cast a shadow on Atlantis. Round after round of the huge, curved stones was laid down, the foundation going deep into the earth, and each rising ring sloping slowly towards a summit that made men dizzy to imagine.

Storey by storey it grew, graceful in its shapely massiveness, the workers toiling at it with loving hands, raising the last memorial of their nation's place, and each stone in it was the height of a man, and the height of each stone in it was the height of a man and the length and thickness that of two.

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Temples, palaces, and great columnal arches, hitherto considered lofty, sank into insignificance as my splendid structure rose, and when the twentieth floor was reached, the top being yet wide enough to place my palace on, the very pyramids seemed dwarfed to little mounds compared with it.

Another year passed and still it grew, and even then the top would hold a cariole, circling round. And still the fleet increased, and still the sea gained on the land steadily, relentlessly, and little earthquakes shook the shores, driving the people inland till they crowded upon each other and food became scarce and disease broke out amongst them.

Some took ship without command, and left their country to seek a safer one, going where they pleased, and I knew not nor cared, and amongst these deserters, these traitors, went Nayrahn the soldier, he whom I first met before beleaguered Miropis.

In his secret heart I believe he had ever detested me, and when I gave Atris command of the army in preference to him he grumbled mightily, only ceasing when warned that 'tis a dangerous thing to rouse the ire of monarchs. So he went, taking one of my swiftest ships, the Lord Dison, who had been living at Saitè, going with him.

This news was told me by Valdo, who augured no good from the coming together of such birds of ill omen. However, I was not troubled, and said that it was well they had gone and that the land was best rid of such ingratiates as they.

'Twere needless to put down here the tale of the anxious days and restless nights of that time of dread suspense and accumulating woe, of the riots that were suppressed in blood, of the touching tributes of affection from my loyal subjects, of the devastating march of the devouring element that mocked at all our barriers and overflowed our rivers and canals, of the testing of the newly-built vessels and the loss of many by theft until I kept all ships within the Bay of Kronos, and guarded every hour; of the mutinies of the black slaves, and of the increasing scarcity of food.

It would only harrow my heart needlessly to tell of these in detail, and I would fain pass on to that awful night of doom when all our hopes were shattered, and the order that remained in Atlantis was turned at one swift stroke to frightful chaos, and the once magnificent city to a smoking, shapeless wreck.

Well I remember that eve, for we had but just returned, Briseis and I, from the peace of our rural retreat to the busy life of the city; from the calm quiet of unfettered freedom to the wearying constraint of royal pomp and the terrible anxiety of facing the ever-looming danger.

But the brief respite was well worth having, and in that fair estate, as yet untouched by the overcrowding press of population and not unsettled by the spreading panic, we could have lived for aye, deeming that sin was not, and that Nature never wore an evil face.

And now I deemed it time to put forth to sea with my mighty fleet, and search out some foreign land whereon to settle our unaccommodated thousands.

The night before the day for sailing came, and every ship anchored in the bay was manned, provisioned, and munitioned for the sea. At the first stroke on the great gong in the Temple of Life, at the first trumpet peal from the palace top, at the first red streak of dawn, the soldiers and the chosen emigrants were to move down to the bay, to embark and be placed in their proper quarters, and on board the *Ravager* I was to lead forth the mightiest armament that ever cut the waters of the Western sea.

So thought I, with comfortable pride, as, the day's work done, the preparations finished, and the people loudly jubilant, I retired to rest and sank to sleep at the side of my loving mate.

Such restful sleep was mine that night when I laid my weary head upon my pillow, and nothing was further from my thought than disaster and death. Till near midnight I slept undisturbed, when Briseis woke me, asking in a startled voice:

"What noise was that, husband?"

"What was't like?" I said drowsily. "A drunken brawler passing the palace, or a storm on the sea?"

"'Twas neither," answered Briseis. "But hark—there it is again; louder and nearer."

I listened, though carelessly, for my eyelids were heavy and my senses dulled, and hearing only a low, booming sound, as of thunder a long way off, I turned over and shut my eyes again, muttering that if the noise was aught amiss it had better stay till morning, when I would attend to it.

But Briseis shook me violently in her fear ere I was well settled for another snooze, and of my own accord I sat up, wakened and awed by a fearful crashing roar that made the solid walls of the palace tremble, and caused the very air to quiver. As its echo died away, and we sat there in the darkness, listening, with strained nerves and beating hearts and hands clasped together, there came a long, dull rumble, a heavy, rolling noise, as of the swift passing of ten thousand thousand carioles over a hollow space, followed by the rattle and crash of falling masonry, the angry surging of the sea, the piercing shriek of a fierce gale, cries of pain and terror from all directions, and a great glare of light that streamed through the casement ten times brighter than the noonday sun.

Then the darkness came again, silent and dense, for a moment, and thereafter filled with strange ear-splitting noises and fitful gleams of ruddy radiance, which latter vanished quickly as they came.

"'Tis an earth-shake, and I know not what besides," I said to Briseis, as she trembled in my grasp, "and lest we would be buried in the ruins of the palace, it were better that we stir from here. I will take you and the children into the deep rock cellars under the basement floor; there you and your maids will be safe till the throes are past."

"And what of yourself, Arnon?" she asked, as I took them through the tottering passages and down the shaking stairs, heedless of the panic-stricken rushings to and fro of the terrified servants and slaves. "What of yourself, whose life is dearer to me than my own?"

"I go to seek Valdo and Atris," I answered, "and to bear a man's part in the work that is before us. Where danger is, there Arnon will be found; but fear not, for your sweet sake I shall take heed how I go."

Deep in the subterranean caverns I left them, together with a throng of white-faced maids and ladies of the palace, and then, snatching up a light cloak, and girding "Sunderer" more securely to my belt, I quitted the rocking edifice, and set forth towards the fair garden where stood the house of Atris.

It was with difficulty that I got along at all, for the streets were cumbered with heaps of loosened masonry, with here and there a human form protruding from them, while ever and anon the ground shook like the deck of a stricken ship.

Stately houses, massive arches, graceful columns, gorgeous temples, airy pleasure-bridges, swayed and fell in the great earth-storm with deafening crash, a dun pall overhung the fire-flushed sky, and the mighty monumental tower that loomed so tall and vast above the scene of wreckage, quivered like an aspen in dusky air, and over all a grey, soft ash was falling, gently as the snow, thickening in the streets till the tread of the frightened thousands, surging hither and thither, was well-nigh inaudible, and collecting on the crumbling ruins and on all who scrambled through them.

I looked towards the harbour eastwards, and saw that the light proceeded from a round, conical hill, which belched forth flame and ash and streams of liquid fire that poured down its blackened sides with ruddy glow, crackling and sparkling as they came.

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The fierce eternal fires that burn below had forced their way through the sinking earth, and in the space of a few hours had thrown up the low mound, and was scattering death in all directions.

By Amun! how the lava rivers poured in glowing torrents down its sloping sides; how the heated liquid hissed and steamed where it met the sea; how thick and heavily fell the flakes of scorching ash, white and grey, darkening the air and choking the crowded streets.

But I hurried on after one swift glance had shown the horror that impended on the stately city, and using "Sunderer" to good effect to clear my way—for none stayed to question if I were king in that dread hour—held on through the dismally oppressive murk until I came to the house I sought. Therefrom emerged Atris as my foot was on the lowest step before the door, his hair dishevelled, his dress but half completed, and a wild look of anguish and despair upon his face. After him came Valdo, walking slow and sad, but calm even then, and carrying two swords.

"What hath befallen now, my captain?" I cried.

"Tell him, Valdo," said he, turning aside. "I was never ready of tongue, and now less ready than my custom."

"The ways of the Spirits are strange," said my Chief Minister. "In the great shock that hath laid low so much of the city, the rear of the house fell in, as thou wouldst see an it were clearer, and of those who have escaped are Atris and myself; of those who have perished are Izitla, his wife, and Phrena, their only child."

"Thy sorrow is great," I said, gently laying my hand upon my general's shoulder, and thinking of Viol and my first Didron, "but I have known the same loss—nay, felt the same grief here in this very garden—and I have lived to be happy even after that. There is work to do to-night, Atris, for all who can keep a clear head and a steady hand. Your King requires you."

"So be it," he said, taking one of the blades which Valdo carried; "now all that I loved is gone I can but die in my duty. Where go we, and what to do? To stay the pouring forth of yonder flaming fire?"

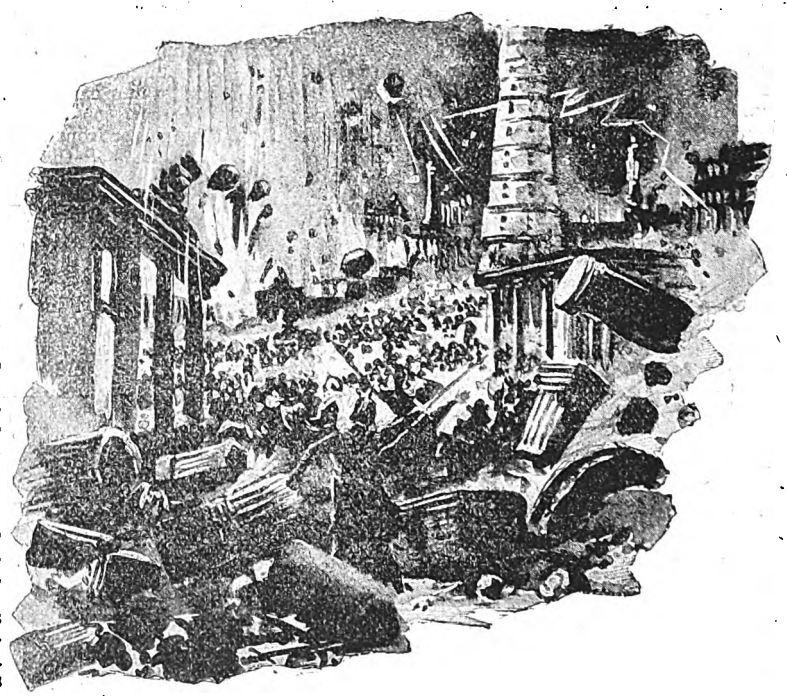
"Now you speak as a man, my Atris," I said, "though 'tis no human hand can stay that blazing beacon of disaster. 'Tis the ships we must essay to save, so that a way of escape may be left. We shall be buried fathoms deep under this deadly shower of dust unless we stir ourselves. Follow me, nor stand on any ceremony on the way!"

Forthwith we sallied out into the streets and turned our footsteps harbourwards. As we went I told them how I had secured the safety of my household, and that our first concern must be to find the *Ravager*, and keep guard at the harbour mouth lest any of the crews of the vessels should put away to sea regardless of their countrymen and women penned up in the death-bound city.

Even more difficult than it had been when I left the palace was it now to make progress, for the fast falling ash and warm dust, intermingled with nobs of flaming scoriæ, lay deep upon the ground, hiding many obstacles and pitfalls on the way.

The air was suffocatingly hot and oppressive, and, but for the flashing, ruddy gleams from the burning hill, we should inevitably have been lost in the dreadful gloom.

At last we reached the harbour-side, where the mighty fleet lay at anchor, tossing on the bosom of the agitated sea, whose very waves were crusted over with the powdery downfall. The decks and spars were grey-mantled with blinding, thickening shower, and some of the vessels had cut or broken their chains, and were standing out for the offing.



A dun pall overhung the fire-flushed sky.

"On board the *Ravager!*" I cried hoarsely, "and let us stop this mutiny at its beginning. Ho! Orlanis! bring her further in."

My Admiral obeyed, and as soon as her bow touched the quay, which was already crowded with the terror-stricken citizens, we three sprang aboard and headed the good ship for the harbour-mouth, the oars dipping fast and low into the muddy-looking sea; and ramming a couple of the miscreants as we went, we drew her up at the narrow entrance and there let down our anchors.

The other vessels, their crews having noted our action, held back on their cables, and the budding revolt was nipped ere it had time to develop. Yet it had been better had I let it take its course, for then some few of those strong new ships might have been saved from the general wreck that followed so swiftly the earth shiver and the bursting of the volcano from the ground.

I was speaking to Valdo, saying how hard a task would be ours to pull ashore in the boat and instil some method into the hurry and scurry of the witless populace—if it were wise to make the attempt—when the falling mist of dust and ash lightened, lifted, and then ceased altogether, blown far inland by a strong sea breeze that whistled through our rigging ominously, and yet with welcome freshness. The ships strained at their anchors, the sky cleared, brightening with the flush of a mellow dawn, and the fire-streaked smoke-cloud from the burning hill trailed out northward over the plain, leaving the city, with all its horror, open to the gathering light of day.

But what was that moaning sound vibrating on the rising gale? and what portended the death-like silence that succeeded, the sudden heaviness of the refreshed air, that

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heaped up banks of billowy clouds in the south? What meant that line of white on the surface of the sea, just below the skyline—a fringe of foam higher than the tallest of our masts, its curling top fretted by fierce forked lightnings, which showed as plainly as a silver pattern on a sombre shroud against the pitchy blackness that followed in its wake?

Full well we guessed its import, and foresaw the ravage it would work upon that crowded fleet. After one heart-thrill of terror and dismay—surely to be condoned—I regained my wonted temper, and clutching the lee rail, gave my orders to the crew:

"Cut cables and ship oars!" I cried. "Put her stern south and keep her there, and every man hold on for his life!"

Atris and Valdo, with a couple of brawny sailors, seized the helm and swung her half-round, the rowers pulled in their blades, and with bated breath each one waited for the coming of the great wave. For a space the dull, heavy silence lasted, the great wall of boiling water foaming nearer and nearer to the shore, and the cloud and the lightning-shattered darkness keeping closely in its rear.

Now it was hanging over us like a liquid mountain range, tipped with overwhelming snows, about to fall upon us, and I drew my breath deeply, looking shoreward and thinking of those I had left beneath the falling palace, and clutched the wooden stanchion upon which I leaned till the timber cracked in my iron grasp and the blood came to my face.

Then, with a blinding flash, a deafening roar, and a mighty shock, the surging wave was on us, its inshore edge catching our stern squarely, shivering our rudder and masts as though they were only dry branches of pine, and hurling the good ship forward and landward straight and swift as a stone from a sling.

Next moment the towering billow curled and fell with the splash and roar of a thousand cataracts, crushing the first line of the ships into a fearful wreck. But now we were beyond these, tearing onward with approachless speed, our keen iron ram shearing off the helms and oars of a dozen good vessels as we went.

Now we struck a large barque fairly amidships, and held our breath, clinging to our supports with frantic energy, as the sharp iron point tore its way through planks and crosstrees, splitting the vessel in twain, and the *Ravager* passed on. With a cry of horror from the doomed crew, which rang dismally in our ears, the stricken ship broke up, and plunged headlong downwards into the seething foam.

Soon the mighty wall of water rose below our stern again, bearing on its roaring, lightning-jagged crest the fragments of a hundred ships torn from their anchorage and sucked into the air by the force of the great wave's fury.

Just and only just in time, we were dashed against the stone-built quay, where the ram, driven like a wedge into an open space in the masonry, held us firmly as the stone itself.

Then it seemed that a deluge of boiling water passed over us, nearly taking our breath in its passing, that following it came an awful crowd of blistering steam, mingled with a rain of scorching dust, that the surging flood pouring into the burning hill, put out the fire for a moment, and next that a dense pall of smoke and ash overhung the city, blotting out the dull red glow of the rising sun.

And in the midst of the tempest of death, even through all the din of the wreckage and the hissing of the volcano, our ears caught the sound of the returning rushing waters, and, half-blinded, half-scorched as we were, the deluge passed over us once more, this time retreating seaward and quenching the fire for the last time.

And then, as though we had not had enough of horror, the great bay and its projecting promontories sank from beneath us with a sudden motion; the storm-lashed water, the black, fiery hill, and the whole of that mighty fleet vanishing from our sight in a gloomy, unfathomable gulf, our solitary vessel alone remaining, overhanging the abyss with a terrible unsteadiness. If the ram had broken or the

Into the yawning abyss.

stone-work given way, the *Ravager* and all on board must inevitably have been swallowed up with the others in that dread, black chasm.

Down, down, into the yawning abyss, the churned-up waters poured with reverberating roar; down, down, into the darkness, and just as we heard the stonework cracking and our timbers creaking with ominous sound, the flood rose up in the seething space where the fleet and the arms of the bay had been.

Through the driving murk our straining eyes caught sight of the dashing waves beneath, and then the staunch iron ram broke off short under the terrible stress, and the helmless, mastless, battered *Ravager* dropped like a stone into the raging sea!

(To be continued).

That charming serial story by Miss Winifred Graham, which ran through SHORT STORIES *a few months ago, entitled* "WHEN THE BIRDS BEGIN TO SING," *may now be obtained from this office in book form for 3s. 6d. It makes an elegant gift book.*

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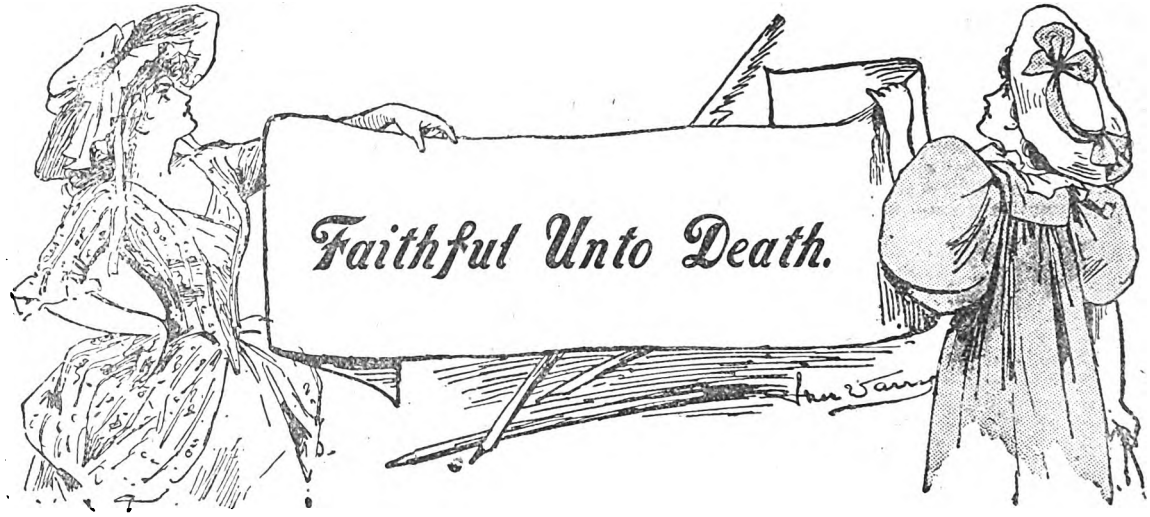

Faithful Unto Death.

"GOOD-BYE, Len."

"Take care of yourself, old fellow."

"Let's hear from you when you get home."

"Don't forget us."

"No danger of that, boys, and if any of you ever come to old Richmond, remember I live there."

The speaker is a young man, hardly thirty, and as he sits in the "buckboard," taking leave of the little crowd of men who have assembled to bid him good-bye, his handsome face and well-knit form are such as to attract attention at once.

After an absence of years, Len Hawley is going home. Out of the little frontier mining-town many another comrade has gone just as he is going—never to return. Many another who, day after day, had dreamt of going as he now is going, lay resting under the sod in the mountains around, whose crests are just beginning to be gilded with the rays of the early summer sun.

"Well, everything is on board, José, and you can drive round and pick up Mr. Dunsmier and his wife, and then turn yourself loose."

It is the stage agent who speaks, giving his last commands to the driver.

As the team of four half-broken broncos swings into the street, the young man's face burns at the words he has heard: and, in the embarrassment they cause him, he almost forgets to respond to the farewells shouted after him. He feels almost like jumping from the "buckboard" and rejoining the comrades he has left.

José stops his team at a house in front of which are already waiting a man of his own age, and a woman some years younger.

The man has the trunk placed to his satisfaction in the "buckboard," and then with his companion takes the hinder of the two seats.

With a crack of the whip, José turns his team into the road, and the weekly mail between Prescott and San Diego has begun its six hundred miles of travel over mountains and across deserts, to meet the steamers of the Pacific.

Two, at least, of the passengers—Len Hawley and Mrs. Dunsmier—are thinking how unfortunate is the coincidence that has thrown them together to make this long journey in company. As for Mr. Dunsmier, he merely thinks how unfortunate he is to be forced to make it at all.

In the past, when Mrs. Dunsmier was simply Mamie, the admitted belle of the little frontier settlement, she and Len Hawley had been lovers. That was before the man who now sat beside her had come into her life.

As for Dunsmier himself, Hawley had never liked him. There were very few who did. Selfish, overbearing, and unscrupulous, Dunsmier loved money as he loved nothing else on earth. To him it was a god, to be deified and worshipped above all else.

It was his boast that with money anything could be obtained, and when he had first begun to visit Mamie Manning, during her engagement to Hawley, his arrogant display of wealth, as well as his ill-concealed contempt of those of less means, had incensed Hawley so much that the quarrel that broke the engagement ensued, and Mamie had been pleased to charge it to his jealousy.

After that, it was easy for her to defend Dunsmier; and then the drifting apart had commenced, until she stood at the altar as Dunsmier's bride.

From that day Hawley had determined to leave the country. He had gone for the last time to look at the house which, during their engagement, Mamie and he had planned, and of which they had superintended the building.

As he went from room to room, he thought of the many times they had gone through them together, planning for the future, and dreaming dreams that were never to be realised.

For the last time he had locked the door, and, taking the key from it, had cast it from him. That had been months ago, and the house still stood vacant. The "buckboard" passed it in the early morning.

The mountains have been left behind, and the road is now in the valleys where the Spanish bayonet, the flat green leaves of the prickly pear, and the sage-brush have taken the place of the pines and the oaks.

The travellers have only stopped twice—to change horses and to eat the noonday lunch. The sun has passed the meridian, and is beginning to sink towards the west. The occasional cracking of José's whip and the muffled fall of the horses' feet in the heavy dust as

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they trot along, are the only sounds which break the stillness of the desert.

Heat, and thirst, and silence. Everything is parched and brown, and the yellow earth, where it is not covered by sand or dust, is baked and cracked waiting for the winter rains that are yet months away. Even the rocks, rough and jagged pieces of lava, are black as if burnt with the heat.

The three passengers sit in silence, longing for the next station, Camp Date Creek, more than ten miles away.

It will, at least, be a relief to reach it, if only to refill the canteens that have become so warm.

Suddenly José rises to his feet, and looks long and earnestly to the left, where half-a-dozen clouds of dust are in the air.

He drops to his seat and says simply, "*Indios.*"

Then he stops the horses, and, handing the reins to Hawley, jumps down. Drawing his knife, he steps to the back of the waggon, where the heavy trunk, placed there in the morning by Dunsmier, is lashed. As he is about to cut the ropes that tie it to the "buckboard," Dunsmier divines his intentions, and turns on him fiercely.

"No, no, you mustn't throw that off! There's bullion in it," he says, and, leaning over, he catches José's hand to prevent him from cutting the ropes that hold it.

"*Los Indios son Apachés!*" (The Indians are Apachés!) says José, his face growing paler as he notes how rapidly they are approaching while the "buckboard" delays.

"I can't help it; but you mustn't lose my trunk," said Dunsmier. "Can't you make him understand?—I can't speak Spanish," he asks, in a pleading voice, turning to Hawley.

It is the first time they have spoken since before the marriage, and, eyeing him contemptuously, Hawley interprets into Spanish what he has said; and José, thinking that he, too, is asking for the preservation of the trunk, leaves it, and, jumping into the waggon, takes the reins once more into his hands, and begins to ply the whip.

Hawley looks to see that his rifle is in order, and as he does so, he glances at the pale faces of the husband and wife behind him. As for himself, he is indifferent.

Dunsmier has begun to throw into the road the mail-bags. His wife looks at him as if to urge him to cut loose the trunk, but remains silent, as if afraid to ask it.

"He would sacrifice even her to save his gold," Hawley thinks bitterly.

The horses jump under the lash. They, too, have scented the danger, and seem to know that the race is one of life and death. The smooth, straight road stretches far ahead towards where it begins to climb the narrow pass through which it crosses the mountains.

It is at that point that the Indians are trying to intercept them. The cruel rawhide quirts, with which they are cutting their horses, seem to be always in the air, while the long, black hair of each streams out far behind.

They are slowly gaining.

Hawley raises his rifle, and fires at an Indian in the leading group.

A little puff of dust marks where the bullet strikes the ground to the left. No use to waste cartridges firing from the "buckboard." One can only wait until all hope of escape by flight is gone, and then fight until death comes. In fight is their only hope.

José has dropped from the seat to his knees, and leans far over the dashboard, that he may reach the farther with his whip. It whistles through the air as it falls on the flanks of the leaders and wheelers, leaving, wherever it falls, great welts that show plainly through the dust and foam that cover the horses! It cuts the thin, delicate nostrils of the wheelers, and raises ridges on the flanks of the leaders, while he shouts at them with fierce Spanish curses.

No wonder the horses grow wild with pain and fear, and dash madly on.

It is only a question of time before they are overtaken, unless something intervenes to save them. A broken trace, a cracked spring—and then a few shots, a rush by the Indians, and all would be over; the next passer-by would find their mutilated bodies lying in the road, amid the rifled trunks and mail-bags.

No one speaks.

They are almost at the point where the narrow road begins to climb the mountain pass.

Behind them, less than a mile away, come the Apachés, their horses flecked with foam.

As soon as the "buckboard" begins to ascend the mountains, it will be madness to drive as they have driven on the plains. To do so might throw them into the cañon hundreds of feet below, or break the vehicle against the boulders that line the roadside.

Already José is getting his horses in hand, as if to check their speed. Here the Indians have the advantage, and their sure-footed mustangs, unhampered by harness or waggon, will soon overtake the "buckboard."

There is one chance. Hawley, whose face is white and stern, says, facing Dunsmier and his wife:

"Dunsmier, from the top of the mountain it is hardly three miles into the next station, Camp Date Creek, and you and I, by getting out here, can keep back the Apachés until the waggon gets away. If we only hold them back for ten minutes it will be enough, for by that time the waggon can reach the top of the mountain, and then there will be no chance for the Indians to overtake it."

As he faces Dunsmier, for the first time for months he again looks into the eyes of the woman he has loved. How blue they appear in the white, pale face. They look pleadingly into his, and his heart is filled with pity for this woman who sits there in silence, with death so near.

Her eyes never leave his face, as if longing for him to speak, if only to pardon the past. All the old love comes back to him, and he feels as if he would give his life to take her again in his arms.

As he thinks it can never be, he puts the thought from him, and in its stead comes the pain that she has brought to him.

"Can't we escape without?" asks Dunsmier, his lips ashen with fear.

"No," answers Hawley, with bitter contempt, and a new hatred, born of the man's cowardice, in his heart; "it is the only chance for your wife, and we had better do it right ahead, where the climbing begins, and where we can get in among the boulders."

"Couldn't one do it? I should be willing to pay anything if——" Dunsmier ceased abruptly, as he caught the stern look in Hawley's eyes.

"You coward! Are you going to come with me or not?" asks Hawley, as he rises in his seat, rifle in hand.

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The horses, under the close rein that José is drawing, have slightly slackened their speed, for they are already in the pass.

"Yes—yes, of course I will go with you," comes from the white lips of Dunsmier.

Hawley reaches within his breast, and taking from it a purse, hands it to the woman.

"Mamie, this is all I have," he says simply; "see that my mother gets it. You know her address."

Mrs. Dunsmier stretches out her hand as if to prevent him from leaving the "Buckboard."

There are tears in her eyes as they meet his, and her voice trembles as she implores him not to throw his life away for her sake.

Almost before she can frame the words, he leaps from the waggon into the road.

In an instant he gathers himself together, and looks towards the "Buckboard."

Dunsmier is still seated in it, holding his wife as if to prevent her jumping from it. A wave of exultation seems to pass over Hawley as he sees this man, who was to have stood by him in facing the Apachés while his wife escaped, thus leave him to his fate.

For an instant the "Buckboard" almost stops, as if in response to some command from the woman; while Dunsmier, who seems beside himself with fear, has taken from the driver's hand the whip, and is striving to lash the horses into greater speed.

Hawley smiles to himself bitterly.

He can yet overtake the "Buckboard," or, easier still, he can hide among the boulders and brushwood that line the cañon from the Apaches, and after they have passed, easily make his escape. Better to let all end here.

She would escape, and would know that is was to him she owed her life.

He took off his hat, and threw it into the air, as a signal for José to drive on. He does not even look where it falls. He will never need it again, he thinks, as he crouches behind a boulder.

He raises his rifle, and fires at the foremost of the Indians who are galloping into the cañon.

In an instant they slip from their horses, and after firing a few shots at him, begin to climb the mountain side.

This is what he expected. They will climb the mountain side, and probably shoot him in the back from above; but before they can do so and remount their horses, the "Buckboard" and its passengers will be beyond pursuit.

He had feared that they would rush in on him, and after a few shots all would have been over with him, and his life would have been thrown away in vain. It was for this he had wanted Dunsmier to come with him. Two might do what one could not.

Enraged at the escape of the "Buckboard," through the delay he has caused them, the Indians fire volley after volley at him, until the cañon echoes so with reports that he cannot tell from which direction the shots are coming. He looks up towards the summit to see if any of his enemies are above him, and, as he does so, he catches a glimpse of the "Buckboard," with a woman's white face looking downwards. An instant and it is gone. Thank Heaven! He knows they are on the mesa now, and she is safe!

A straight level road is before the waggon, and at its end they can see, against the dark side of the mountains beyond, a cluster of adobe buildings, with a flag floating high in the air over the parade ground. The horses are again running as if mad, with the stingings of the whip that seems to be for ever falling.

The shots in the cañon die away in the distance.

A mile is passed, and then another.

Already the wild race had been noticed at the post, and, while they are still a couple of hundred yards away, the ringing notes of the bugle are sounding above the hard breathing of the horses and the rattling of the "Buckboard;" for, to the old soldier in command, such driving means that there is succour needed.

As the "Buckboard" passes the sentinel, a few words explain all; and, while the foam-covered team still stand trembling from their wild race, a troop of cavalry dashes by at a gallop to the rescue of the man who is facing such odds in the cañon.

The woman who has come in with the "Buckboard" watches the blue-coated men with staring eyes.

The husband approaches her, and places his hand upon her arm, as if to lead her into one of the houses, out of the sun.

She shakes his hand off, without looking at him.

The few women in the post gather round, and urge her to compose herself, but she does not seem to heed them. She can only stand and watch the cloud of dust which marks the progress of the cavalry.

They have crossed the mesa, and, as they disappear from the horizon beyond, she knows that if the Indians are still there, the cañon will soon be filled with the smoke and fire of the cavalry carbines.

An ambulance, in which is seated a hospital steward, approaches where she is standing, to receive orders from the commander of the post. When she hears that it, with its escort, is to follow the troop of cavalry, to bring back the dead and wounded, despite all that can be done, she takes a seat in it. When it returns, she is clasping to her breast the form of the man who had stayed behind in the cañon.

As the ambulance stops, a little crowd gathers round it, and looks into it curiously.

"He was shot to pieces, and dead before we got there," the sergeant explains.

H. ABBON.

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STRONG ENGLISH WORDS.

When a person says "I suffered excruciating pain," he expresses a fact in the strongest words afforded by the English language. The word "excruciating" comes from *crux*, a cross, and signifies an intensity of agony comparable only to that endured by one who undergoes the barbarous punishment of crucifixion. There are some diseases which, for a time, cause pain of this acute and formidable nature. To find a relief for it, when possible, is at once the impulse of humanity and the studious desire of science. Two brief examples may indicate what success is attending the effort to both comfort and cure cases of this kind.

"Nearly all my life," writes an intelligent woman, "I have borne the burden of what appeared to be incurable illness. I always felt heavy, weary, and tired. My appetite was poor, and after eating I had a *cruel pain* at my chest and between the shoulders. Frequently the pain was so intense that I was impelled to loose my clothing and walk about the room. My nerves were disordered and impressible, and I was, consequently, easily disquieted and upset. My sleep was habitually bad, and I seemed none the better for spending a night in bed. Eating but little my strength waned of necessity, and I came to be very weak. For a long time I got about feebly and with difficulty.

"In August, 1887, I had an attack of rheumatic gout, which gave me the most harrowing experience of my life. The complaint took its usual course and refused to yield to the ordinary treatment. Through the partial failure of the liver and kidneys dropsy set in, and my legs and feet became puffed and swollen. I suffered *excruciating pain* and was confined to my bed for *thirteen weeks*. Remedies of every description were tried, but to little purpose.

"My brother, visiting me one day, said he had been cured of an attack of dropsy by a medicine called Mother Seigel's Syrup. I got a bottle from Mr. Hewett, the chemist, in Seven Sisters Road, and after taking it felt a trifle easier. I continued taking it, and soon the pain and swelling abated. I could eat without pain or inconvenience, and by a few weeks' further use of the Syrup I was not only free from any local ailment, but felt better than I ever did in my life before. Since then I have enjoyed continuous good health, taking a dose of Mother Seigel's Syrup occasionally for some transient indisposition. You are at liberty to publish my letter. (Signed) (Mrs.) Elizabeth Rogers, 42, Plevna Road, South Tottenham, London, September 13th, 1895."

"In January, 1892," writes another, "I had an attack of influenza, and was confined to my bed for *eighteen weeks* thereafter. Subsequently I was very weak, and could get up no strength. What little food I forced down (having no appetite) gave me *excruciating pain*, so that I was afraid to eat. I came to be exceedingly weak and had frequent attacks of dizziness. I was worn almost to a skeleton, and none thought I would recover.

"In June, 1892, Mr. Smith, a friend of ours, recommended me to try Mother Seigel's Syrup, which I at once procured of Mr. George Coombs, the chemist in Hucknall. After taking it for only one week I felt greatly benefited. I could eat better, and food ageeed with me. Continuing with the Syrup I grew stronger and stronger, and soon felt even better than before I was attacked by the influenza. You are free to print this statement if you wish to do so. (Signed) (Mrs.) Ruth Halliday, 44, High Street, Hucknall Torkard, Nottingham, March 19th, 1895."

Intense pain may or may not indicate urgent danger to life, but it is hard to bear, and very exhausting just the same. In cases of rheumatic gout (Mrs. Rogers) the pain is caused by a poisonous acid in the tissues, originally produced by the decomposition of food in the stomach—indigestion or dyspepsia. The same poison acting on the liver and kidneys creates the other symptoms mentioned. In the case of Mrs. Halliday the ailment was dyspepsia, which in the first place *invited* influenza, and then remained to torment her.

It is best and easiest to *prevent* pain by using Mother Seigel's Syrup *immediately* when the slightest illness appears.

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

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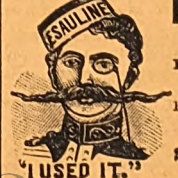

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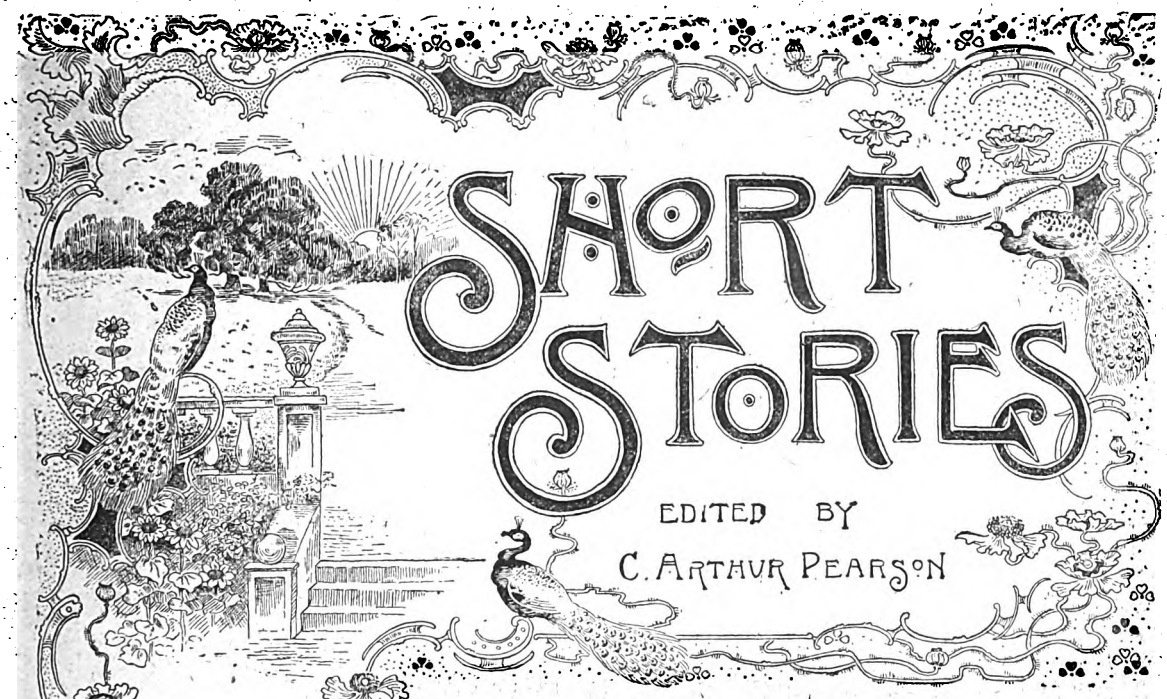

No. 419.] For the Week ending January 9th, 1897. [1D.

A FEAST OF FICTION

A COPPER COIN.

FOUR nights in succession I saw the same scene depicted in a dream, and to a man who very seldom indulges in such luxuries, I may as well admit it upset me more than I relished. In the oft-repeated dream I saw a woman lying in bed, her arms stretched full out at right angles to the body. She was asleep. I could just distinguish that she was young and of surpassing beauty, when a dark visaged individual with a Vandyke beard would come on the scene in that mysterious manner characters have in dreams, and deliberately stab the woman. So realistic was the whole scene that I could not only see the blood spurt, but actually feel drops splash against my face.

At the time I write about I was just beginning to make a name for myself as a criminal lawyer, and was busy working up a rather intricate case. I naturally tried to dispel all thoughts of the ugly dream, and attempted to cheat myself into the belief that it was overwork and a disordered liver; but, try as I would, I could not make headway with my work, and on the fifth day was plodding away at business that ought to have been done, but had got delayed owing to my inability to grasp the pros and cons. Determined to conquer the morbid sensation, and work off arrears, I stayed at the office somewhat later than usual. I dismissed my two clerks and gave instructions to the commissionaire who came on duty at six o'clock, that I was not in to anyone.

Between half-past six and seven this man tapped quietly at the outer office door. I went to see who was there, rather ruffled in temper, too.

"There's a young lady downstairs, sir, says she saw you were in your office, and would like to see you on most urgent business. She says she's called several times to-day, but your clerk always said you were out."

I remembered that Joynson had told me about some lady having called, and not being in a position to turn up my nose at clients, I told the commissionaire to show her up.

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Although I have gained a good position, I always have said that my physical powers were predominant, but I was more than thankful that I happened to be seated as my client was shown in, else I'm certain I would have collapsed, for she was no other than the victim of my dream.

Mechanically I pointed to a chair, and then leaned over the papers strewed on my desk, to gain a minute's respite to pull myself together.

"You wished to consult me about some urgent matter, I think," I eventually managed to remark.

"Yes, I must apologise for coming so late, but I called twice before, and my case is urgent."

"Don't mention it, I regret being out and giving you so much trouble. Will you explain your case, and no doubt I can help you."

"I am an artist's model—not through choice, but for bread-and-butter. About three weeks ago I answered an advertisement that said a sculptor required a model. After two interviews, terms were arranged, and an agreement drawn up. I have posed eight times altogether, the last time was a fortnight ago yesterday. I have declined to go to his studio again because of his behaviour, and he now threatens me."

"What is the sculptor's name and address?"

"Anton Barittz—his place is 18, Vandor Street. He has the whole house from the first floor up. His studio is on the top flight."

"Quite so. Now, what was the nature of the agreement? Did you get a copy of it?"

"No, but it was to the effect that I was to pose so many times, partly draped, for a sovereign each, and twelve times without the drapery for two pounds each. I have posed six times draped and twice without, but absolutely decline to go there again."

"Has he paid you each time, or does he owe you anything?"

"He always paid me as I was leaving."

"And now, tell me, what is the nature of the threat he holds over you?"

"He says that if I don't fulfil my contract his work will be spoilt, and he will kill me; and a foreign-looking man follows me about wherever I go, and I am frightened."

"Ah! Well, if you will leave me your card, I will communicate with you. I don't think he will molest you after receiving the letter I shall send him to-night."

I was so relieved at her going that I didn't even look for her name on the card for some time, but when I did, saw printed thereon:

"Anton Barittz, 18, Vandor Street."

I wrote to the gentleman, stirring him up, but had to do so carefully, not having the lady's name. I got no reply, nor did I receive any communication from the artist's model, and as the days went by, and the dreams no longer disturbed me, the whole matter gradually faded from my recollection. It was only a temporary forgetfulness, for a couple of weeks later I heard the newsboys calling out:

"Horrible murder of an artist in Vandor Street."

I invested in one of the halfpenny evening papers that gloat over the morbid details of a murder, and read that Barittz had been murdered while lying in bed—stabbed through the heart.

Everybody knows that dreams are supposed to work out exactly contrary; it was only natural, therefore, I should at once conclude that the mild, persecuted model had committed the crime. It was no business of mine, however, and I kept my own counsel, but never remember taking such an interest in a murder as I did in this one. The police, despite all their efforts, were completely at sea. Nothing like the vestige of a clue could they get. Even the knife or dagger with which the crime was perpetrated had been removed. The servants were all out at the time, and the whole affair was shrouded in mystery.

Occasionally I thought of telling the police about the visit of the model, but on second thoughts I decided not to, as if anyone were arrested and charged with the crime I would in all probability have either to defend or prosecute. One thing, however, a mere curiosity perhaps, but I could not resist going to see the murdered man. I felt convinced in my mind that I would find in him the dark-visaged, Vandyke-bearded man of my dreams. I had no difficulty in getting access to the chamber of death, but to my astonishment, almost dismay, the dead man's features bore no resemblance to the man of my dreams. He was fair, at least for a foreigner, and wore a long, silky, brown beard, as unlike my imaginative creation as could be.

On my return to the office, my clerk informed me that a gentleman was waiting to see me—his name was Franco Barittz, brother of the murdered man I had just seen.

I cannot say that I was much surprised to find my visitor the real murderer of my dream, and every nerve of my body quivered with excitement as I acknowledged his bow.

"I am, as no doubt your clerk has told you, brother to the M. Barittz who was murdered the day before yesterday—and I have called upon you to ask your aid."

He spoke perfect English, and if my life had depended on my correct answer, I couldn't have told to what nationality he belonged.

"I'm afraid the police can give you more assistance, monsieur, than I possibly can—at present at any rate," I cautiously replied.

"Ah, but the police are such dolts—and I hear that Mr. Lawrence is spoken of as a remarkably shrewd man in criminal matters."

I smiled at the forced compliment, wondering when the real object of the visit would be made known, and what nature it might take.

"I have already made many discoveries," M. Barittz continued. "First of all, I learnt that some lady, an artist's model, had visited you here late in the evening. That she had complained of receiving insults from my brother, and of being threatened and followed, or in some way molested. Now, Mr. Lawrence, the whole of that is false. This Miss Rose Mayton never entered my brother's house, nor did she receive any communication from him. As a matter of fact, family matters have occupied his time so much lately that he has practically neglected his art altogether."

"Then why should the lady come to me with that story—what benefit could she derive from making such a statement?"

"We will find that out in time. In the meanwhile, I have two very sharp detectives of my own working on the case, and I hourly expect to hear that they have traced this model, and that brings me to the object of my visit. Will you tell me the address the lady gave you?"

"That is more than I can, no matter how anxious I might be to tell you, because instead of leaving a card of her own, she left me one of your brother's."

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I noticed just the least twinge of the muscles of his mouth as I gave him the last bit of information, but took care not to let him have any suspicion that I had noticed it; but from his reserved manner afterwards, and his persistent twisting of the conversation to commonplaces, I gathered that he doubted me. Promising to call next day he left me, after offering both a fee and profuse thanks and apologies.

My own work was fated to interruptions that day, for I had no sooner got comfortably settled than another visitor was announced.

"Who is it this time?" I asked rather petulantly.

"Ex-sergeant Banner, sir; says it is most important."

"Well, Banner, have you taken to work again?"

"Yes, sir, and the rummest job I was ever on."

"Ah?"

"Yes, sir, it's this artist murder in Vandor Street. A tall, dark chap, with a pointed beard, comes to me the other night an' says: 'I'm the brother of that murdered chap in Vandor Street; I believe he was killed by a woman who is an artist's model.' He gave me the particulars and finished up by saying: 'Find that woman for me and I'll give you a hundred pounds.'"

"A good offer, Banner."

"You bet I was on it at once, sir, but now if you please, I'm being shadowed myself; and an hour ago a chap puts this note into my hands."

He gave me a scrap of paper upon which was written:

"Content yourself with doing the work you will be paid for."

"What have you been doing, Banner?"

"Well, sir, you know that when you're on a case you must look into everything, and leave nothing to chance. Now I don't like the face of that man Barittz, and seeing him last night talking in Oxford Circus with a tall woman in a dark veil, I got suspicious, and shadowed him, and overheard a little of their conversation. I heard him tell the woman that he would do for that girl as soon as he found her, and she replied about getting something first. I didn't hear any more because some fellow came and jostled up against me—I suppose he was a spy in Barittz's employ."

"Pity you didn't shadow the woman."

"I did, Mr. Lawrence, and she went into the house in Vandor Street."

"It's developing into quite a mysterious case, Banner, and I think it might almost pay you better to watch the principal movers in this little drama, than keep at a search I'm afraid will, or might, be futile."

"Don't you think that woman exists, sir?"

"Oh, yes, but I think they have a reason for sending you on a wild-goose chase. Leave the finding of this model to me, you keep an eye on Barittz, I'll supply the necessary funds. You might also find out what you can about the occupants of 18, Vandor Street."

I gave Banner a blank cheque, in case of emergencies, and he departed, no doubt determined to do or die, but I verily believe when he left me he hadn't an idea which way to turn. I felt convinced, however, that whatever was to be found out, Banner was the man to succeed. He had been one of the smartest men in the Criminal Investigation Department, and only but for his health breaking down, which necessitated his retiring, would have risen high in the force. For one thing, he looked a born fool, and as innocent as any country yokel, and he was a splendid linguist.

Three weeks went by and I neither saw nor heard anything of Banner—indeed the whole case seemed to have died, the evening papers couldn't get enough to make a paragraph of, and I dare say those who did think of the case at all, shrugged their shoulders and sagely remarked that it was only another instance where the police were beaten.

The first intimation I received informing me that the case was still somebody's business was a peculiarly worded telegram, from Charing Cross office.

"British ensign will be hoisted at three o'clock promptly."

I knew it was from Banner, and surely enough at three o'clock he was duly announced.

"Well!" I exclaimed as that worthy entered my room, "you have been wandering all over the globe, I should think."

"I've been to Paris, Hamburg, Moscow and Petersburg, sir, thanks to your foresight in giving me that cheque."

"Do you know, Banner, it never occurred to me to find out whether you had used it or not, but I have been very busy." Which was quite true.

"The night after I left you, Mr Lawrence, I was giving some instructions to my pal when out comes Barittz with a bag and rug, jumps into a hansom and drives off. There wasn't another cab about, and I felt real wild. I ran into Cromwell Road, hailed a cab from the stand and told him to just let her hum to Victoria."

"Why Victoria; did you hear the destination?"

"No, sir, but it was nearly half-past seven, and I knew the continental train left Victoria at 8.50. Sure enough his nibs was there. The next question was money—then disguise. I had about six shillings in my pocket and it was then a few minutes past eight."

"Rather awkward, Banner! What did you do?"

"Well, sir, I'll admit I felt somewhat in a hole, but I meant going by the train, money or no money. I knew the fare to Paris was 18s. 7d. I then remembered that I knew a man who kept a small inn at Newhaven. I ran to the booking office, found the fare was 4s. 8½d., and of course the rest was simple. I got my pal to rig me out both with toggery and funds. I kept a watchful eye on Barittz in Paris, but it was in Hamburg where I learned all about him. Of course, I don't know for certain, but I'm almost sure that he is an emissary of some Nihilist or Socialistic society, carrying gems of information about, principally through the medium of pieces of sculpture. One item of importance I did find out, and that was that Barittz never had a brother."

"Then I wonder who the murdered man was and why he was killed?"

"My idea is, sir, that he found out something about Barittz, and he, on the principle that 'dead men tell no tales,' put an end to him."

"As likely as not."

"Well, sir, I'm off to see what's been going on while I've been away. I'll come back and report."

About an hour afterwards he returned.

"We've found the artist's model, sir, and so has Barittz; at least my man says he saw one of his spies hurrying off towards Vandor Street as soon as he was certain of the girl."

"And what do you propose, Banner?"

"If we're sharp, sir, we might get there first and hide in the room and hear all that passes between 'em. The lady is willing, sir, so long as we promise that no harm shall come to her."

Banner and I immediately left for the house of Miss Mayton, and were lucky enough to arrive first. We had hardly spoken ten words, however, before a sharp knocking at the door announced the arrival of Barittz.

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Banner hid behind a screen, and I got myself concealed beneath the heavy folds of some curtains, close to the sofa, upon which Miss Mayton was reclining.

"Ha, ha! my fair traitress, I've found you at last, have I?" savagely remarked Barittz as he bounced into the room.

"I am certainly here, and have been for some weeks. What is it you want this time?"

"You know what it is I want, you she-devil, and I mean to have it or kill you here as you lie."

"That wouldn't save your life, M. Barittz."

"No, but I could die calmer and more contented if I killed you first."

"Supposing I told you that I hadn't got this little bauble you make such a fuss over, what then?"

"I should say mademoiselle lied. Listen, you took that little copper coin—the insignia of my position—not knowing its value; already one man has been executed by the League for not having it, and unless I produce it to-morrow night in Hamburg, I shall be assassinated, too. Now, what did I do to you? Merely tried to kiss you. Many a woman in your humble position would have felt honoured by such an attention from an artist like me. You, however, in your stupidity, struggled and fought, and while doing so detached a trinket from my watch-guard. I didn't miss it at first, but when I did I appealed to you, feeling sure that you had it; I say I appealed to you to give it to me. I even offered you a large sum of money for it. You pretended you had not got it. Then you ran away and hid, and despite the efforts of the spies I put on to trace you, I failed to hear of your whereabouts until now. I ought to have given M. Carnac the symbol of office the day before the murder, but as I had not got it. I couldn't. He was executed in my house by order of the Nihilist committee for disobeying orders. That is one murder on your soul. Do you want to have another?"

The woman sat upon the sofa, and as she spoke looked radiantly beautiful.

"You lie, M. Barittz. I saw you stab that man while he was asleep."

"*Sacré!* Then you were in my house were you, you *canaille* of an English spy. You shall never spy on me again—die like a dog!"

From where I peeped behind the curtains, I could just see the bright gleam of some steel instrument poised ere descending on the helpless woman, when I heard a sharp ping—and the next second felt something wet splash against my face. Banner had shot the man dead.

The Russian police, when acquainted with the facts, informed me that Carnac was a spy in their employ, and that they had made every arrangement for capturing Barittz on his next visit to the Continent.

My dream was realised after all, but I never anticipated that those four nightmares would be the means of my finding the loveliest and dearest woman on earth for a wife.

C. ENGLAND COWAN.

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The Thames Police. E. A. DU PLAT.
Illustrated with drawings and photographs.

Tales of the High Seas. CONAN DOYLE.
(COMPLETE STORY.)
No. I.—THE GOVERNOR OF ST. KITT'S.
Illustrated by WARWICK GOBLE.

Which is the Cleverest County? J. HOLT SCHOOLING.
Illustrated with diagrams by the Author.

How the Proceedings of Parliament are Recorded. A. A. TAYLOR.
Illustrated with photographs.

Queen of the Jesters. MAX PEMBERTON.
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No. I.—THE HUNGER OF FERDINAND DAUBERVAL.
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Captains Courageous. RUDYARD KIPLING.
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Is Palmistry Dependable? ROBERT MACHRAY.
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Illustrated by C. CLARK.

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THE room was a large and magnificently appointed one in the palace of Gatsclinia. An immense fire burned in the elegant porcelain stove—it was almost red hot—a table littered with pamphlets and papers, also a couple of arm-chairs were drawn up before it; two men stood there, one old, but alert, stern, uncompromising, General Sergius Kalitzin, chief of the Imperial Military Police of Russia. The other, young, handsome, bearded, resolute, Alexander, the Tsar.

The Ruler held in his hand a pen, and presently he sat down and dipped it in the ink. He wrote rapidly some twenty lines and handed them to the General—this is an Imperial method not uncommon of replying to communications of a certain nature.

Kalitzin took it and read, his face darkening with excited blood as he did so, his brows contracting, his lips quivering, his powerful hand shaking.

"Your Majesty!" cried he under his breath, "I implore of you, for the sake of the Empire, your father's sacred memory, your oath, your religion, do not venture on such enterprises!"

Alexander remained silent, merely shaking his head with a smile and pointing to the slip of paper containing his autocratic instructions.

"But, sire, I implore pardon!" The old man bent his knee to the young one. "If you persist in these investigations yourself, death, death is positive. I tell you, as I have just rehearsed to you, the Nihilists are a power we must dread; we must crush, stamp out, burn, torture, strangle, for it is strong, and these of whom I have told you are keen as daggers. They have sworn; they are sharp; they have taken the oath, and if your Majesty persists in the course here outlined, I, the chief of the Military Police of the Empire, confess to you that I may prove of no avail."

The Tsar again smiled as he extended his hand to raise the General, at the same moment taking from him the slip of paper, lighting it at the fire, and holding it until it crumbled into a feathery nothing.

Kalitzin rose and bowed; he knew that the secret orders—so secret as not even to be spoken lest the very walls should possess ears, and always burned lest trace of them might fall into treacherous fingers—must be obeyed, yet there was trouble, and even sorrow in his countenance as he quitted the presence of his Imperial master, and hastened to give directions in connection with the Sovereign's proposed visit to Paris, for which place he set out on the following morning. Kalitzin went also; in these days he was never more than three feet distant from the Tsar, with eyes watchful as the hungry tiger's, and a scent for danger as acute.

Once arrived in the French capital, it would seem that the precautions for the Russian safety were redoubled, and amid all that hubbub of fêtes, shows, pageants, balls, exhibitions and reviews, there stalked grimly the living, breathing, palpitating purpose of the followers of Prince Krapotkine, the determination to kill the Tsar.

Who was to do it?

General Kalitzin knew, he and three others; one, the person who was to do it; another, the accomplice; the third, the victim himself; these were all, and yet Alexander smiled on and went about apparently in unconcern.

When a man is guarded as he was, it is not hard to smile with unconcern.

To-night he sat in the superbly decorated box prepared for him at the Opera. Calvé was singing *Carmen*, but with a motion of weariness he leaned back, and concealing a yawn, withdrew behind the shadow of the silken curtain.

With a languid hand he picked up his *lorgnette* and surveyed the house. Glancing to the right, round the circle of boxes, his gaze was suddenly arrested as the gaze of a man is arrested but once in the course of his life.

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By the sight of a woman's face.

This woman was dressed like a Spanish woman in a Velasquez portrait, in clinging robes of dull browns and fawns, a little cap of the same hues sat on top of her head; her hair was dull yellow, and it was worn in a curious tangled mass with wing-like loops over her ears; her arms, in their tightly-puffed sleeves, were very long and slender, and she held them crossed innocence-fashion on her breast between them On the glint of bare ivory-flesh shining pallid next the velvet of her bodice, hung, on a magnificent golden chain bestudded with topazes, an aggressively large and exquisitely painted miniature of the Tsar of Russia. The woman's face was far from beautiful; far more than beautiful; it possessed that divinity of difference from all the other women's faces Alexander had ever seen which made it for him the most extraordinary bewitching and alluring face in the world. She was pale with a radiant pallor, features a bit Tartaric, straight yet flat full lips, pink as coral, eyes under thick, light eyebrows shining like the topazes that blinked on her bosom.

She looked like a moth, a strange note of wildness subdued her and held her prisoner, fluttering maybe in irked enforcement amid this sea of other tame women in their blue and green and red and yellow and white, and multitudinous rainbow fallals.

Her companion, she had but one, was a man, or a boy —it was difficult to determine which—a being at any rate of the liveliest temperament, with jet black curls worn clustering around his bright vermilion painted cheeks; evening clothes, it is true, but with much savagery in the way of a scarlet satin cravat, jewelled pins, chains, rings, and a bracelet of wrought iron, delicate as a girl's bauble, encircled with a pigmy watch, set in diamonds between its links.

This fat, white, braceleted hand was raised most of the time holding an opera-glass, which, at the moment that the Tsar had levelled his and caught glimpses of the moth-like girl, the painted boy handed to her, whispering:

"Take the glasses and look at him well."

She took it, and the rays of light from the electric globes above them in the centre of the ceiling became entangled in these two glasses, held by the Tsar of Russia and the moth-like girl; a spark as of lightning's fire was emitted by the contact, and both the man and the woman dropped their arms as if struck by some power stronger than either of them.

Alexander of Russia sat bolt upright now, with no more languidness in look or mien, without removing his eyes from the woman's face, he motioned with his hand that Kalitzin should approach him.

"Who is that, Kalitzin?" asked the young man in a bewildered voice, "that girl yonder in the third box to the right, all ivory and yellow and brown, with something like tiger's eyes shining round a picture on her breast. Find out for me, if you please."

General Kalitzin paused a second before he either bowed or replied to his Sovereign; a strange hesitancy was in his manner, something between fear and irresolution.

But an instant, however, and then he inclined profoundly and ventured to glance at the Tsar with an expression of interrogative curiosity on his wrinkled face.

Alexander felt it, and without turning his head he deigned to answer the unasked question with a sigh and an imperious inflation, briefly thus:

"She attracts me."

"God forbid!" exclaimed the old soldier under his breath, and with such a terrible fervour that the Ruler half-turned in his seat with something like a frown.

"Your Majesty," whispered Kalitzin with a shudder, "that is *she*."

"Yes; *that is she*," murmured Alexander half to himself, as once again his gaze is riveted on the face of the moth-like girl.

"That is she."

It is what every man, however humble or mighty, says to himself one time in his career.

Kalitzin looked at his master, his face betraying as he looked a sense of horror, anxiety, and consternation.

"Your Majesty," he continued, "that woman is the woman I told you of before we quitted Russia, to whose lot it fell, when lots were drawn, to be the assassin of your Majesty; she glories in the fate; she is here in Paris masquerading as a Russian patriotic aristocrat, so as to watch you and strike her blow at the most convenient moment; she wears ostentatiously on her bosom a miniature of your Majesty; the watchword between her and her accomplice, that red-cheeked boy who poses as her brother, is: 'When the Tsar is Crowned.' Your Majesty, now, now, now, that I am able this night to reveal to you the details of the dangers which encompass your person, I implore of you, cut short your stay in this accursed Paris. Let us begone to-morrow, nay, this very night! for nowhere—and it is I who say it—is your Majesty safe except in Petersburg." Kalitzin's voice trembled with suppressed emotion as he spoke.

The Tsar turned again half-way towards him, his countenance, notwithstanding the thick beard and moustache, was ashy pale, his eyes widened and staring.

"Her brother?" was what he said.

"God knows! most likely her lover, if such women have hearts," returned the amazed soldier impatiently. "Petro Petrovitch, one of my most trusted men, came to me this morning with the information I have just imparted to your Majesty; at three this afternoon his dead body was found in the Seine, at St. Cloud!"

Kalitzin stares at his royal master in blank astonishment, for on the Tsar's face there is not a trace of even interest as to the fate of Petro Petrovitch, and his eyes are again fastened on the moth-like girl. They are like snakes; their holes are invisible to mortal vision, their fangs are deadly, the poison they use is undiscoverable the devil himself is their aide-de-camp. "Oh, your Majesty, permit me—and forgive me for the persistency—permit me to issue your command to the suite for a secret departure from Paris this night; a diplomatic feature is easily arranged for your going; one has not too much to dread from the displeasure of a Republic." Kalitzin's large hand grasps the arms of the Ruler's chair like a vice.

"What is her name?" asks Alexander, in a curious, hushed voice.

"She goes by the name of Princess Kara Chreptovitch," is the response.

"And she lives?"

"At number 28, Cours la Reine."

"And you know nothing more than you have said?"

Kalitzin shakes his hoary head.

"Nothing as yet; we shall have to spill a man's blood each day in sacrifice to their diabolical methods in order to find out."

"She has baffled you, then?" remarks the Ruler.

"I confess it," returns the old man. "All I know I have told your Majesty; those two wretches yonder laugh

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in derision when the words: 'When the Tsar is crowned' reach their ears; and they and every one of the three millions—yes, your Majesty, three millions—of Nihilists scattered over your dominions and over the world, laugh in scorn when they read those words, when they hear those words now burning on the lips of the civilised globe; they swear that the coronation shall never take place; they swear that yonder fiend, with your image blazing on her breast, will strike you dead."

"Ah—h!"

It is something between a gasp and a sigh that parts the Tsar's lips as at last, his eyes still fixed, as were hers on him, on the moth-like girl, he says:

"Kalitzin, you may issue orders for a secret departure from Paris to-night, immediately on our reaching the hotel after the opera."

"Your Majesty, thank God!" The tears almost glisten in the old soldier's eyes.

"Once in Russia, once in Petersburg, far from that wretches' den, Geneva, and I am master of the situation, safe sure. But not here, not here, within range of that ivory-looking woman."

Alexander gives a dismissing nod.

During the last act he sits, still watching the moth-like girl, and now, too, the painted boy.

* * * *

By two o'clock, that is about three hours after the last notes of *Carmen* had died out in the opera-house of Paris, five carriages and several horsemen, twelve soldiers of the Russian Imperial Guard, twenty gens-d'armes and a miscellaneous following of grooms, servants and luggage quitted the Hotel Continental for the Gare du Nord.

By the time the cavalcade, which aroused not the slightest interest in the few revelers, street-sweepers, and early market-men whom it encountered, had reached the railway station, the dim film of violet irridescence, humid harbinger of the dawn, stole up the horizon, crept across the rim, curled in the tops of the chestnut flowers, wakened the birds, drew the scent from the earth and grass on the Cours la Reine, that matchless avenue, and at last, violet melting into golden arms of risen sun, night marrying with day, the Hymen-torch of their nuptials struck the gilded cupola of the Invalides, and kissed the sky into rosy joy at birth of yesterday's to-morrow.

At one of the windows of number twenty-eight, a white hand opened the lattice, disclosing the moth-like girl standing in her night apparel, breathing in the pungent air of the unsullied morning; the lace at her bosom fluttered back with the breeze, revealing the golden chain, another miniature of the Tsar; her dull locks were pushed behind her little ears and fell forlornly in two rough braids to her knees; she put her hand up and shaded her eyes from the glint of fierce coppery light which struck them from the dome of the Invalides; she bent listening, for a sharp sound, as of the click of a cane on the pavement, attracted her; she leaned to look out, and beheld the painted boy coming glibly in the *porte-cochère*. Then she withdrew, and pulled a dressing-gown of red cloth over her white one, pinned up her braids and glided to the door of the room, opened it, and, meeting him on the landing, drew him in with anxious and imperious gestures.

She looked like a moth.

"Well, my princess!" cried he, with a fawn's grin on his fat face as he ran his plump fingers through his well-oiled curls and cast the yellow *béret* on the sofa.

"Hast no word for me after my absence? no welcome?"

"Liof Mouravief, I have told thee a million times I will have no words or thoughts for thee or any other man until this human vampire"—the moth-girl holds up the Tsar's miniature as she speaks—"lies dead by this hand. What hast thou found out since I parted from thee at the opera-house? I am in a fever of impatience; time hangs heavy on my hands until I can set the trap and catch the Imperial ermine. Oh, now that I have seen him, gazed upon his flesh and bone, my

The moth-like girl standing in her night apparel.

nerve is steadier for the deed, my heart happier, my whole being the more intensely, irrevocably absorbed in the fulfilment of my oath."

The moth-like girl is pacing up and down the room, her hand is clenched on the Tsar's miniature as to cause the gems encrusting the frame to cut into her tender fingers. She pauses under the chandelier; the candles are still lighted, albeit spluttering to their end; she raises her arms above her head, her eyes uplifted as she goes on:

"Oh, my Russia, my Russia, my frozen, bitten, whipped, oppressed country! bleeding and sweating at every pore with the thin blood of starved, tortured men, women and children; howling with the million cracked, parched throats that choke in the mines of Siberia; with the million backs breaking back into mother earth under the sting of the lash that goads you because you have dared raise voice against the despot who sits upon a throne of gold; my people shrieking with your more than million tongues to me, to all of us, to save, to rescue, to avenge you; I would stick spurs of steel red hot into my very heart did I now not quiver with impatience for the moment when I may enmesh, crush, kill the tyrant whose hand is against and never for you!"

She has dropped upon her knees, still holding the Tsar's portrait up before her.

The painted boy looks at her, shrugs his shoulders, sighs, and then, crossing to the open window, he closes it sharply, blows out the dying candles, lights fresh ones, picks up a sponge, wets it with Colonge and water and washes the rouge off his face; he also removes his curls, so black and loving, leaving himself thereafter a man, pale, golden-haired, sombre, with eyes of blue fire, devouring in speechless greediness the beauty of the moth-like girl.

He approaches her now, and lays his hand upon her head.

She shakes off his touch, and in a harsh voice she cries out:

"Liof Mouravief, I tell thee no man shall touch me until I have accomplished my mission. What news have you? Where sups he to-night? How soon wilt thou snap the pretty bracelet on my wrist? How soon may I set the watch in motion and throw it—away? Tell me?"

Liof Mouravief turns moodily off.

"Alexander and his suite quitted Paris two hours ago; their——"

"What! and the deed not yet done!"

"Their destination Petersburg. The information brought them by that wretch Petrovitch—by-the-way, he is dead—has set them agog. Kalitzin's eyes were upon us."

"Us! and has he found ways to discover that I am aught save the Princess Chreptovitch?"

"He has; while you were staring at the Tsar last night the Tsar was staring at you, and no doubt Kalitzin at his elbow was identifying you for his master's benefit."

The girl pauses.

"Well, what of it? We will never come in contact. If he has returned to Russia we can do the same; our passports are unimpeachable; our credentials perfect; and, by the living God"—she again holds up the miniature—"I swear that if these eyes once again behold the tyrant they shall not quit their gaze till his are sightless in death.

"Liof!" she whispers, "we have wasted too much time already; do you make the preparation for our departure on to-morrow night, and before I live another hour without it, give me the bracelet, here, clasp it on my arm, let me eat, sleep, move, knowing that the little dainty bomb, light as a diamond, easily thrown as a flower, is where I can reach it, use it at a second's warning."

Liof shook his head angrily; he loved this woman and was biding his time to make her his wife.

"I will keep it until the time comes," he says sternly; "that is part of my duty."

"You will give it to me now," she says, gritting her white fox teeth together, and adding, with that celestial smile upon her face, which such women have: "If you love me, as I am sure you do."

He transferred the death-dealing bauble to her wrist, blessing fate for the chance to finger that adorable white arm.

That evening the Princess Kara Chreptovitch received as usual on Thursdays. A great crowd of clever people were always to be found in her salon last winter, you will easily remember if you chanced to have been then in Paris; personages, many of them in the social, literary, art and dramatic worlds, others to fill in; clever men and women, too, but indistinctive, each glad to be there in the house of the original Princess, who was so enthusiastic in her patriotic devotion to her Tsar.

She stood there now, her yellow hair once more looped

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in those strange little wings, and sprayed and woven into meshy mosses at the back; a little coronet of topazes glimmered on top of it, and she was dressed in the national sarafan, the loose, square-necked, sleeveless gown of yellow satin worn over a full-sleeved yellow caltin chemise, thin woven yellow sandals on her feet and long yellow gloves on her hands; the miniature of the Tsar shone on her bosom, and the painted boy, posing cheerily as her brother, flitted near her.

There was music, something half barbaric, sensuous, sweet, sounding out from the rear of the ante-room; everyone was chattering with much laughter and gaiety, when the servant entered and approached Kara Chreptovitch with a card and a great heavy heap of purple sweetness on his salver.

She took the card, and the scent of the violets greeted her as if one with the lusciousness of the music.

She read the name.

"Alexis Tzof," and beneath was written: "A fellow-countryman, a stranger, a sympathiser, begs the honour of permission to pay his respects to the Princess Kara Chreptovitch."

In an instant the painted boy was beside her; he had read the card, thrown it in the fire, the flame of suspicion which is the familiar of such people leaping to his face, and the violets went after the card, he standing between Kara and the fire, not to be surprised if an explosion should follow.

But none did.

Nothing worse occurred than that the stranger, possibly tired of waiting in the ante-room, now entered the salon, and made his way directly to the hostess.

Alexis Tzof was a young man noticeable above others, not on account of his height, which was great, or the splendour of his physique, or the perfection of his toilette, or his beauty, but for his atmosphere, which was unique, commanding, demanding and obtaining pre-eminence wherever he was. He was fair, with a face as smooth as a girl's and as strong as a lion's whelp, beautiful white teeth and eyes of tourmaline; they rested with an expression most caressing upon Kara's face, and instantly she felt a shiver of curious thrillingness pass over her; he bent his head, took her hand in his large, strong, white one, raised it to his lips—as he did so the rays from a cat's-eye which he wore upon his finger met those of the diamonds surrounding the Princess's portrait of the Tsar—the flash seemed electric—it smote Kara and half blinded her; she stood nerveless, passive, resistless, while the newcomer, well-watched by Liof Mouravief, spoke.

What did he say?

Such things as all women love to hear. That unseen he had gazed upon her, followed her, shadowed her, unable to obtain presentation, he had at last in desperation resolved to this means of gaining her acquaintance; that he was amply prepared to satisfy her and her brother as to his identity and qualifications and so forth and so on.

Kara Chreptovitch listened as one listens in dreams that are sweet, dreading the awakening; thereafter all the evening her guests float before her as misty creatures, films dwarfed into nonentities by this surpassing being so full of strength, possessiveness, power, newness.

The painted boy was uneasy and alert; he thought he detected beneath all this paraphernalia a secret emissary of Kalitzin's, and he was very wary.

As one by one finally almost the last of the company were leaving, he contrived to convey as much to Kara.

She started, rubbing her eyes as a child disturbed in its refreshing sleep.

The last person has now quitted the salon except Tzof; he too was at the door, but he turned with a quick and gallant motion and was beside Kara; the painted boy, keen for mischief, had his hand on his pistol in his little pocket, while the stranger spoke.

"Excellent, sir," Tzof said quietly, while a faint smile of amusement played upon his full red lips, "delay a little; I assure you with me you will have no use for your weapon."

The painted boy still held it fast, however; conspirators are firm believers in the universality of conspiracies.

"Madame," with a profound inclination before the Princess, "I have noted both here and everywhere that I have had the honour to behold you, that you wear the portrait of the man they call the Tsar of Russia," an inflection a trifle sad, a trifle supercilious strokes the ears of his two listeners.

"Madame, I have of late been in Geneva;" his voice lowers to a mere whisper as he glanced round cautiously, for at the mention of that Swiss city both Kara and Liof could not forbear a start of bewilderment and apprehension.

"There," continued Tzof, "where you frequented not

Kara Chreptovitch listened as one listens in dreams.

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Falling on his knees before her.

long since, I, too, have been familiar. I mean in the small shops of Serge Prost in the Rue Sturm."

The eyes of Kara and Liof dart against each other like the play of criss-cross lightning.

"The words you have heard I, too, have listened to." Now his tones sunk even lower, and articulation is scarcely more than mere breathing.

"When the Tsar is crowned," murmurs Alexis Tzof, fixing his peculiar orbs on the face of Kara Chreptovitch.

The painted boy takes his hand from his pocket.

The Princess shudders as her glance is dissolved in his, absorbed by his, shudders with the perfect heretofore unknown bliss of actual vital, divine loving.

And the three sat there with close-drawn curtains late into the night, even until once more the dawn pricks all the east with rose and quenches the stars and reawakens the world to its new round of labour and sweat.

* * * *

It had been planned by the Princess and Liof Mouravief to quit Paris for Petersburg the night following the Tsar's sudden departure; it has been told how anxious was Kara Chreptovitch to go, to place herself at once within reach of her intended victim.

Very well; but they did not quit Paris. So often does it happen that the desire of yesterday burns out in the flames of to-day's fire.

The painted boy was for departure.

The Princess made excuse of not being well; he stared; she was unresponsive, languid, indolent, lying at length on her lounge, full of absent-mindedness, with lowered lids.

Alexis Tzof came again that evening, and while she should have been journeying post-haste to the frontier, she languished amid warmth, downy cushions at her feet and head, listening to the music of his voice.

The painted boy played the piano until he was tired, and then he went out in the little garden and smoked, peeping in at the windows in jealous rage at these two, complacent, quiet content, if for no other reason than that they had at last met, where it now appeared to them that they must have been waiting to meet since the world began.

What did they speak of?

Naught but themselves, naught but that supreme theme which Adam and Eve, making primal awakening in one another's arms, found sweeter than any other ever to be mentioned again.

This went on for a fortnight.

Always the Petersburg journey put off; always Alexis Tzof each day and evening too. Always the painted boy a little dull, but watchful and patient till now.

He raged up and down in front of her, his light eyes swimming in tears of anger and passion.

"I tell you it must stop. I will not have it; you are betrothed to me; you are bound by a sacred vow to end the tyrant. You! once most eager to plunge the knife, to throw the little bomb there on your wrist. You! forsooth must linger on fêting and pleasuring here in Paris. Why? Because a tall man is become your hero, your slave and your master, both in one. Kara, if you do not come at once to Petersburg I will kill your lover and denounce you to the leaders at Geneva."

Lashed into a fine fury, the painted boy in his little yellow *béret* and his evening clothes—for it was now nine o'clock, and guests as usual were expected in the Princess's salon—dashed up and down, smashing a few cups and saucers *en route*.

Kara looked at him; how impotent, how silly he was;

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she shrugged her shoulders and united the iron bracelet round her arm with a smile. At last she said:

"I promise you, as the tyrant, within forty hours from to-morrow either he or I will be no more." She sighs, for Alexis Tzof has stolen all the tang and smart and bitter out of her oath. Yet she knows it must be kept.

"And me! me! What of me?" almost shrieks the painted boy at her ear.

"You!" the Princess stares at him. "You can do nothing, be nothing, say nothing, until this bracelet has done its work. Run away," she says lightly, "and play the piano and compose yourself; I hear footsteps."

The guests came; they ate and made merry.

The guests went, all save Alexis Tzof.

Kara Chreptovitch stood leaning against the marble statue of Aphrodite, her hands were clasped in front of her, her arms so encircling the portrait of the Tsar. She was looking down; she trembled; she knew that the wonderful divine moment of life had come; she knew that unspeakable joy stepped across her threshold, entering in, and giving her new birth as Tzof drew near to her.

"Kara," he whispered, "Kara, beloved one, it is something with you as it is with me, is it not? Speak, sweet love, and say to me that thou lovest me one tithe as well as I love thee? Oh, 'tis not love, my worshipped lady," cries he, falling on his knees before her and reaching up to clasp her slender waist. "It is idolatry; for thee I would throw away a world; for thee I would resign all that men crave; for thee honour, life, kingdoms, principalities; all weigh as nothing. Speak to me, my dove, one word!"

"I love thee—but my oath, my mission too long have tarried; this night must see me on the way to Petersburgh to fulfil my destiny."

"And thou canst talk of destinies when this moment makes our destinies one! Beloved, dost thou think I will allow thee to separate from me, risk thyself, who dost now belong to me?" Tzof holds the moth-like girl close to his breast with both arms about her, his eyes fixed upon her face in unutterable tenderness.

A sound comes up through the silent house; it is the creak of the painted boy's boots; the Princess breaks her bonds, stands wildly like some hunted wild thing, beaten by cruel dogs into a last unavailing court; the boots of the painted boy creak nearer.

"Oh!" cries she. "Away from me; tempt me no more, or I cannot withstand. My oath must be kept. Alexis Tzof, if I accomplish my mission and live, then I am thine own; if not, farewell."

Tzof approaches her.

"Then," he says simply, standing in the flicker of the firelight, his hand on her shoulder, "keep your oath now, this moment, for I am Alexander, the Tsar."

Smitten, blinded, stunned, she cowers at the base of the statue of Aphrodite, no whiter than she.

"Thou!" she murmurs, creeping slowly to him. "Thou!" And the music in her voice is of heaven, so touching, so tender, as she draws down his beardless face to her bosom and strokes and caresses it with cold, trembling little fingers.

"I, even I," he says, holding her to his heart.

"And I have now had thy image on my heart for eighteen long months and not to know thee when I saw thee bare of beard." All these few moments she is caressing his face, his throat, his hands.

The boots of Liof Mouravief now creak on the staircase.

The moth-like girl rises.

She drags herself the whole length of the very long room. Alexis Tzof crosses down to the other end to meet the painted boy.

He meets him.

Neither sees the woman.

She wrests the iron bracelet from her wrist, and snatching the bomb, light as a blossom, from its jewelled socket, she raises her arm and drops it, snapping, at her own feet.

A sharp report, a dull thud, two weak woman's hands clasped on the portrait of the Tsar on her bosom.

Death lay between the two men who knelt at either side of Kara Chreptovitch.

"When the Tsar is crowned," mutters Liof Mouravief, turning over the miniature and reading the five words so engraved on it, and then beginning to weep and pray.

But Alexander the Tsar said nothing, only raised her, and laid her on the sofa, and kissed her on the mouth, and went out of her house, and back to his own country and to his own people.

FRANCES AYMAR MATHEWS.

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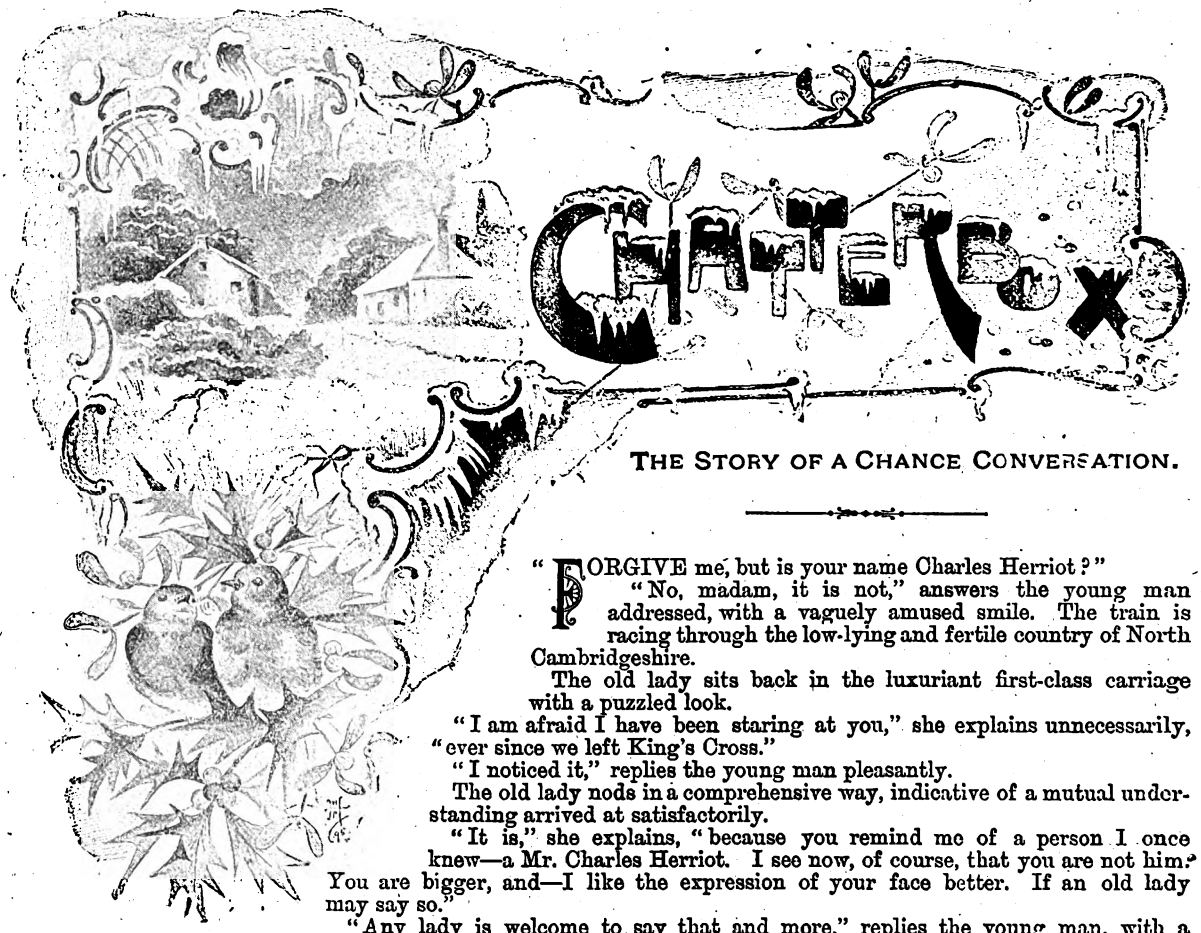

THE STORY OF A CHANCE CONVERSATION.

"FORGIVE me, but is your name Charles Herriot?"

"No, madam, it is not," answers the young man addressed, with a vaguely amused smile. The train is racing through the low-lying and fertile country of North Cambridgeshire.

The old lady sits back in the luxuriant first-class carriage with a puzzled look.

"I am afraid I have been staring at you," she explains unnecessarily, "ever since we left King's Cross."

"I noticed it," replies the young man pleasantly.

The old lady nods in a comprehensive way, indicative of a mutual understanding arrived at satisfactorily.

"It is," she explains, "because you remind me of a person I once knew—a Mr. Charles Herriot. I see now, of course, that you are not him. You are bigger, and—I like the expression of your face better. If an old lady may say so."

"Any lady is welcome to say that and more," replies the young man, with a twinkle in his melancholy eyes. He folds his newspaper and courageously battles with an air of resignation, which, nevertheless, is quite obvious. No more of *Pearson's Magazine* for him, he reflects.

"I am very glad it is only a resemblance. Dear me, what a pace this train is going at! I hope the engine-driver is sober. I am glad you are not Charles Herriot, because I do not approve of him. He is a young man I dislike intensely. A young man whom, if I were a man instead of an old woman, I should want to kick."

"If I can be of any use to you——" begins the young man, and is interrupted by a laugh which is wonderfully silvery still, despite the silver hair.

"No thank you. I dare say that fate will do it for me. He has retired from the precincts of my life—for ever, I hope. He never did me any harm. Why is that engine-driver whistling so annoyingly? Do you think he sees a train in front?"

"I hope not."

"No, he never did me any harm, but he spoiled the life of the dearest girl I know, just to gratify his own vanity. Oh, the vanity of you men!"

The young man has opened the paper again. He is studying the heading of the article on palmistry with a vague smile.

"He was rich—disgustingly rich—and I suppose he fell in love with the dear girl according to his lights. She refused him. I admire her spirit still when I think of it, for she had everyone against her. Even her own mother, the very person who ought to have saved her from him. Oh, some women are horrid! Have you a mother?"

"Yes."

"I am glad to hear of it. I am a very old woman, so you need not be afraid of my curiosity. I never repeat anything—never gossip—never, never. That whistle again! I am glad your mother is still alive. She must be proud of you. Respect her. I always tell young men that. I should like to warn young women—against their own mothers. But it wouldn't do. I never make mischief. I know a great deal about my neighbours. But I am a well—a perfect well."

The young man is looking up from his newspaper. The twinkle is in his naturally melancholy eyes again.

"I was telling you about Charles Herriot—wasn't I?"

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"Yes."

The melancholy eyes drop suddenly to the magazine again.

"Well, he could not get her by fair means, so he tried—the other thing. He engaged the mother—horrid woman—on his side. He persecuted poor Edith till her life was a burden to her. He did mean things. He spread reports that they were engaged. A 'cad,' I call him. Did you say anything?"

"No; I only coughed."

"But you have no business to cough. What can your mother be thinking of? Now, you take my advice and buy some black currant lozenges, or perhaps it's stomach?"

"Perhaps!" admits the young man gravely.

"Well, you know, there was somebody else all the time—the poor girl was breaking her heart for him. I know it; she told me. I cannot remember his name now. Reginald—Reginald somebody or other. The great booby believed what he heard, and never moved a finger. The girl could not go and tell him that she loved him—or it was some idiotic idea of honour—not spoiling sport, or whatever they call it. Men are so stupid. So he went away—to the Cape, or somewhere. It was only the day before yesterday I saw her, poor girl. She looked quite old—it was four years ago—but very sweet and pretty. She is living with her horrid mother in town. The train is going to stop, isn't it? I hope they will get another engine-driver."

"I hope so," says the young man gravely.

"Oh!" goes on the chatterbox, "I remember now who he was. His name was Herriot, too—Reginald Herriott—his younger brother. What station is this?"

"Peterboro'."

"But you are not going to get out?"

"Yes," answers the young man gravely, collecting his possessions; "I am. I am going back to town from here—by the next train."

"I am sorry," says the old lady graciously. "We were having such a pleasant journey. But perhaps we may meet again."

"I hope so," says the young man from the platform.

"Oh, the train is going. Good-bye. Come and see me in London; my name is Faneuil—Lady Faneuil."

"And mine is Reginald Herriot. Good-bye."

"Oh!"

MADGE MORRIS.

Key to Jumble Story No. 24. ***See page 62.***

1	91	52	36	101	20	65	37	121
2	71	49	13	78	109	77	116	98
3	83	47	105	58	106	23	114	122
4	84	96	99	17	119	34	73	81
11	62	12	48	57	15	117	97	88
31	19	79	16	102	72	33	112	74
25	40	29	100	44	111	94	110	5
14	69	32	63	21	115	41	103	6
18	24	9	68	51	64	27	95	30
43	66	10	42	53	86	118	59	55
54	26	75	50	107	60	87	76	
70	92	93	90	108	80	104	113	
85	45	61	35	28	7	39	120	
22	46	82	38	89	8	67	56	

OWING to the Christmas Holidays, this number of *Short Stories* goes to press before the result of Jumble Story No. 25 is known. The names of the winners will appear next week.

Whose Hand?

A £10 Prize.

In the New Year's number of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE, now on sale, appears a most interesting article, in which

NINE TYPICAL HANDS

are delineated by an expert palmist.

George Alexander, Sir Walter Besant, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, a Typical Criminal, the Lord Chief Justice, Dr. Parker, G. R. Sims, W. T. Stead, and Sir Evelyn Wood have been good enough to allow us to take photographs of their hands, and from these photographs the palmist made her delineations.

The process was this: Photographs of (say) Mr. George Alexander's hand were taken in four or more different positions, and forwarded to the palmist, who "read" the photographs *without having any idea as to the ownership of the hands.* The same method was pursued in each case.

Thus, altogether, we had collected forty or fifty hand-photographs. Fifteen of these were selected haphazard and embodied in the heading of the article. We now ask you to say to whom each of these hands belongs, and we offer a cheque for £10 to the first person who is successful in this task.

Competitors have the following information to guide them:

(1.) Each of the fifteen hands depicted in the heading belongs to one of the nine persons above mentioned.

(2.) The palmist's readings and a hand of each of the nine persons is reproduced in the article.

From the lines and other features of these nine hands, and the palmist's readings, an accurate idea of the characteristics of the various hands can be obtained, and it will thus be possible to distinguish the ownership of each hand. An outlined numbered diagram is reproduced herewith.

Competitors are requested to write on a sheet of paper their name and address, and the numbers one to fifteen down the left-hand side of the sheet, and opposite each number the name of the person who is, in their opinion, the owner of the corresponding hand.

- - Buy a copy of PEARSON'S MAGAZINE with all - - haste and set your wits to work.

The first person sending the correct - - solution takes the £10. - - - - -

The diagram at the head of this notice must accompany each attempt.

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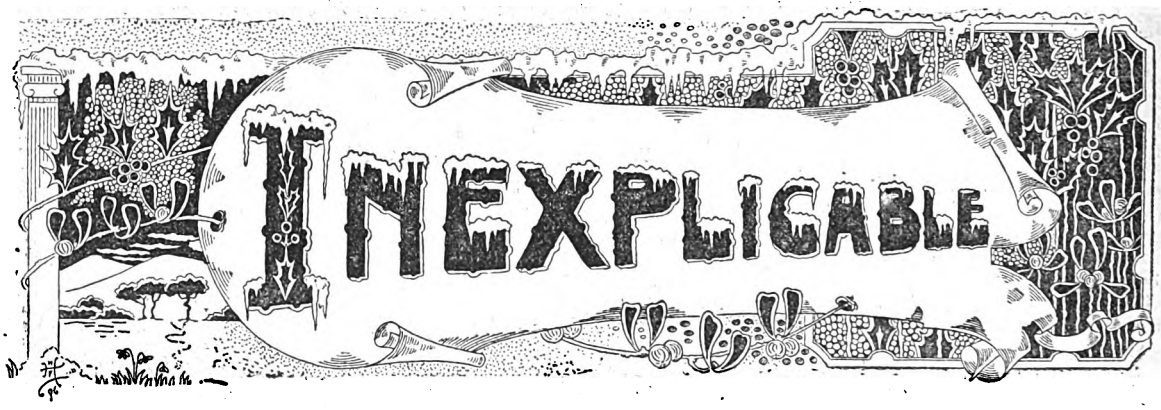

IN an interval of a busy professional life, I sit down to record a series of remarkable events.

Remarkable they unquestionably were in themselves, but more especially so from the manner in which they came within my experience. Though the part I played in connection with them was, from the first to last, little more than that of a spectator, yet it will, I think, be granted that there was something strange, something inexplicable, in the manner in which that part was again and again thrust upon me, and always, it would appear, to qualify me for helping to bring about a certain result.

In the month of December, many years ago, I came up to London to spend my Christmas. I was but nineteen, and had never set foot in the great city before. My desire to see it was intense, and to gratify this, a friend—Jack Halford we will call him—had asked me to share the grimy hospitality of Barnard's Inn during pantomime time.

"You must not expect to live luxuriously, or to fare sumptuously," he had written. "The inn of Barnard is severe as to lodgment, and scaly as to catering. It is congenial to the tastes of the Eremite rather than to those of the Sybarite; but lendeth itself not unkindly to him who would 'see life.' Come up on the 23rd. By that time I shall have returned from a few day's idling in Kent, for which I am now preparing."

Acting literally on the terms of my friend's invitation, I started from Derbyshire on the 23rd, and arrived in town, cold, hungry, and wretched, long after dark that night. Knowing nothing of London, I took a cab, and drove direct to Barnard's Inn. On my arrival a porter confronted me, and I asked for my friend.

"Out of town. Down in Kent."

That was his answer. "But he expected me," I urged. "I could, of course, get admission to his rooms?"

The porter shook his head. He had not the keys. The laundress was at home—no doubt a-bed. He had received no orders to admit anybody to Mr. Halford's chambers; in fact, it would be more than his place was worth to do so.

Eventually he consented to take charge of my luggage, and, on his advice, I set out in search of a hotel where I might get a bed for the night.

There were plenty of hotels in Holborn; but as the street was agreeably bright and lively for the hour, I thought I would walk a little and take my choice of them. Perhaps I was not without some faint hope that I might encounter Halford, who I felt little doubt would return that night. At all events, I wandered away, got out of the main streets, grew bewildered, and eventually asked my way of a man who turned out to be the boots of what he described as a most respectable inn, one of the oldest in London, where, he assured me, I could receive every accommodation.

The house was unquestionably old. It had also a dingy and forlorn aspect; but I was hungry and tired, and glad to avail myself of supper, with the prospect of a bed to follow. So I allowed myself to be enticed into the place, and along a dark passage, into a wretched hole of a room at the back, which had the sole merit of being unoccupied.

It had a floor that shelved down towards the great fireplace, wide and draughty, and a low ceiling, shelving also, and threatening to fall, in spite of the two huge beams which sustained it. A century of smokers had contributed to the indescribable odour that pervaded it.

Two candles in frames burned against the walls, and there was probably an idea that the room benefited from a lamp in the passage, which could be dimly descried through certain panes of ground-glass in the room door, which bore the legend "Coffee Room"—quite as a matter of fancy, seeing that coffee had obviously never been drunk there within the memory of living man.

A poor supper, a glass of something hot, and to bed—to bed in a close, stuffy back room, with a look-out comprising the back windows of a row of houses stretching away further than I could see. Never had I seen so villainous a room.

Tired as I was, sleep seemed impossible; but I threw myself on the hard bed in the hope that it might at least give me rest. In that hope I put out the light; but no sooner had I done so than my brain, warmed into activity by the glass I had taken, began to exert itself in distressing speculations. What, I asked myself, was the character of the house into which I had ventured so imprudently? Was I safe? Should I be robbed, ill-treated, murdered?

For a time I rendered myself utterly miserable through these fears and misgivings. Then I began to laugh them down, to attribute my unpleasant impressions to an ignorance of town life; and so by degrees I grew calm and inert, and sleep came upon me unawares. I closed my eyelids and sank into the most refreshing of slumbers.

From this blissful unconsciousness I was startled by a scream. Jumping up, I looked about me. All dark, all silent; yet I heard it most distinctly—a shrill, piercing scream, as if from the lips of someone in mortal agony. At first my impression was that I was not

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alone, but finding all was silent about me, I rushed to the window, raised the blind, and looked out.

At the instant I did so, my eyes encountered a frightful sight. There was a light in one of the opposite windows, and the light shone through the white blind. It shone with sufficient brilliancy to throw upon the blind the shadows of two figures. One figure was that of a woman staggering back, with long, down-loosened hair, the other, that of a man who was rushing upon the woman with a long knife, clutched like a dagger in his hand. As I gazed the knife descended, the woman fell, there was, or I fancied there was, an audible moan, then the light was extinguished suddenly, as if it had fallen or been trampled under foot, and there was nothing to distinguish that window from any other in the row.

I waited. Standing there shivering in the dark, I waited for what might happen next. For half-an-hour at least I remained at the window, but without anything further occurring. The light did not reappear. Whatever the result of the blow I had seen dealt, it had clearly aroused no one; and, though not without misgivings that I had witnessed an assassination, I at length returned to bed, and finally sank again into troubled slumber.

Late in the morning heavy steps on the stairs awoke me. Almost immediately the incident of the shadow on the blind recurred to me with intense vividness. I could see the knife, the falling woman, and the man, whose face had been so distinctly outlined that I could almost have identified his features, while I could with certainty declare that he wore a sort of forage-cap, with a projecting peak standing out straight from the forehead.

Full of this impression, I darted to the window and looked out. Unfortunately I looked in vain. There were many windows in the row of houses, all alike, and nearly all had the blinds down. The consequence was that I could not even tell in which I had witnessed the deed of the previous night.

This uncertainty had one effect; with the impetuousity of youth, I burned to communicate what I had witnessed; but I felt that it was hardly likely I should meet with such credit when I could not even point out the house in which what I described had happened. People would, not unnaturally, conclude that I had been dreaming.

With this impression I descended to the miserable room in which I had dined over-night, and ordered breakfast. Several persons were present, each engaged on his morning meal, and I looked from one to the other in the firm conviction that presently some allusion to a murder in the neighbourhood would greet my ears. In this I was disappointed; all were silent. So I imitated their example, held my peace, and breakfasted as best I might.

The meal was over, and I sat propping my chin in the hollow of one hand, and staring vacantly at the glazed door, with the lamp still burning in the passage outside it, when I suddenly involuntarily started and cried. The cause was simply this: as I looked I saw the shadow of a face cast by the lamp on the ground-glass! It was the face of someone stealing noiselessly along the passage, and to my amazement I recognised it as the same face I had beheld over-night—the face of the man who had dealt the blow! I could swear to the features, and, still more, I could not be mistaken in the identity of the peaked cap.

Acting solely on impulse, I darted out of the room, and made my way along the passage; but, in place of the assassin of whom I was in pursuit, encountered only the waiter who had attended to my wants in the coffee-room. He was an old, ill-favoured man in greasy black, and with a wisp of dirty linen about his neck to match the napkin over his arm.

At sight of me he thrust out his arms.

"No you don't!" he exclaimed aggressively,

"What do you mean?" I demanded. "Who is the man who has just quitted this passage?"

"Man!" he ejaculated. "Oh, yes! I dare say; we've heard that before. That's a stale game, that is!"

I expressed my astonishment and inability to comprehend his meaning. Of that, however, he did not leave me long in doubt.

"Oh, we understand," he remarked injuriously. "You ain't the fust by long chalks as 'ave tried on that game, comin' here without a bit or mossel of luggage! gettin' of your supper, bed, and breakfast, and then all of a sudden there's a man passin' the winder, or there's a 'pintment in the City, or a somethink or another, and off you goes! And we may hook for the bill, we may. Oh yes; we know! Not this time. Not if we're aweer of it!"

The effect of this imputation of swindling motives so overwhelmed me that I had not a word to offer in explanation or defence. I simply paid my bill and quitted the house, which, as I saw on emerging into the street, was called the "Green Posts."

Hastening off to Barnard's Inn, I had the satisfaction of finding that Halford had returned, and was full of apologies for the inconvenience he had caused me. Later in the day I confided to him the adventure in which his absence had involved me. He listened; but attached no great importance to what I had seen.

"Stabbings and things of that sort are constantly happening in London," he said. "There isn't a night without its dozen murders. However, I know the "Green Posts," up Gray's Inn Road way, and we'll go this evening and see if you can find the house where this happened."

This suggestion entirely jumped into my views, and after dinner we set out. found the house I had slept at, and the street adjoining it. And, indeed, it would have been strange had we not found the latter, for it was full of people in the utmost state of excitement. There were, moreover, fire-engines in it, others were momentarily arriving, and a great glare of flame irradiated the sky. A house was on fire, and I had a conviction that it was the very house in which I had seen the murderous deed perpetrated. I was for giving information to the authorities, but Halford dissuaded me.

"Doubtless the body of the woman is consumed," he said; "the house having in all probability been fired with that object. You would only bring yourself into unenviable notoriety for no purpose."

So I remained silent, though the fire intensified my suspicions that I had witnessed the perpetration of a cowardly murder.

* * * * *

Years passed away. Halford had risen in his profession, but still hung to his gloomy stronghold in Barnard's Inn. I had spent many a jovial hour there in those halcyon days which prelude the stern realities of medical life, the days sacred to that most joyous of human pursuits—the walking of hospitals! I had succeeded to my father's practice, and lived in the old house, in the quiet old Derbyshire market town, which our family had inherited for two hundred years.

One night, on returning from a long professional

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round, I received a letter in a woman's hand, entreating me to come up to London without loss of time. Halford, the writer said, was ill—she feared dying. The letter bore a signature, but I could only decipher "Joanna"; the rest was a mere blur.

The next night found me at Barnard's Inn. My coming had been eagerly looked for, the porter told me, and, in confirmation of this, I was received at the door of Jack's chambers by a young woman, who, on seeing me, uttered an exclamation of gratitude, and thanked me again and again for my kindness in coming.

"I have the pleasure of addressing Joanna?" I inquired.

She blushed, and dropped her eyelids in acquiescence. She had darkly-fringed lids, and tears like dewdrops glistened on the fringes. A pretty, sweet-faced woman altogether was Joanna; one whom it was impossible not to admire, and it might have been easy to love to distraction.

After admitting that I was right in calling her Joanna, she said no more of herself, but, drawing me aside, explained what had happened to Halford. "It was very mysterious," she said, shuddering as she spoke, "but while coming home from a friend's a few nights before, he had been shot at and severely wounded."

"Shot at!" I ejaculated with genuine surprise. "Attacked—robbed—I suppose?"

"No. Simply shot at from a doorway; the man, seeing him fall, ran away."

"And where was this?"

"In Red Lion Square."

"Strange! The object must have been robbery."

She shook her head, and was then seized with so violent a tremour that she had to clutch at a chair to save herself. Then she further informed me that the effect of the shot had been very serious, from a difficulty in extracting the ball, which had, however, been happily accomplished that morning. Since then there had been a slight improvement.

I found my friend ill, very ill; but did not despair of his life. He was quite insensible, and remained so some days. During that time I stayed in town; in fact, I protracted my stay long enough to satisfy myself that he was out of danger. My companion in the sick-room was Joanna, whose intelligence I found to equal her beauty. We talked much of Jack, and I saw that she was devoted to him; but she did not say a word about herself, or the relations between them, and the subject was so delicate that I dared not question her upon it. One singular observation, and one only, she let slip; it was to the effect that it was hard he should suffer all this for her sake.

That phrase struck me at the time, and haunted me, both on my homeward journey and long afterwards. What did it mean?

In a month or so, Jack had recovered sufficiently to write and thank me for coming up to him; but he made no allusion to the attack, which had been attended with consequences so serious, and, more singular still, there was no word of Joanna, from one end of the letter to the other.

To those engaged in professional duties, time flies. So three or four years might have gone by before the incident with which I opened this narrative was suddenly and strikingly recalled to my memory.

I had gone to France for a few weeks' change, and was travelling between Amiens and Paris, on the then newly-opened railway, when at one of the sharp curves in the line our train ran off the rails. Several of the carriages were overturned, and one was smashed to atoms. In that one carriage several persons were riding, and all were more or less injured. The severest sufferer was an Englishman—Jasper Nuttall—as I gathered from his card-case; for immediately on learning what had happened, I went to his assistance.

The man was very much shaken; two of his ribs were broken, and he had received some internal injury which caused blood to flow from his mouth. His own conviction was that he would not recover, and his horror of death was childish in its exaggeration. For this, however, I soon learnt there was a cause. After binding me by a solemn oath not to divulge what I was about to hear while he lived, he intrusted me with a confession of a most serious nature. This was the substance of it.

The name that he bore was not his true name, he said; what that was did not matter, as he had not used it for many years. The occasion of his abandoning it was this: He had spent his early life as a midshipman in the Royal Navy, and while on shore, during a month's leave, he had been introduced to a young lady, who, though eighteen years of age, was still at a boarding-school at Canterbury, her parents having died while she was an infant. A fierce, consuming passion for this beautiful girl took possession of him; but she did not encourage his advances, her heart being already given to another, who was secretly paying her his addresses.

Such, however, was the Jasper's ardour that he gave her no peace, and followed her up with such indiscretion that the school authorities discovered the connection, and talked of expulsion.

Terrified at this threat—fearing also that by what had happened becoming known she should compromise herself with her lover beyond forgiveness—the girl, in a foolish moment, consented to elope with Jasper Nuttall; and in a few days they were privately married. But, directly the ceremony was performed, the girl repented of her rash act, and, seizing an opportunity, ran away from the husband of an hour.

Exasperated beyond measure, the narrator proceeded, he followed his wife up to London; he ascertained, after awhile, that she was in hiding in a low lodging in a questionable neighbourhood; he found out also that she had written to her old lover, to what effect he knew not; and on the night of making these discoveries he went to the house she was concealed in, found a means of entrance, and suddenly presented himself before the terrified woman, who caught up a table-knife to defend herself with. This he snatched from her, and, maddened with drink, passion, and jealousy, he, on her irritating him, by a refusal to explain or go elsewhere with him, plunged it into her heart. That done, he left the house as secretly as he had entered it, but did not quit the neighbourhood.

All that night and the succeeding day he loitered about to see what would happen, expecting every moment to be seized and denounced as a murderer. But all that day passed, and nothing happened. At nightfall, an idea took possession of his maddened brain. He determined to fire the house in which he had committed the murder, so as to hide all traces of his crime.

"And this hideous purpose you carried into execution," I interrupted. "I remember it perfectly."

"You remember?" he asked aghast.

"Certainly; I saw the murder committed."

So astounded was the poor wretch at these words—so astounded and overcome with mingled pain and terror—

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that he fainted. In that state he was removed to a cottage in the neighbourhood; and when the train was ready to carry those of us able to travel on to Paris, I left him, with the firm impression that his eyes would never open again in this world.

* * * * *

The fact that this revelation should have been made to me—to me of all human beings—impressed me so strongly, that on my return to England I wrote to Jack Halford, giving him an account of what had happened, as far as I felt myself justified in doing so; dwelling on the singularity of our old mystery being cleared up after so many years; and adding that, now the unhappy wretch was dead and gone, it was well that his secret should die with him.

To this I received an immediate reply, expressing surprise, and asking whether the name of the dead man was not Jasper Nuttall. My astonishment at the question was great; but I had no reason to withhold the information from my old friend, and I answered in the affirmative.

For at least three months after I heard no more of Jack; then he wrote, informing me that he was about to give up the old chambers and the old life; to tear himself from the blandishments of the Inn of Barnard, and to take unto himself a partner in life's transport and tribulations. The lady's name, he informed me, was Joanna Hilders, orphan daughter of the late Captain Hilders, a lady whom I would recollect having met at the inn some years ago.

At last, then, the murder was out; Joanna was to be his wife. I certainly resented not having been taken into their confidence before; but an invitation to the wedding made amends (though I was unable to accept it), and I was not sorry to know that dear Jack was at last comfortably married and settled.

The next Christmas, Mr. and Mrs. Jack, as we called them, came down to Derbyshire on a visit, and so pleasant did this prove that the experiment was tried on the following Christmas. Mrs. Jack was, as I have intimated, a pretty, lovable woman, and I often wondered where he had met with her. It leaked out that he had known her some years; and that was about all I was able to learn.

During this second visit the weather was fine, and we rode out most days. On the afternoon preceding Christmas Eve we took a long drive, and, while going through a lane bordered with trees, a trifling but rather singular incident occurred.

The lady suddenly cried out: "Oh, Jack! Jack!" and pointed in the direction in which she was looking, her face being of intense alarm.

Jack inquired what was the matter, and she in reply whispered in his ear.

Thereupon he looked serious; but instantly shook off the feeling, and said, with a smile: "Joanna is constantly fancying likenesses in strangers to people we have met. Did you observe anything peculiar in the stranger under the tree we last passed?"

I had not even observed a stranger; I said so, and there the matter dropped.

That evening we sat round the fire in our old-fashioned living-room. The lamp was not lit, but the piled logs sent out a strong glare, and it was pleasant, in the flickering uncertain light, to see the stars shine through the windows, and to listen to the ringing of distant church-bells, borne in fitful gusts on the breeze.

Suddenly we were all startled by a crash. One of the casement windows had been burst in, and, looking round, I saw a man leap into the room. He was ragged in his dress, with shock hair, a white face, and fiercely-burning eyes. Staggering forward, he threw up his arms, and uttered a wild shriek.

"My wife!" he screamed; "give me my dead wife!"

In uttering these words he rushed toward Halford, but on his way stumbled against the table in the middle of the room and fell forward over it, his bare arms thrown out wildly, and his head striking on the mahogany with a sharp sound.

Both Halford and his wife startled up; but the latter, with a sacred and terrified look, dropped back into her chair.

"Jasper," she ejaculated in a tone of horror, and sank back insensible.

I caught at the name to which she had given utterance, as stepping to the table I clutched at the intruder's long hair and turned his face to the light. It presented a terrible aspect. The eyes were bright, but wild; the mouth was working convulsively.

I had little difficulty in deciding that it was the face of a maniac; but still less difficulty in recognising it as that of Jasper Nuttall, whom I had left for dead after the accident on the line between Amiens and Paris.

While I was in the act of making this discovery, there were voices and footsteps without, and several strange faces looked in at the window. They were keepers from the county lunatic asylum, in search of an escaped patient. At the sound of their voices, the wretched being before me sprang from the table, beat out wildly at the air, uttered gurgling and inarticulate sounds, and then, to our inexpressible horror, fell backwards—dead.

Rapidly all this had passed, there had been time enough for me to see, as in a flash, the connecting link between the incidents of years—between my first London experience, as above recorded, and the horror I had just witnessed. Intuitively I perceived, what I had never of course for an instant suspected, that Joanna was the object of Jasper Nuttall's affection, the girl whom he had made his wife. But he had taken her life and destroyed her body in the flames of the burning house? True, he believed that; but was it so? had the wound he had inflicted proved mortal, or had it not?

Under pretence of facilitating her restoration, I stepped up, and with a pair of scissors divided the cord that fastened Joanna's bodice. As I expected, her bosom presented traces of a stab—a deep, fiery scar.

Halford's quick eye noticed that I saw this, and that it had a significance for me. On this he—when the body of the unfortunate man had been removed by the keepers—tendered an explanation which spared me further conjecture.

His avowal was to this effect: He was Jasper Nuttall's rival, and was down at Canterbury, waiting an opportunity to see Joanna on the day of my first visit to his chambers. Although he then failed to see her, he received her letter apprising him of the false step she had taken, and imploring his forgiveness. Hence he little imagined that she was in danger; less still, of course, that it was against her I had seen a murderous hand raised, or that it was her body we suspected to have perished in the flames of the burning house. Heavens! the very idea would have driven him frantic. Fortunately, the wound inflicted had not proved mortal. The knife did not enter her heart, but passed between the two lobes of the lungs; and the people of the lodging-house, discovering what had happened in time, the unhappy girl was removed to a

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hospital, so that Nuttall's second criminal act, that of firing the house, was perpetrated in vain.

After the fire Jasper Nuttall disappeared, and for years Joanna remained in concealment, watched over by Halford, though estranged from him by her fatal marriage. No doubt the murderer, as he supposed himself to be, spent the interval at sea; but that he nursed the deadliest hatred of his rival in his heart was pretty well proved by the attempt at length made on Halford's life, for neither he nor Joanna ever doubted that it was Jasper Nuttall, who—probably—during a temporary stay in England—fired the shot which so nearly ended my friend's life.

All the while Nuttall lived Joanna's position was a most painful one; but on Halford's receiving my account of the railway accident, and the discovery it had led to, with the conclusion I had hastily jumped at, that the man was dead, he had formally proposed to his old love, and their marriage followed as a thing of course. What wonder, then, that Joanna should have been overcome with terror when that night she saw her first husband standing alive before her!

My hasty conclusion as to the impossibility of the man's surviving had, of course, done all the mischief. He had survived, but his health was shattered, and his brain, always weak and excitable, had given way, and his friends in England had placed him in the Derbyshire Asylum, from which he had that day contrived to escape.

Poor wretch! we pitied him sincerely. Jack's tender heart was moved at his miserable end, and perhaps the least touch of self-reproach prompted the tears Joanna shed at the memory of one who had loved her as deeply as he had wronged her.

For my own part, while I felt for him, I was strongly impressed by the singular bearing one upon another of the links in this strange chain of events, extending over so many years. It seemed a mere accident that I was ever concerned in the matter at all; yet but for that accident Halford and Joanna might never have been united, and Nuttall would probably have died in the asylum, his death unknown to those who from uncertainty about his fate, and terror at his probable reappearance, might have gone down to their graves nursing a hopeless and fruitless passion. The problem of their lives was happily destined to be worked out to a more blissful solution.

H. M. S.

A CHRISTMAS EPISODE.

N the evening of the twenty-fourth day of December, Mr. Herrington Seymour rang the door bell of the residence of his head book-keeper, thus making the one hundred and thirtieth time he had so heralded himself since calling to inquire as to the physical condition of the said head book-keeper on the fifteenth day of July preceding.

Not that the health of the head book-keeper longer required this attention, for he had, in fact, been back at his desk since the early part of September; but, although the illness which had laid him low was a thing of the past, the daughter who had been his nurse-in-chief was still a present fact, and it was into her presence Mr. Seymour was ushered this same evening of December the twenty-fourth.

"Now, don't interrupt!" said Miss Bland hastily, hardly glancing up from the bit of paper on which she was pencilling; "I have purchased nineteen Christmas presents out of £2 10s., and I am trying to find if I have anything left for postage on one yet to be sent."

Mr. Seymour accordingly sat down and studied the even parting of that portion of Miss Bland's head which was presented to him as she returned to her figuring—not the least delightful part of the intercourse with his head book-keeper's daughter being the refreshing and altogether novel fashion in which she ordered him about.

"Poppet and I went Christmas shopping together, with all of our money in one purse," Miss Bland presently deigned to explain—the said Poppet being otherwise known to Miss Bland's friends as her youngest brother Paul—"and after adding three times, I find that I owe Poppet fourpence, which I do not possess to pay him, and must go further in debt for that postage. Where is Poppet, did you ask? He and Tom and Louis have gone to the entertainment St. John's is giving to the choir-boys, and will not get back until after the midnight service, and Elizabeth is finishing off a last bit of Christmas work, and father, having vowed he would give no presents this year, and, as usual, repenting at the last moment, has gone out and is doubtless paying double for everything because it is the eleventh hour."

In his heart, Mr. Seymour blessed the occasion which thus removed the family of Miss Bland, for, there being something of a superfluity of motherless little Blands, it was inconveniently difficult to find opportunities wherein to enjoy this chosen representative of the family apart from the importunities of a Poppet or a Louis or a Tom.

Yet, from the moment when Miss Bland had met him at the door and reported on her father's then somewhat desperate condition, Mr. Herrington Seymour had done little else but seek for just these same rare and coveted opportunities.

"Tom and Louis, being blessed with the gift of saving, have their choir money, you see," continued Miss Bland, "and Elizabeth always reaps a small fortune with her painting at Christmas; but Poppet and I, being the spendthrifts, are always in debt, and

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never have anything unless the others take pity and lend us."

Mr. Seymour, content that she should talk on indefinitely, if only he were privileged to watch the colour coming and going on her smooth cheek, the parting, the curving, the smile, the droop of her lips which changed with every mood, the fluttering of her quick hands, started a little absent-mindedly when he found her pausing and looking towards him expectantly, and made some totally irrelevant remark about the amount of needless trouble and hollow farce attendant on the modern Christmas.

"You know I cannot bear to hear things like that," declared Miss Bland, a rush of colour to her cheeks, a frown between her straight brows. "Christmas is a blessed time, if people would only let it be so, and be influenced by it, and breathe in the good-will and fellowship around them, and——" she checked herself sharply, meeting the amused smile in his eyes at her little outbreak, and sprang up, and, turning her back on him, pretended to be occupied in choosing a sprig from a mass of holly piled on a chair. But, nevertheless, there must have been more than the mere contemplation of the holly on her mind, for, when she did turn, her eyes, which steadily avoided his searching and pursuant gaze, were so bright as to suggest the sparkling therein of unshed tears.

"What?" said he, with just a touch of the masterful in his tones.

"Nothing," came from Miss Bland with more than a touch of defiance in hers.

"But you promised," insisted the other, again a little absently, seeing how fascinating was that tremendous little quiver of her lips, "you promised you would be frank with me always."

Miss Bland assumed an attitude at once resentful and distant, and her accents were iciness itself. "The truth is, I do not see why I ever allow myself to show any feeling even bordering on things deep or real, before you. You never fail to meet it with something cynical, or a smile of amused scepticism, if nothing more, and—and then——"

"And then?" repeated Mr. Seymour, as she stopped, leaning towards her with an aggravating show of breathless interest in his manner.

"Why, then we had better turn to something practical before we fuss," declared Miss Bland, with a crushing change of manner, having finally arranged the holly in a vase to her satisfaction. "So we will go to work and tie and label all my presents for my family and get them disposed of before they return."

"But that is not at all that you promised, or what I came prepared to do," argued Mr. Seymour in tones quite injured and reproachful.

Miss Bland's charming colour deepened and spread down her cheeks, and crept along and under the soft curves of her chin and down her throat. "But I did not promise, you only assumed that I would," she said.

"But if I honestly interpreted it as a promise and hold it as such?" said he, following her to the mantel where she had retreated.

"You had no right to."

"But then, you see, I did. It was perfectly natural I should, I am sure you will allow. I remark that I have had no satisfaction or pleasure out of the so-called festive season of Christmas since I was a small boy. You tell me that with my opportunities I ought to be ashamed to say so. I demand to know my opportunities. You remark on my having fewer friends and fewer relations to tax me than has the average human being at Christmas, and declare that there is a whole cityful of poor who will doubtless go Christmasless, and draw the most alluring pictures of the satisfaction and pleasure of bestowing one's superfluity upon this tasteless populace. And not only converted, but quite fascinated by the alluring way you picture it, and knowing myself to be unable to gracefully descend upon the unexpectant poor alone, I proposed your accompanying me in the *rôle* of the beneficent fairy, or at least to teach me how to impersonate the patron saint properly. And you allow me to go away resting on the assurance that you will, and to come to-night so prepared——"

"I did not promise——"

"But you would have, if Poppet had not come in—and interrupted."

"No, I would not!"

Mr. Seymour sat down with some dejection. "Of course, there is no more to be said then," he remarked, and proceeded to talk about the weather.

Miss Bland looked uneasy. She agreed with him that the weather was all he claimed, ideal, typical, proper for the season, but there was a dissatisfied, half-hearted manner about the way she allowed it, strolling at the same time about the parlour restlessly, and finally, on reaching the door, going out with some sudden abruptness.

Left to himself, Mr. Seymour fell to gazing in the fire, leaning forward, elbow on knee, and, despite the greyness about his temples and the hints about his strong, clean-shaven face that youth had sometime ago departed, there was a depth of feeling in the smile just then about his mouth, a hint of suppression in his manner, that made him seem not so much older than the young girl over whose wilful vagaries he was smiling, as he really was.

When Miss Bland returned, a moment later, she had on jacket, hat and gloves, and her furs—collar and muff—were in her hand. "I went to get ready, you know," she explained.

"Yes," said the other, avoiding comment with the wisdom of experience, and sought his overcoat in the hall.

But she was obviously nervous and embarrassed as they started out. "It seems queer," she began, "and I am afraid audacious for me to have suggested such a thing to you. In—in theory I did mean it, of course, in a joking way, but—but in practice to have actually told you you ought to spend your money——" she stopped, with a tragic little sweep of her hands, and it took him all the rest of the 'bus ride to get her back to anything like her usual self-possessed and bright, unconscious self.

"And even now that we are out," she began again, as they left the 'bus and reached the thronged and gaily lighted pavement, "what are we out to do?"

As the whole affair had sprung from her suggestion, it was more than generous of him not to remind her of that now. "Considering the nature of the expedition," he rejoined promptly, "I should say we had better begin to look for that cityful of poor, and if I were impersonating the beneficent fairy, there is no question I would feel I had a beginning right here before me," and he nodded toward an adjacent recess in an unoccupied doorway of a gaily decorated toy shop.

"It's Joey!" cried Miss Bland, following his glance and halting as she recognised the carrier of coal, the shoveler of snow, the general outdoor help and dependent of her own household.

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The ups and down of childhood, as embodied in the varying lengths of the persons of Joey's small brothers and sisters, turned at this utterance of the eldest Mulligan's name, and broke, as by consent, into a unanimous smile as the bright countenance of Miss Bland was recognised.

"We're buying our Christmas," explained the offspring of the house of Mulligan with one voice, the embarrassed elder brother excepted. "Joey, he tipped us all round, he did," and every little Mulligan forthwith removed a red little fist from a protecting pocket or shawl, and opened it in witness of Joey's generosity.

"Three pennies a-piece, except Lobelia, and hers is a sixpence, cause her jaw is swelled."

Lobelia, of the swollen jaw, as it proved, embarrassed by the possession of her wealth, was still undecided whether to sink her sixpence entire in the purchase of a flannel monkey which walked down a red ladder on its hands, or to divide it, and sink half in a red balloon and the other half in toffee. It was for this decision to be reached before entering the toy-shop that the party had halted and were now standing shifting from foot to foot in the frosty air, and hoarsely breathing out volumes of hoary breath to keep its noses warm.

"I say for the toffee," voted the smallest of the Mulligans.

"Joe Kelly, he's all fer his stomick," retorted Lobelia scornfully; "he's already spent part of his fer nuts, and, anyhow, May ain't settled herself a'tween a box of paints and buns."

May's small voice being lifted in protest that she had long ago decided in favour of the paints, and forthwith calling on little Mike to witness that fact, Joey, with his freckled face a-flame, hoped Miss Bland would understand, "seein' that the children were that excited over Christmas, there wasn't any makin' them behave or mind their manners!"

"And I dare say," began Miss Bland's companion, in an aside apparently meant to be secret and confidential, however audible to the others, "I dare say they would be even more excited if they knew this is not the real Miss Bland at all, but a Beneficent Christmas Fairy——"

The little Mulligans stared.

"——who can change coppers into silver in the twinkling of an eye."

The little Mulligans gasped.

"So that if each of these small people should drop their money into this purse and we then should snap it shut and hand it to her, every single penny will turn to silver in her hands;" and the grave and serious-faced gentleman forthwith solemnly presented an open pocket-book to the gaping and astonished company.

The fist of every little Mulligan closed tight on the instant and sought its pocket, that is, of all but Lobelia, in whom the possession of larger wealth had created a speculative recklessness that led her to drop her all into the open purse.

Yet no sooner had the pocket-book changed hands and, true to the serious-faced gentleman's prophecy, Lobelia's sixpence had emerged swollen into five times its former size and value, than every penny in the crowd rained into this Fortunatus, while even Joey stared, open-mouthed.

And when, under the supervision of the Beneficent Fairy, the family of Mulligans had ended its Christmas shopping, it fairly staggered under its accumulated load, while from the basket, forming speechless Joey's portion, there peeped forth purchases such as promised to stock the Mulligan larder with a profusion hitherto unknown.

Then, when the little Mulligans were hoisted into a passing tram and sent rejoicing on their way, the Beneficent Christmas Fairy turned to her escort with a rapturous little catch in her voice: "It—it was lovely." she said, "but—but it was all you; I never could have done it in that lovely way—never!"

"No?" returned the other, with all the accustomed scepticism; then, with another note, and that of deep tenderness, somewhere mixed in it, "but your turn to be generous will come later."

Whereat, either because of the tone or the emphasis, which seemed to convey something subtle and hidden in the meaning, the Beneficent Fairy froze instantly, and haughtily commanded that the passing crowds be scanned for further subjects for munificence.

Nor was there pressing need for a microscopic study of the throng that tramped the streets and jostled and pushed their way along the noisy, busy thoroughfares. The Beneficent Fairy and her escort had purposely avoided the highway and sought the side streets, where shops and pavements were the more likely to be patronised by the class they had in mind. And even at the first fruit stall of one such street they turned into, an opportunity awaited in the person of a small representative of the Christmasless poor, clothed in an out-at-elbows, dingy dress and much wistfulness, and eyeing with unexpected eagerness the pyramids of Christmas fruits and wares piled up before her.

"Mary Jane!" The swarthy woman, turning back, impatient at her delay, called her. Mary Jane of the wistful countenance moved not, but stood and watched the crowning pyramidal glories vanish into a gigantic paper bag, and gazed from them to the tall gentleman and the pretty lady, all smiles, and brightness and furs and warmth and comfort, by his side, who were pointing out a wealth of nuts and dates and figs to follow oranges, bananas, apples, into that yawning cavity. And when, with a merry word from the pretty lady, Mary Jane found in her arms that weight of tropical richness, she, lacking that grace of manner belonging to the Mary Janes of the upper world, only gasped, but it was noticed that in the eyes of the swarthy woman was swimming something shining and wet, as she took Mary Jane quite gently by the hand and walked away.

Then in at the fair strolled the Beneficent Christmas Fairy and her Bearer of the Purse, into that vast heterogeneous collections of second and third rate wares, where, for a third more than its honest value, one can purchase anything.

And here, amid the Christmas wares and decorations the Beneficent Fairy found herself quite in her element, and, aided and abetted by the ever-watchful Bearer of the Purse, found herself introducing red-cheeked dolls into empty, wistful childish arms, and slipping knives with a reckless multiplicity of blades into small boys' grimy, yet to the last, sceptical fingers, and carrying a pale-faced, hungry brood from under its paler-faced mother's wing and seating them in the lunch-room, and feasting them to their hungry little stomachs' full content. During which occupation on the Beneficent Fairy's part, the Bearer of the Purse stole the pale-faced mother's basket from her arm, and leaving her to be coaxed by the Fairy's wiles into the taking of a cup of coffee, swelled its pitiful pennies' worth of groceries into pounds, its feeble promise of Christmas cheer into a

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heavy reality of plenty. Then the Bearer of the Purse stealing away, with the Beneficent Fairy clinging to his arm with an unconscious confidence that thrilled him, they left the brood choking over its pie, the mother over her tears, and brought up behind a much be-whiskered old man in fur cap and mittens, who could not withhold his perplexed confidences five seconds before the tender smiling ingratiating advances of the Beneficent Fairy.

"It was the children, to be sure, Lisa's, his only daughter's children; he was out buying Christmas gifts for Lisa and Katie and Carl, and the baby, William Joseph, named after himself. Here was the little red waggon for Carl, and the lunch basket for Katie, and the doll for Little Lisa, but at William Joseph he hesitated perplexed. It must be more than this small rattle for William Joseph, named after himself; and then too, Lisa—Lisa was a good daughter, and it was on his mind to choose a present for Lisa, too."

And when the Beneficent Fairy had suggested a warm and tasteful and not over dear white woolly cap for William Joseph, and a pretty glass preserve dish for Lisa, and had slipped a fascinating woolly sheep that said "Ba-a," into his hand, and begged he would take that also to William Joseph, she and the Bearer of the Purse departed, and the dear old man was left beaming, still hunting for the words to best tell what his feelings were.

And, because it was just round the corner from the Fair, the two went through the market house, gay with cedar and tissue paper garlands, and stopped by a stall and managed to hear the most of a little old woman's perturbed confidences to the pork gentleman.

How she had started out to buy a few sausages for her old man's Christmas breakfast, as well as a bit of something at Miss Farmer's request, for Miss Farmer's crippled Jamie's Christmas dinner, Miss Farmer being the lady who rented the top back room, next to her own, and buttonho'ed for the shops for a living, and not able, at all, to be after losing even the bit of change, which, along with her own, it seemed, had just been taken from the little old woman's pocket.

And when, at the instigation of the Bearer of the Purse, the Beneficent Fairy had whispered some words of comfort under the rusty old bonnet, and had pressed more than the price of several breakfasts of pork sausages into the numb and ungloved old hand, both the little old women and the Beneficent Fairy were trying to smile at each other through their tears, while the Bearer of the Purse and the Pork Gentleman made up a basket for crippled Jamie's Christmas dinner, to which the Beef Gentleman in the next stall and the Vegetable Lady, and even the Fish, Game and Poultry Gentleman, overhearing the story, contributed.

And when they left the brightly-lighted shops and turned into the less frequented side-streets, the love in his nature overcame his discretion, and, bending down, he kissed her cheeks. Burning with wrath and scorn and defiance, she walked on and left him to follow, until, overtaking her where the street grew dark and silent and altogether deserted, he found she was crying again, and caught her by the hand, and she broke down altogether and confessed she loved him dearly, truly, had loved him always, and that the fault, the blame, was all his, for not having made her say so before!

And in time, with never a thought from either to take a tram now, the two reached the square shadowed by the towers and steeple of St. John's and—through the swirling snow, now coming down thick and fast—called to the head book-keeper, also bound for the midnight service at St. John's.

And the head book-keeper, peering in his near-sighted way several moments before he recognised them, let Kate take his hand and hang to his arm and make him confess, like the guileless gentleman that he was, that he had paid two and even three times too much for everything, even according to her prophecy.

Nor dreamed the dear, unworldly, short-sighted soul that Kate's companion had never loosed his hold of her hand on the other side, nor yet that that gentleman, drawing her to him as the head book-keeper went into the vestibule, had kissed her then and there in the deserted porchway of St. John's.

All of which blindness to his own interest—seeing that to him the worldly gain would be nothing to the losing of his Kate's companionship and tender ministrations and admonishments—possibly explains why this gentleman had and probably would stop at being a head book-keeper—for ever.

And, within the church, as suddenly the midnight gloom and silence burst into light and music and rejoicing, the voice of Poppet—Poppet, the torment, the tease, the darling of the head book-keeper's household; the pride, the joy, the glory of St. John's choir—the voice of Poppet rose high above the swelling organ tones, and soared and thrilled even to the deepest depths the hearts of the congregation.

"For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees! O hear the angels' voices! O night divine, O night when Christ was born! Fall on your knees! O hear the angels' voices! O night divine! O night when Christ was born! O night divine, O night divine!"

And kneeling by her, her hand behind the sheltering pew clasped in his, one of that congregation whispered after Poppet, deeply, reverently, to the woman by his side:

"O night, O night divine!"

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THE QUEEN AGAINST OWEN

BY

Allen Upward

Author of "Secrets of the Courts of Europe," "The Prince of Balkistan," etc., etc.

SUMMARY.

ELEANOR MARGARET OWEN is charged with the murder of her benefactress, Ann Lewis. Charles Prescott, who has known Eleanor since a child, holds the brief for the prosecution. His friend, George Tressamer, is in love with Eleanor, and holds the brief for her defence. The prosecution is vigorously pressed by Mr. Lewis, deceased's nephew. The case comes on at the Mynyddshire Assizes.

CHAPTER V.

THE CASE FOR THE CROWN.

"MAY it please your Lordship,

"Gentlemen of the jury, I am merely repeating a commonplace when I say that I rise to address you under a very heavy sense of responsibility. As you have heard, the prisoner at the bar is charged with the crime of wilful murder. It is now my duty, acting on behalf of the Crown, to tell you how that crime was committed, according to the view which I have to ask you to take; and to bring before you the witnesses whose evidence, if you believe it, goes to establish the guilt of the accused."

Thus Mr. Prescott. It was the third day of the assizes. On the Tuesday afternoon, after a true bill had been found, Mr. Justice Buller had announced that he should set apart this day for the trial of the great case. The court had opened at ten o'clock. It was crammed to suffocation. The intensest excitement, whetted by the interval of delay, reigned supreme. All eyes were strained towards the dock as the words were uttered:

"Put up Eleanor Margaret Owen."

Another moment and she stood before them. Clothed in black from head to foot, pale as a lily, and trembling in every limb, she sank upon the chair behind her, and covered her face with her hands.

A great throb of sympathy shook the court. Sobs were heard. The most prejudiced of those who had bandied her name about for the past few weeks felt a dim sense of shame. Only a few out of all those present were unmoved: the judge, schooled to conceal all trace of emotion, nay, schooled to stifle it as it rose; the jury, too overcome by the duty thrust upon them to be just then alive to what was happening; the counsel on both sides, who, for different reasons, forbore as long as they could from looking at the dock.

She was beautiful. All the suffering she had gone through had not been able to affect that, unless to render her beauty more spiritual and delicate. Her hair of that light glistening brown which is best known as golden; her drooping eyes of deepest blue; her wide, square forehead, unshaded by that device of ugliness, the artificial fringe of hair; the full, open lips; the rounded chin—every mark of a certain order of loveliness was there.

And she wore no veil. Some of the women present condemned her for that. The matron of the prison had besought her to use one. Her answer was decisive. She had never put a veil on since childhood, and she would not wear one now. She would not shrink beneath a false charge. She would show her face to them all.

She spoke bravely; but she had not realised all that was before her. And when she came up the dark, winding stairs from the underground cells, and found herself in that—Great God! Was it some crowded theatre, or a solemn court of justice?—her physical strength gave way, and she scarce knew what happened for some moments.

Then her will asserted itself again. She stood up. She faced the judge, the jury, the crowded bar, the fashionable dames in the gallery, and showed no more signs of fear. Her name was called, the hideous accusation was made. She answered it out loud. Her counsel, dreading another scene like that already recorded, had bent across the table

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and warned the clerk of arraigns beforehand of what the plea would be. The jury was sworn, including in their number the two onlookers whose remarks on the previous day had been so suddenly cut short. The last formula had been recited by the clerk.

"Gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner at the bar stands indicted for that she did wilfully murder one Ann Elizabeth Lewis. To that she has pleaded that she is not guilty. Now, you are to try the issue, and to say whether she is guilty or not."

And now the counsel for the prosecution had begun his speech.

"Two years ago the prisoner was left an orphan by the death of her father, the Rector of Porthstone. She went to live in the house of a lady who had known her from a child, and who lived in the same place. With that lady she remained down to the 1st of last June, and it is that lady with whose murder she now stands charged.

"Miss Lewis, the deceased, may be described as eccentric. She was in the habit for some years before her death of making very large purchases of jewels——"

"I beg your pardon." It was the counsel for the prisoner who rose to his feet and interrupted. "My lord, I am sorry to interrupt my learned friend at this early stage, but may I ask him if he has any evidence that the prisoner knew of the existence of these jewels? If not, my lord, I submit he is not entitled to refer to them at all."

The Judge: "What do you say, Mr. Prescott?"

"My lord, I am entirely in your lordship's hands. This is the first time it has been suggested to me that the fact of the deceased's having this jewellery was not a matter of common knowledge in the household. I, therefore, can't say at this stage whether I shall be able to distinctly fix the prisoner with such knowledge."

The Judge: "Of course, you mean to bring this in as motive?"

She stood up.

Mr. Prescott: "Yes, my lord."

The Judge: "It is a very important matter. If the jury were satisfied that the prisoner did not know of these purchases, and if there were no other motive suggested, it might have a very great effect on their minds." (At this point the jury tried to look as if something were having a great effect on their minds, and did not altogether succeed.) "Perhaps you had better not say anything about the jewels now. You will have another opportunity after you see what your evidence is."

Mr. Prescott: "If your lordship pleases. Well, then, gentlemen, I will come at once to the night when this crime was committed."

Here Mr. Pollard was observed to write something on a slip of paper and hand it to his leader. Mr. Prescott stopped to glance at it, and then went on:

"I may, however, mention one thing before leaving the question of motive, and it is this. I shall be able to prove to you that the deceased on one occasion, in the presence of a witness, made some promise or offer to the prisoner as to remembering her in her will. It is, of course, for you to say what weight you will attach to that circumstance."

Here the jury tried to look as if they knew what weight to attach to it, and again utterly failed.

"On the first of June, a nephew of Miss Lewis's, and her only surviving relative, as I am instructed, and who will be called before you, arrived at Porthstone. He had just returned from Australia, and went to see his relative. He dined there, and spent the evening. At 10 o'clock he came away to his hotel and at once retired to bed.

"The deceased lady had also retired to her room, and from the evidence there can be no doubt that she undressed and got into bed. She was last seen alive a few minutes after ten. The murder was discovered the next morning at nine. Between those hours the crime must have been committed.

"The female servants followed their mistress. At half-past ten the butler fastened the front door. He will describe the fastenings to you, and he will also tell you of a peculiarity in the latch, about which I shall have something to say presently."

The counsel then went on to detail the events narrated in his brief, only throwing in an observation now and then as he went along. When he had described the evidence of the removal of the body by the window he said:

"And now we come to one of the difficulties in the case. If the prisoner lowered the body out of the window in the first instance, why did she afterwards return to the house, and take a second journey, carrying a burden of some kind? I am hardly at liberty, after what has fallen from his lordship, to suggest to you that this second exit was in order to remove something which the murderer wanted to steal, something with the object of stealing which she committed the graver crime. But, gentlemen, there is another explanation, a terrible way of accounting for that second journey, so terrible and horrible that I wish it were not my bounden duty to put it before you. And it is this:

"Only a portion of the victim's body has been recovered. That portion is a hand. Now, in the absence of anything to make us think that the cutting off of the hand was a solitary mutilation, we are forced to the probable conclusion that whoever killed this poor woman mutilated her in a very dreadful manner. It is possible, therefore, that after lowering one portion of her victim's remains through the bedroom window, she returned upstairs to bring down some other part or parts of the body."

As the counsel with evident reluctance brought out these horrible points, a shudder ran through the court. The prisoner had borne it all with tolerable firmness up to now, but she was completely overcome by this part of the speech, and cowered down into her chair, again concealing her emotions by putting her hands before her face.

If Mr. Prescott had any idea of making the jury revolt at

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the thought of associating such shocking brutalities with the prisoner, his speech produced the very opposite effect to what he intended. The jury saw in it nothing but the natural reluctance of a man at making such a charge, overborne by the counsel's conviction of the prisoner's guilt. Their faces assumed an aspect of stony horror as they turned their eyes upon the shrinking girl. A slight frown crossed Tressamer's countenance, followed by a look of contempt.

"The second difficulty in the case," resumed Prescott, "is as to the latchkey. As I have explained, there were only three keys in existence, so far as the prosecution have been able to discover. These will all be produced before you. One was found in the pocket of the deceased's dress, the other was never out of the possession of the witness, Simons, the third was on the prisoner's person when she was arrested. One of these keys, therefore, must have been used in the latch that night, and must have been used with such carelessness or ignorance—it is for you to say which" —again the jury tried to look as if they were prepared to say which, and again they broke down—"that the latch was raised too high, and stuck. Now, here I must draw your attention to a very important circumstance. The person who entered the house last, whether the prisoner or anyone else, and who fastened up the front-door as it was found by the witness, Lucy Jones, the following morning, that person must, for some reason or other, have failed to notice the condition of the latch. She, if we assume it was the prisoner, must be supposed to have been so agitated from some cause that she failed to notice what she was doing when she raised the latch with her key, and failed again to notice how the latch was caught when she proceeded to fasten the door inside.

"Gentlemen, it is for you to ask yourselves whether a reasonable explanation, an explanation that will justify you in coming to an adverse verdict in this case, is furnished by the suggestion that the prisoner's mind was excited by the crime she had just committed to such an extent as to deprive her of the power of observing these things."

At this point Mr. F. J. Pollard began to be aware that his leader was not pressing the case very vigorously. He looked round at his brother in the solicitors' seat behind. That gentleman looked extremely angry. He had noticed something curious in his counsel's manner from the first. He now leant over and whispered to his brother:

"What's the matter with Prescott? I can't make him out. He talks as if he were the judge summing up, instead of the counsel for the prosecution."

Mr. Pollard, the barrister, shrugged his shoulders and bit his lip. He could do nothing. It was not for him to offer advice to his leader. A man of Mr. Prescott's standing was not likely to tolerate any interference from a young fellow just called.

But the offended proceeded to cap his misdeeds by a new suggestion, which had never occurred to either of the Pollards. It had been noted down long ago by Tressamer, though.

"The third difficulty in this case, gentlemen, is one which has doubtless been present to your minds all the time I have been speaking."

This time the jury made a desperate effort to conceal their astonishment, and to look as if they perfectly well knew what was coming. But no one was deceived.

"I refer to the disposal of the body. On this point we have exactly two pieces of evidence. A young woman like the prisoner was seen walking in the direction of Newton Bay, about midnight, by the witness, Evan Thomas. On the following afternoon the severed hand was discovered on the beach of Newton Bay by a visitor.

"How did it get there? It is for you to say. On behalf of the Crown, it is my duty to suggest to you that the prisoner in the dock may have carried the result of her crime to that distant spot, in several journeys, on one of which she happened to be seen. I must put it to you that piece by piece she accomplished her revolting task, and that she sought to hide the traces of her guilt in the sea. If you think that a rational and likely course of circumstances, no doubt you will say so.

"Gentlemen, I have done. I trust I have not detained you at undue length over this case, which must strike you as one of the most grave and difficult that could well come before a court of justice. I shall now, with the assistance of my learned friend, put the evidence before you. If you are left in any doubt after hearing it, and, after hearing the prisoner's defence, if you feel that there are mysteries in the case which have not been properly explained, and difficulties which have not been fully met, then you will, I feel sure, be only too glad to acquit the prisoner of this dreadful charge. But, if, on the other hand, you are fully and entirely satisfied, if you feel no doubt whatever—of course, I mean no reasonable doubt—you will, I am equally sure, do your painful duty by returning a verdict of guilty."

The barrister sat down, and his junior, who had listened impatiently to the close of the speech, at once started up, and called out:

"John Lewis!"

And now, for the first time, Charles Prescott ventured to look towards the dock. After the first involuntary glance at Eleanor's entrance, he had steadily kept his eyes averted. During the whole of his address, which took up nearly an hour, he never once looked round. He was afraid to trust himself. That one brief glance had revived the memories of old with an added force which almost overwhelmed him.

Yet he was not what would be called an emotional man. His was one of those natures which maintain a seeming coldness under all circumstances, but which often conceal in their depths a strength of passion and devotion compared to which the fiery outbreaks of others are mere "sound and fury, signifying nothing." And now this hidden force was stirred. It held him in its grasp, and his whole being shook and quivered to its centre.

Not love at first sight, for he had seen her before. Yet love, awakening suddenly as he looked upon her in the full bloom of opening womanhood, surrounded by a halo of suffering, and peril, and mystery, the fated victim of an accusation which he would not believe and could not disprove. This it was that overpowered him; this it was that led to that feeble, halting advocacy which surprised all who heard it. They could not recognise the keen, trenchant Prescott, who had made such a name for himself on the circuit. The Pollards were the only ones there who resented it, but they were by no means the only ones to be puzzled at the change.

But Prescott did not easily give way to his feelings. The sense of duty was sufficiently strong in him to keep him from absolute abandonment of his cause. He had gone faithfully through the case, and he was now preparing to take his part in examining the witnesses. Pride and professional training asserted themselves, and he stood firm.

At this moment, however, and when he was suffering most acutely, one of those happy accidents which men call good fortune or Providence, according to their dispositions, came to his aid. A solicitor's clerk came hurriedly into the court and made his way to the barrister's side. An unforeseen event had occurred. A case in the other court which had been expected to last all day had suddenly come to a settlement by agreement between the parties. The next case on the list was one in which Mr. Prescott was engaged, and engaged by himself, and his immediate presence was called for. Breathing an ejaculation of thankfulness, he got up and quickly withdrew, leaving young Pollard to manage the witnesses as best he could.

The judge looked annoyed, and the solicitor, Pollard, somewhat dismayed at this sudden disappearance of the leader for the Crown. But young Pollard himself was only too pleased. At last he was to have his chance. He was

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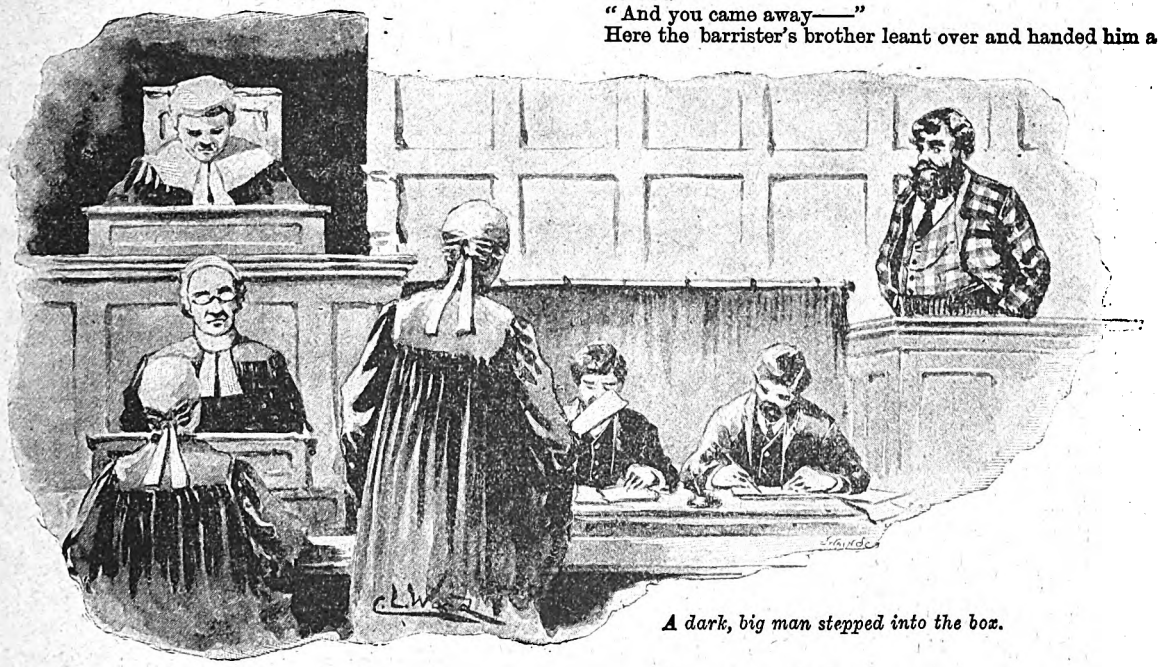
eft captain of the ship. If all went well he might hope to get through the evidence and have the concluding speech in Prescott's absence. And his satisfaction was shared by Tressamer. Tressamer knew his man. For the first time that morning a look of satisfaction crossed his face, and he settled his wig firmly on his head as he prepared to encounter the moving spirit of the prosecution.

And Eleanor? She did not altogether understand what had happened. But she saw that the man who had put the case against her so mildly had now gone out of it altogether, and her heart gave a great beat of joy for the first time since she had parted with George Tressamer, two days before the memorable 1st of June.



A dark, big man stepped into the box.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WITNESSES.

"JOHN LEWIS!"

A dark, big man stepped into the box, frowning heavily around him. The oath was administered, and then Mr. Pollard commenced in the approved style.

"Your name is John Lewis, and you are now living at 'The Shrubbery,' Porthstone?"

"Yes."

"That's where the murder was committed?" interrupted the judge.

"Yes, my lord. The witness inherited it under Miss Lewis's will."

The Judge: "Have you lived there ever since?"

Witness: "Yes, my lord."

The Judge (after a pause, during which Mr. Pollard waits impatiently): "Go on, Mr. Pollard. What are you keeping us for?"

Mr. Pollard: "I beg your lordship's pardon." To witness: "You are the nephew of the deceased, and have just returned from Australia?"

"Yes; I came back to my aunt."

"After making some money out there, I believe?"

"*I object!*"

This interruption, it need not be said, came from Tressamer. He had risen to his feet, and put on that scowl of scornful indignation with which an experienced counsel knows how to daunt a young beginner and make him feel he has committed himself.

"My lord, my friend cannot prove that, and if he could, it cannot possibly be evidence against the prisoner. It is a most improper question."

The judge looked a little puzzled.

"It is irrelevant," he said, "and I won't allow it if you object. In a case like this we can't be too strict, of course."

Mr. Pollard began to realise that greatness has its snares as well as its triumphs. He tried to get back on to the track.

"You went to see the deceased on the first of June?"

"I did."

"And you came away——"

Here the barrister's brother leant over and handed him a slip of paper. He took it and read it, turned red, and, trying to appear as if he had not been prompted, put the question contained in the slip of paper:

"Was anything said about the jewels?"

The judge stared. Tressamer started to his feet in a transport of fury.

"My lord, my friend is deliberately leading the witness. In a case of murder it is disgraceful!"

"I agree with you, Mr. Tressamer. Don't answer that question, sir."

Thus the judge. Poor young Pollard turned as red as the judge's robe, and stammered out some apology. His brother mentally swore at him, and every solicitor in court resolved never to give him another brief.

"Go on, Mr. Pollard; you mustn't keep us waiting."

The wretched young man gave a last look at his brief, and closed the examination.

"And you left about ten o'clock?"

("Leading again!" ejaculated his opponent.)

"Yes. My lord, may I say——"

"No!" snapped the judge. "Say nothing unless you're asked."

The witness looked angry, and frowned savagely at his counsel. But the latter had now sat down, and the cross-examination was about to begin.

Tressamer had been studying the witness, with a view of ascertaining his weak point. This was evidently his temper.

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Accordingly, he avoided irritating him till he had obtained as much as he could from him. He began:

"Had you any other relatives living besides Miss Lewis?"

The witness was thoroughly thrown out. He could not see what was coming. In a sullen voice he responded:

"Yes, I've a sister in the North."

"Did you go to see her before your aunt?"

"No. My lord, may I explain?"

The Judge: "You had better confine yourself to the questions now; you will have an opportunity of explaining afterwards."

"You went straight to your aunt. Was she pleased to see you?"

"Yes, she seemed very pleased."

"And yet she let you stay at a hotel?"

"That was only for the first night. It was arranged that I was to occupy a bedroom in her house afterwards."

"Oh!"

Type cannot do justice to the peculiar intonation with which the barrister uttered this exclamation. The whole court was aroused to suspect something beneath the surface. Then he turned round to the jury with a mysterious expression, and slowly repeated the answer:

"It was arranged that you were to occupy a room in her house after that night?"

The jury roused themselves for a grand effort, and succeeded in imparting a distinct air of suspicion to their countenances.

At last Mr. Lewis's temper came into play. He cried out:

"Yes; and if I had been there on the first night I might have prevented this murder."

"Silence, sir!" said the judge.

And now Tressamer brought out the question for which he had been preparing the way all along:

"When this arrangement was made about your living in the house, did your aunt (remember you are on your oath, sir!)—*did she happen—to—furnish—you—with—a* LATCHKEY?"

The effect was electrical. He had brought out the last words of the question slowly, one by one, and then he suddenly hurled the final word at the witness like a weapon.

John Lewis instantly realised the situation. The question was tantamount to an accusation. The whole court took it in that sense, and gazed at him in deadly earnestness. He turned livid. For a moment he could hardly bring his lips to frame a syllable. At length he recovered his self-command, and thundered out:

"No, sir. May Heaven strike me dead if she did!"

The fierce earnestness of his denial produced a revulsion of feeling in the court. The jury felt that the counsel had been guilty of unfairness in making such a charge so suddenly, and, as it seemed, with such absence of grounds.

The judge was annoyed, too. Sir Daniel Buller hated sensationalism. In fact, he did not like anything which threw his own dignity into the shade. He liked to feel that he was in the star part, and that everybody else in court was merely playing up to his grand effects. He, therefore, refrained from rebuking the witness, and from this stage he showed himself less favourable to the counsel for the defence.

But Tressamer had anticipated something of this sort, and he had a card in reserve. He went on with his cross-examination as if nothing had happened.

"You gave the prisoner into custody, I think?"

"I did."

"You made up your mind that she was guilty, I suppose, without much thinking?"

"I thought there was absolute proof of it."

"That's what I mean. You were anxious that she should be convicted, were you not?"

"I was anxious that she should be tried. I thought it my duty to see that this crime was punished."

"By the conviction of the prisoner?"

"If she were guilty."

"But you felt sure she was guilty? You were the one to accuse her, you know."

Mr. Lewis was getting irritated again. He made no answer to this suggestion, and the barrister forbore to press it, contenting himself with a meaning glance at the jury.

"You were represented at the inquest, were you not, by Messrs. Pollard?"

"Yes."

"The gentlemen who are now conducting this prosecution—nominally—on behalf of the Crown?"

And with this parting shot he resumed his seat.

Young Pollard instantly rose.

"My lord, the witness was anxious to explain one of his answers to my learned friend. Would your lordship allow him to do so now?"

"Yes, yes," was his lordship's answer.

The witness instantly took advantage of the permission.

"I wished to say, my lord, that the reason why I went first to see my aunt, instead of going to my sister's, was because she had befriended me when I was young. She furnished the money to start me with in Australia, and I felt it only right, in common gratitude, to come straight and thank her on my return."

Another revulsion of feeling swept over the court. The effect of Tressamer's last suggestion was obliterated. Lewis was once more in favour.

Pollard had scored. His brother twitched him by the gown from behind as a hint to sit down. But the unfortunate young man must needs try and improve on his lucky shot. He summoned up a very tragic demeanour, and put the fatal question:

"And is there the smallest ground for suggesting that you were near the house or out of your hotel after ten that night?"

The witness showed confusion. Instead of answering in the prompt, decided style he had hitherto shown, he hesitated for some seconds, and then said with visible embarrassment:

"No, there is none."

Pollard hastily sat down. The rules which govern the production of evidence did not permit Tressamer to put a further question to the witness, but he was skilful enough to do what accomplished the same result. He called across the barristers' table, in a perfectly audible voice:

"Is anyone from the hotel here, Mr. Pollard?"

"Not that I know of," was the sullen answer.

And now it was the judge's turn, and he proceeded to put to the witness that question which was in the mind of every person in court, but which neither of the counsel had dared to put, each fearing the answer might be unfavourable to himself.

"Tell me, Mr. Lewis, had you any special reason—don't tell me what your reasons were—but had you any reason, apart from what you were told by others, for accusing the prisoner of this murder?"

"I had, my lord."

"Did that reason arise in your mind as a consequence of anything which you saw the prisoner do, or which took place in her presence?"

"Not exactly, my lord. My aunt said to me—— "

The judge swiftly raised his hand with a forbidding gesture, and pursed up his lips.

"That will do. You can go."

Mr. Lewis retired, and the jury were left to wonder what the mysterious reason could be, the result on most of their minds being far more unfavourable to the prisoner than if the rules of evidence had allowed the witness to speak freely.

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(To be continued.)

OR,

The Romance of a Lost Continent.

By **Geo. C. Wallis,** Author of *The Winning of Gunhild,* etc.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Days of Desolation.

I never thought to see the light again when the waters closed over me as the helpless vessel clove them in her headlong fall, but she was a good ship, soundly built, and ballasted with loving care, and ere my breath was altogether gone, she bore up to the surface with a buoyant spring, shook the water from her deck with deep disdain, and righting, lay tossing heavily on the slowly subsiding waves.

One half of her crew was gone, but Valdo and Atris were left me, together with Orlanis, and it was not long before we got the oars out and to work, gained the broken quay, made the *Ravager* fast thereto, and set foot on the shore.

The terror-maddened thousands who had sought refuge by the sea had now fled back into the streets and houses of the ruined, grey-clad city, and were wandering aimlessly about the pavements, or crouching in deadly fear in holes and corners of the mighty buildings which still raised some framework to the smiling sky.

Drawing our swords—for we knew that the lawless and the robbers would now be reaping their grim harvest—my three officers and I, leaving the sailors to guard the vessel, set our faces towards the crumbled ruin that had once been the palace, anxiety for my loved ones quickening my steps and burning into my brain as I went, till I scarce knew how I got along over the damp, muddy, crowded, wreck-strewn streets.

The faithful three kept at my heels, however, Atris and Orlanis silent, and Valdo grumbling at my carelessness, till, through the maze of ruin, we came to the palace.

The great sea-wave had not reached so far as that by nearly a stone's cast, and so, when with the help of a score of willing hands gathered on the spot, the fallen stones were dragged away from the underground entrance, the white, scared prisoners came forth unharmed, but almost speechless with terror.

The ladies and their maids for the most part fainted or burst into tears of joy; but Briseis, though her cheeks had a death-like pallor, came and put her hand in mine without a word of her own distress, while Didron and Vesta, child-like, seized my tunic and essayed to pull me two ways at once, till I was fain to pick them up and bear them on my shoulders, laughing at their prattle the while, though there was no laughter in my heart.

Said Briseis, when I told her how the great fleet was destroyed, and how the *Ravager* alone was saved to us:

"Whither go ye now, husband, to house ourselves, our children, and our friends? There is no large house left standing, and the people seem gone mad with fear."

"'Tis a hard question, dear one," I said. "I would have taken you aboard the ship, but that the craft is helmless and battered, and needs weeks of repair before she will be seaworthy. It may be best to take the cariole and seek shelter inland. Perchance the ruin has not gone far."

"The horses are dead in their stables, King," said an attendant who overheard my speech, "and the royal carriages are crushed under the ruins of their shelter! Also, the streets are impassable, save by men on foot."

"May a thousand curses rest on these doings!" I cried in desperation; "would the gods have us to live homeless like the beasts of the field?"

"If it seemeth well to you, King," said Penares, a young officer in the Royal Guard, "I would advise that you make

yonder tower your palace till order is restored," and he pointed with his spear towards the mighty monumental column on the outskirts of the city.

It had withstood the great convulsion's fiercest shock, and now loomed grey and grim above the scene of universal desolation, seeming all the greater now that the highest edifices of the city were humbled to heaps of shapeless wreck.

"Well thought and said, Penares," I answered. "Thither we will go, and that as soon as may be, for *there* are stores of food, and it is now past noon. You, Penares, with these fifty of the Guards, shall protect us on our way. As to our ladies, we who are strong must carry them this tiresome journey."

"An we be not too heavy," said Briseis, smiling, as I set down the children, and picked her up in my arms.

"Some burdens are so precious that the bearer feels no weight," I replied, as I bore my sweet load on. Behind came Valdo, bearing Didron, and Atris with Vesta on his shoulder, and several nobles and soldiers carrying their wives or love-maids or their little ones, while in front and in the rear, the guard marched with levelled spears and drawn swords.

We made but slow progress through the choked streets, and awful and sad were the sights that met our gaze as we wended painfully on.

Families, or sole survivors of families, sat or wandered disconsolate about the ruins of their houses; priests kept watch with keen daggers over the buried treasure of their fallen temples; soldiers stood on sentry at their appointed places, heedless of what had happened around; and hundreds of homeless, friendless outcasts, listlessly or with terror-haunted looks, ran stumbling hither, thither, everywhither, as though seeking what they had lost, throughout the great city.

Bands of armed robbers, and strong ruffians single-handed, prowled about the streets in all directions, taking tribute of all and sundry whom they could overpower. It was the harvest of the murderer and the thief, and right well did they labour at the task of reaping the fruits thereof! No person, no place, was sacred to the violaters, and but that they stood in awe of the Royal Guard, the King himself would have had no respect from them.

And in the midst of the sights and sounds of disaster and violence we heard the mocking refrain of ribald songs, and saw Wantonness stalking abroad with unblushing face.

So we hurried on past crumbling houses, broken columns, shattered arches, splintered marble glaring white and cold amid the grosser wreck, temples richly carved and painted fallen to the dust, stone walls thrown flat upon the ground, great drifts of ash piled up in heaps by fierce wind-eddies, and human beings dead and dying, or outcast, homeless, friendless by the hundred-score; past all these evidences of the dreadful night, till we came to where the ways were fairly passable by gentle feet, and there our fair ones bade us set them down to walk, so that our arms might gain a rest, and, little loth, we did so, for, despite our protestations, a burning ache began to seize our shoulder-joints, and our strides grew short and shaky.

Here, in the city's outskirts, the damage was not so great, save for the thronging crowds through which we slowly made our way.

"Come, let us hasten!" I said to Briseis, seizing her roughly by the arm; "these are not sounds fit for the ears of a fair queen. Let us not linger! As for these besotted wretches, who make merry in the day of a city's death and have no better use to which to put the gain they have taken from the common folk, Penares shall do with them as he will!"

I was about to give command in my anger that the revellers and all such be slain in their cups, and their houses pulled about their ears, when from a street on the left came melody of another kind, strong and clear in the noisy air, at which the crowd hushed, and all men stopped and turned to look and listen. Clear and strong in the air resounded the loud, full tones from a hundred throats:

Cease your revels; death is nigh!
Cast your pallid looks on high.
Ask not wherefore, ask not why,
But nerve yourselves to die—to die!

Pray the gods to close your eyes,
All ye people who are wise:
Wisdom only, courage brings,
That scorns at weak and foolish things.

The dizzy summit of the column.

Nearer came the song and the singers, nearer and nearer, till we saw the people give back as for a royal progress, and down the widening space between the throngs came a company of a hundred priests, proceeding from the direction of the half-ruined Temple of the Three Spirits; Unim, the Priest of Truth, Kalen, the Priest of Love, and Neolyn, the Priest of Life, walking in the van, and every priest in the stern-faced company wearing his robes of office, and scattering handfuls of the Passport Pieces as they passed along with slow and measured tread. The song went on, sounding strangely solemn in the midst of the sudden calm:

Cease your weepings, cease your wails;
Hide the soft cheek when it pales;
Cease not praying, though it stales—
Death comes to all and never fails!

Count your days and count your years;
Mind the blood-tie that endears
Heart to heart and soul to soul—
Short is all life, and Death its goal!

The little band of stern-faced men, moving thus unarmed through a crowd of outcasts half maddened by loss and fear, slowly passed the place where I stood with Briseis clinging to me, and the fifty soldiers of the guard, with a score of other loyal subjects ringed around us, and not even for the royal presence, which priests are so ready to acknowledge,

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did they pause or cease their awful chant, but went on as though I had never been:

Throng the temples, 'plore the Three—
Rulers of the land and sea—
To make the seeming bitter, sweet;
To smooth the path for flying feet.

Ask that he—dread Amaranth—
God of Death—in this ill month
Will veil his face in shades of night,
And make your heavy burden light.

They passed, and the song grew fainter, and they marched along and were lost to view, but still we listened and clearly heard another strain of the priestly warning:

Cease your revels, night is nigh!
Cease your tears, cease now to sigh!
Cease not praying, ye who fear!
Hope is yonder: Death is here!

Now all thought of punishing the tipsy revellers, whose levity had roused my ire, vanished, and I gave no command, even when one of the gay young nobles, with a leman on his arm, and a great amphora spilling hillside wine as he came, in his hand, staggered to the door of his mansion, and after drinking deeply, blasphemed the priests, the gods, and the people, for disturbing his pleasure.

I had stopped to reflect, and Briseis had whispered words of mercy in my ear, and I had no heart to add to the general ruin. But when the maddened crowd, incensed at the profligate's disdain of their distress, surged round his house like an angry sea, and tore him from his own door, and his leman with him, and trampled them out of all shape underneath a multitude of avenging feet, I also held my hand, saying to my Queen:

"Come; we have tarried here too long. Let us be going."

Soon we reached the open space outside the city bounds, and, pressing on through the flying throng, who sought refuge on the plain, gained the foot of the mighty tower, and, unlocking the brazen doors, entered, tired, hungry, and thirsty, but safe at last.

The huge vault between the great foundation walls was used as a public granary, and an ample supply of water poured always into a marble bath in the centre of the floor, conveyed in earthen pipes laid underground from the distant hills; so we felt no fear of immediate privation, and, setting twenty sentries round the walls, with orders to let none but ladies and soldiers of the guard enter, I and Valdo, with Penares, ascended the steep and winding stair to the dizzy summit of the column.

I was weary, and faint for want of food, but could not rest till from that commanding height I had gained a view of the extent of the night's destruction.

What I saw put the desire of food from me, so that when I went down again I ate but little, and that grudgingly, as one compelled against his will.

The afternoon was well advanced and the sun's slanting rays fell full upon a vast expanse of fallen masonry, relieved and broken here and there by skeleton walls—through which the light streamed strangely—standing gaunt and grim above the wreck, amongst which moved a restless throng of houseless wanderers.

In some places dull flame and blue smoke rose from the ruins, and over all was the greyness of the fallen dust, and the confused murmur of many voices. Nearer to the tower, where the shock had been less severe, sounds of riotous mirth and the clash of arms came up to where we stood and gazed, while once, borne on a turn of the breeze, there trembled in the air a fragment of the priests' song:

Count your days and count your years;
Mind the blood-tie that endears
Heart to heart and soul to soul—
Short is all life, and Death its goal!

Beyond the city the sea tossed sullenly, its foremost surges breaking on the shattered inshore edge of the submerged bay, and in a curving line well-nigh encompassing the stricken town within its briny arms.

But it was not to the south, nor to the east, nor west, where many leagues of land had sunk beneath the rolling tide, that we looked at longest and with most dismay. It was to the north, where a level plain with forest-clad hills rising in the distance should have met our gaze, that we saw the sight that blanched our cheeks and filled us with a nameless fear.

The hills were gone, and in their place and nearer still upon the plain we caught the silvery glint of sunlight playing on the surface of the sea!

Incredulous, we looked again, straining our weary eyes upon the distance, but our first glimpse was a true one, and following the gleaming line of water we could trace it without a single break to the ocean on east and west, nor saw we any land rising from it, even in the north. Valdo first found voice in the silent awe in which we stood, staring with moistened eyes; saying, with a touch of his old dogged recklessness:

"So the prophecy that was told concerning the death of the Sleeper is true, and the day of Atlantis' end is here! Let it be thus: we who are men and know how to meet adversity like soldiers will stay here, defying the doom to the last, and dying, when the time comes, as men who have seen death too often to be affrighted at his shape!"

Penares swore a round oath that come what might, he cared not, so that he could die at the last with a blade in his hand and a foe before him; but I answered—grown wiser with sorrow and years:

"Our end comes how and when it will, my warriors, and not as we would wish, and 'tis more manly to take greater thought for the lives of others than for our own entrance to the shadows. For the sake of the fair ones whom we have brought across the city, it will be well if we can fly from here while yet there is time. We must secure the *Ravager*, and have her put to rights, and with as many as she will hold, put forth to sea."

"You are right, King," said Valdo, stroking his beard thoughtfully, "but it maketh me no less bitter 'gainst womankind to know that they may yet be the death of us, for if we wait until the ship is ready for them, as well as we rough men, a new calamity may happen."

"With them, I will sail hence," I replied, "without them, I stay here, though I die in a common grave like the unrecognisable thousands buried under yonder ruins."

They said no more, but following me, descended the tedious stair. I knew Valdo of old, and knew his fulminations against the gentler sex to be a besetting habit more than a real callousness, else I had been deeply grieved.

Need I tell of the days of misery that fast succeeded one another? Of the nights made hideous with the glare and roar of incendiary fires, the wild carousing of the drunken mobs, the shrieks of agony from the hundreds of those of gentler birth, who fell a prey to the howling horde of ruffians who ruled supreme in the city? Of the days spent in ceaseless watch and ward, and often in fighting, to keep the rebels from our gates, lest they should seize our stores of food and put us to death? I need not.

'Twill be enough to say that the horror-stricken thousands of the once stately city had lost all sense of loyalty or order and, led by the most daring spirits, had armed themselves as best they could, robbed and pillaged right and left, put to the sword all the nobles on whom they could lay hands, and then, intoxicated with success and the brief enjoyment of the luxuries taken from the great houses, had given way to the wildest excesses of riot and lawlessness.

The killing of the young and dissolute noble, which I had witnessed, was, so to speak, first blood to the restless, homeless bands, and thereafter 'twas in vain for the priests to go amongst them in endeavour to allay the mad tumult.

For two days we who watched from the upper stories saw the dignified procession wending its way through the stony avenues, and heard snatches of their warning song.

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but on the third day neither saw nor heard a sign of them, and on the fourth, Kalen, the Priest of Love, crawled to our gates, wounded and alone—as many a noble and soldier and woman had done before—and, nearly at the last gasp, was taken in.

"I alone am left of the priests of the city," was all he said.

We had then three hundred well-armed men within our walls, as well as two hundred women and children, and felt no fear of holding the place against the violence of the undisciplined hordes in the city, who were fast relapsing into barbarism.

But on the fourth day the water in the basin ran brackish as the sea, and we knew that the pipes from the distant hills were broken by the land subsidence, and the ocean water had entered.

That we were now on a sea-girt isle, cut off from what was left of Atlantis—if, indeed, any was left—the rebels knew as well as we, for from the column top we had seen messengers come in from the plain with the dreadful news, the panic with which it was received, the sending out of other messengers northward to make sure, their return with sobered faces, and the frenzy of despair with which their report was greeted.

But the ignorant masses had no thought of anything save swift pleasure and mad riot, and the smoking city, its ruins thronged now with thousands of the country people driven south by the advancing sea, was plunged into a still deeper and more savage saturnalia.

So we dared not venture out to the three wells nearest us lest our number should be reduced, and in the end, after enduring a foretaste of the tortures of thirst till some of our weakest died, we dug a well, wide and deep, down into the earth beneath the basin, having first removed the latter and stopped up the earthen pipes, and thus secured a good supply of the precious fluid.

To make our store of food last as long as possible, I had our little party numbered and the amount of grain and other edibles measured to the smallest portion, to each man and woman giving an equal share daily, and a lesser equal share to each child, myself and my own family being no exception to the rule, and found that with strict stinting of our stomachs we could hold our post for the space of five months.

"By which time," I said to Atris, "it may be that the rebel fever will have worn itself out, and the people will have come to reason."

"Ah, ye Spirits! Well was it for me, then, that Kalen, the Priest of Love, was no finder-out of the secrets of the future! Well, altogether well!

Before the second month had passed, the stores of food in the sea-girt land were nearly all consumed, for much provision had gone down in the ill-fated fleet, along with some thousands of sailors, and hunger stared the famished hordes of ragged beings in the face.

They rioted still more, fought with each other for scraps of offal 'mid the ruins, gnawed the bark of trees out on the lessening plain, ate the putrid flesh of dogs and horses, and at the last, famine and pestilence swept through their ranks, slaying them by hundreds at a time, till only a miserable company of emaciated forms crept round the tower; weak, but fierce and cunning, and still too many for us to venture out.

For some reasons we could have been happy while we lived in that tower of refuge, for we suffered and hoped and thought in common, there being no envy nor malice amongst us, no lords and no servitors, each doing his best for the good of all, each threatened by the same danger and eating the same food.

I bade them cease all ceremony in addressing me, though that they found hard, and, had we been ignorant of the chaos outside, we should have lived as a happy family.

But when we daily, hourly, heard the sound of revel or of riot, or the wail of anguish or lamentation at the ravage of the pestilence, or marked that line of water in the north ever creeping nearer, and the shore-line of the harbour sinking more and more, our hearts were sad and sore.

And when the breath of the fell disease swept over the land, and the odour from the unburied dead was wafted to us on the air continuously, till many of us sickened and died, the smile fled from our faces and the jest remained unuttered on our lips.

And when my darling Vesta fell beneath the foul blight and was summoned by Amarunth to the Shadows, and we bore her outside the walls one night and buried her with the Passport Piece between her little fingers, Briseis and I found the cup of our sorrow full to overflowing.

Let me pass on.

(To be continued.)

POST-CARD COMPETITION.—2.

NEW SERIES.

A PRIZE of two guineas is offered for the best anagram on the words, "*Short Stories* is best." Post-cards only, please. Date of closing, Monday, January 11th.

Result of Jumbled Story Competition, No. 24.

See page 45.

THE first prize of £5 goes to Mr. Claude B. Lemon, 22, Stanley Crescent, Kensington Park, W.

Prizes of £1 each have been sent to Mr. W. H. Fitz-Gerald, 9, Ondine Road, East Dulwich, S.E.; Miss N. Marshal, Reed Vale, Teignmouth, S. Devon; Miss M. E. Spencer, 8, Bettridge Road, Fulham, S.W.; and Mr. J. Burton, 102, Glenparke Road, Forest Gate, E.; and Mr. E. Beardsley, 31, Ponsonby Place, Westminster, S.W.

None of our Irish readers have succeeded in correctly solving this Jumbled Story.

Jumbled Story Competition.—27.

ON page 64 appears a story, each line of which is numbered. The lines are all in their wrong position, and the prizes mentioned below are offered to those who write on a sheet of paper the numbers of the lines in the order most nearly correct. The title is jumbled up, and should be correctly given *and pasted on the paper containing the effort*

The conditions are jumbled in the following paragraph as an example. The correct order of the lines is given in line 10.

1 SHORT STORIES on or before *Monday*,
2 awarded to the readers whose solutions first
3 *JUMBLED STORY*.
4 Four Prizes—one of £5 and three of £1 each—are
5 *January 11th*, and envelopes must be marked
6 correct. In the event of a tie, the prizes will be
7 reach this office.
8 All attempts to be delivered at the offices of
9 offered to the readers whose keys are most nearly
10 4—9—6—2—7—8—1—5—3—12—11—13—10.
11 a sheet of paper the figures in the order they
12 Competitors in doing the story should write on
13 believe to be correct, thus:

£2 is offered to the first of the readers living in Ireland who succeeds in forwarding the correct, or most nearly correct, solution.

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CURIOUS EFFECTS IN THE TREATMENT OF CORPULENCY.

THE old-fashioned methods of curing obesity were based upon the adoption of a sort of starvation dietary. Would any reader now believe that by the new orthodox treatment a stout patient can take almost double his usual quantity of food, and yet decrease one or two pounds of fat daily for a time? This is very singular, and directly hostile to previous opinions held by medical authorities, yet it is a fact. The author of the comparatively new system in question explains that the person under treatment is restored to a healthier state in the small space of twenty-four hours, having lost probably 2lb. of superfluous deposit, the organs display great activity, and more food is required. By standing on a weighing machine the proof of reduction is incontrovertibly shown daily. In serious cases a pound to ten pound weekly loss is registered until the person approaches his or her normal weight, then the diminution becomes less pronounced, the muscles firmer, the brain more active, less sleep is desired, and finally a cure is effected. Compiled reprints of medical and other journals, and interesting particulars, including the book, entitled "Corpulency, and the Cure" (256 pages), containing the "recipe," which is quite harmless, can be obtained post free from Mr. Russell, of Woburn House, 27, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., by inclosing two penny stamps.—*Dublin Weekly Freeman.*

A POSITIVE REMEDY FOR CORPULENCE.

Any remedy that can be suggested as a cure or alleviation for stoutness will be heartily welcomed. We have recently received a well-written book, the author of which seems to know what he is talking about. It is entitled, "Corpulency, and the Cure" (256 pages), and is a cheap issue (only twopence), published by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. Our space will not do justice to this book; send for it yourself. It appears that Mr. Russell has submitted all kinds of proofs to the English Press. The editor of the *Tablet*, the Catholic organ, writes: "Mr. Russell does not give us the slighest loophole for a doubt as to the value of his cure, for in the most straightforward and matter-of-fact manner he submitted some hundreds of original and unsolicited testimonial letters for our perusal, and offered us plenty more if required. To assist him to make this remedy known, we think we cannot do better than publish quotations from some of the letters submitted. The first one, a marchioness, writes from Madrid—'My son, Count ——, has reduced his weight in twenty-two days 16 kilos = *i.e.*, 34lb.' Another writes—'So far (six weeks from the commencement of following your system) I have lost fully two stone in weight.' The next (a lady) writes—'I am just half the size.' A fourth—'I find it is successful in my case. I have lost 8lb. in weight since I commenced (two weeks).' Another writes—'A reduction of 18lb. in a month is a great success.' A lady from Bournemouth writes—'I feel much better, have less difficulty in breathing, and can walk about.' Again, a lady says—'It reduced me considerably, not only in the body, but all over.'" The author is very positive. He says—"Step on a weighing machine on Monday morning and again on Tuesday, and I guarantee that you have lost 2lb. in weight without the slighest harm, and vast improvement in health through ridding the system of unhealthy accumulations." — *Cork Herald.*

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OUR NEW ILLUSTRATED MANUAL mailed free upon request, showing how these profits may be made WITHOUT SPECULATION. Cheques for profits mailed promptly 1st of each month, and for withdrawals of capital on 2nd and 16th of each month. Trial investments of £5 and upwards may be made.
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11, Place de la Bourse, Paris.

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On receipt of stamped envelope, a lady who cured herself of Deafness and Noises in the Head, after fifteen years of suffering, will send to all afflicted free particulars of the Remedy, which is simple, safe, sure and inexpensive. Address—Mrs. C. E. AUSTIN, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London, S.E.

CORPULENCY CURED By a simple inexpensive self-treatment, effecting a rapid and permanent reduction without change in diet. Particulars free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to Dr. G. A. BOYD, 14, York Buildings, Charing Cross, London.

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Particulars of a self-treatment for a permanent cure, as prescribed by eminent physicians of the U.S.A., forwarded free to all sufferers on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to Dr. B. F. FIELD, 15, York Buildings Charing Cross, London, W.

THE GREAT COUGH REMEDY, BRONCHONIA.
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JUMBLED STORY No. 27.] [*See Page 62.*

THE LIE W. CAUTIL TOLD

Once upon a time a little white cloud left its girl, while she listened tearfully. She clung to him, and the sun, for he thought that it might spoil her blue sky.

The man walked to the railway station and from the station, and soon left the country village and placid lakes.

The man was talking long and earnestly to the girl. Then he walked on towards the station.

Then the man kissed her again, and, taking his way she turned a corner, and the cloud was not sobbing. Was it possible that he shook her off just there was a half-sneer on his lips.

When he had finished his story the woman tapped soundly.

And this interested the little cloud more than one before."

"I will follow him," he said; "and see what he saw deep valleys. He crossed rushing rivers fascinating, so wondrously beautiful.

That night, as the little cloud looked on the basket.

He crossed the mighty ocean.

At this the little cloud sighed heavily.

Which, when one comes to think of it, was not so far behind.

When at last the journey came to an end, and the wench was feeding the geese with grain from a distant view with great, unseeing eyes.

"Bah! how cold and miserable," he said.

Somehow he felt that already he hated that man. The man was telling the woman of his country feet.

He passed over mountain tops. Far below him away over the city.

"Oh," he cried, "this is quite ideal. Dear me, I left them sitting there together, and sailed swiftly in his little life had the cloud seen a creature so rolled down her sleeves.

"Why can't she understand?" the man muttered. In the farm the cows waited to be milked. The geese, and cows, and more, a charming country clapped them joyously, and sailed away across the great houses, he noticed a man and woman sitting very surprising.

The girl ran forward when she saw him, and walked down the road. The little cloud followed him lightly on his arm.

Then the farm gate clicked behind her, and she disappeared long ago. I declare I have never seen geese cackled for their food.

The little cloud heard him, and noticed now that a letter that the postman had given her. Her face remained very quiet and still as the train drew out a trifle impatiently? The little cloud was not sure.

"These country girls always take one so seriously."

He listened carefully to what they were saying.

A girl was standing at the gate of a farm reading adventures that morning.

Tired of all this grandeur, the little cloud found me in this wonderful world?"

He looked at the woman at his side. Never before anything he had ever seen before.

When the country girl had finished feeding the mischief he's up to."

"What shall I find," he cried, "that will interest our woman's hearts."

The girl remained very still, staring out to the arms of the country girl.

And the little cloud dissolved away into tears, with a gun under his arm awaiting her.

By the time the morning sun had risen in the geese, she put a large hat on her tumbled hair, and that it came from the man who had deserted her.

"Ah, you men," she said, "how you play with fresh complexion. When she had walked a little remained behind in the country.

The man replied tenderly, kissing the woman's corner, and waved his hand to the poor country English village. There were farmhouses, and clever thing. When he thought that no one would really thought that milkmaids with white arms had gun under his arm, strode away. He turned at the little cloud came out from the steam and looked very surprised to see a man in a shooting-jacket, threw her arms round his neck, while he kissed her cautiously, taking care to place himself between her parent's side, and unfurling its tiny, fleecy wings, to the ground. Instinctively the little cloud knew to the station, and hid himself in a volume of thick play with, others to win. The little cloud, disgusted, was very pale. The letter fluttered from her hand hand as he spoke, that some hearts were made to notice him he flapped his little wings and came down entered a train. Then the little cloud did a very smoke that the engine was giving out. Then he round him, he wished very much that he had out on a balcony, gazing up towards him. He looked again, and then—why then he saw that the man was the man he had seen that morning in the which fell, very softly, as drops of rain, at the girls' it a positive relief when he discovered beneath him nothing more interesting than a tiny, old-fashioned sky, he found himself over the little country village.

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Windsor, May 9/95.

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EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 420. FOR WEEK ENDING JANUARY 16TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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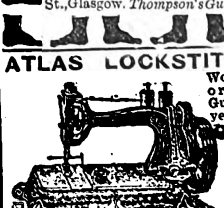

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SHORT STORIES

No. 420.] [ONE PENNY.

EDITED BY

C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

For the Week ending January 16th, 1897.

ROMANCE

LOVE

ADVENTURE

WAR

HUMOUR

PATHOS

THE SHADOW OF THE GUILLOTINE.

"ROLAND, they are coming. Hark! I hear the voices, the clatter of the pikes and guns. Oh! Roland, my husband!"

"Hush! Yvonne; be brave."

His wife clung to him, weeping, as he tried to soothe her.

Lights approached the house, and the noise without grew louder till it culminated in a furious knocking at the door below.

"In the name of the Republic!" cried a voice.

Footsteps ascended the stairs, the door was flung open, and the room filled with the fierce, red-capped soldiers of Lebon. One stepped forward. "Citizen Mauricière, you are arrested."

Yvonne gave a cry of agony. At Arras, in the year 2 of the Republic, arrest meant death.

"Courage, dear," whispered Roland. Then aloud, he asked: "What is my crime?"

"Harbouring rebels."

"Or that my father has escaped you?"

"You are an aristocrat."

"I am a Republican."

"You are a *Suspect*."

Roland smiled disdainfully and resigned himself to his fate.

"Then all is said," he replied. "I am ready."

Yvonne clung to him still, but he gently unclasped her hands and kissed her. The soldiers closed round him, and he was gone.

His wife stood dazed. Gone! to the prison; and from the prison to the guillotine was but a short journey that the feet of some condemned traversed every day. Gone! and she was alone. No, not quite alone. Her child, sleeping on a couch by the window, had wakened at the noise of the trampling and the voices, and now began to stir and cry. Yvonne fell on her knees beside him—there was still her boy left to her, to guard and protect.

The little one put his soft hand up to her face, wetting it with the hot tears, and laughed. She clasped him in her arms and covered him with kisses hot and fervent. But the curly head turned away rebelliously and the dimpled hands tried to push away the mother's face. Something else had attracted him. Yvonne looked up to see what had taken his attention, and then suddenly released the child, who slid from the couch and ran tottering across to the centre of the room, where stood a tall, white-haired man clad in the ragged, discoloured dress of a Republican soldier.

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Yvonne shrank back at the sight of the uniform, but the man took the boy in his arms, and, advancing, tenderly drew her to him.

"My poor, poor girl," he said.

"Father!"

"I saw him taken, my child; I came to warn him, but too late."

Yvonne looked round fearfully and pushed the shutters closer.

"They may return," she said. "Are you safe?"

"Yes, for a time, and my life is precious now or I should not be in this dress," he replied bitterly. "Listen, my child, this is no time for tears and sorrowing. We must act if we are to save Roland."

"Save Roland! Can we—can you save——? Oh, it is useless. Do not raise my hopes, father. Can you, of all people, think that Lebon has mercy?"

"He? No. But Robespierre will sell a life for a life. It is I, the Marquis de la Mauricière, they want. I escaped them, so Roland was marked down. He suffers for his father's loyalty; shall his father be less loyal to him than to the cause? My life is useless to the young king; Robespierre will buy it with Roland's freedom."

"Ah, no!"

But the father continued resolutely: "My child, I can trust no one but you, and I must not be taken, for my life is my son's. You must go to Paris, see Robespierre, plead with him. If that fails—denounce me; and when he gives you Roland's pardon, you shall tell him where I am hiding."

"No, no! I cannot betray you; Roland would curse me; my child would learn to loathe me. Do not ask me to do this. See, I am brave and can bear the agony of parting with my husband. He himself will die an honourable man. I shall bring up my child, my little Roland, to reverence him; do not ask him to live in shame, and me to be the betrayer of his father."

The old man's eyes shone with unshed tears, his stern lip trembled, but he drew himself up imperiously.

"I command it," he said. "I am still the head of the family; will you rebel against me, as this *canaille* has rebelled against its King? I alone am answerable for my son's arrest, and if I would save him, will you refuse to do my bidding?"

Yvonne hesitated still. "Do not ask me," she sobbed.

A great tear rolled down the old man's bronzed cheek. Almost pleadingly he stretched out his hand.

"Will you not let me save my son, my Roland? Will you, his wife, not help me? Think, think if this child, your little Roland, were in danger, would *you* not give up your life for him?"

Yvonne involuntarily caught her baby from her father's arms and pressed it to her bosom. The answer was there.

"Then you will go to Paris?"

"Yes," she murmured between her sobs. "May God and Roland forgive me. I will go."

* * * * *

"A woman?"

"A woman, citizen."

Robespierre trembled. He was a coward, and but nine days before Cecile Renault had perished for her attempt on his life. Marat was but one year dead by the knife of Charlotte Corday.

"Her name?" he asked harshly.

"Yvonne Mauricière, from Arras."

"I will see her;" and the Dictator's thin, dry hand was laid on the pistol beside him.

Yvonne, pale and trembling, entered and advanced to the table.

"Back there! Stand back, *citoyenne*. What is your business?"

"Ah, Citizen Robespierre, to plead for a life."

"You are from Arras, a Royalist town. It is useless."

"But Roland, my husband, is not a rebel. He is a good Republican. Hear me, monsieur."

"Eh?"

"Citizen. Hear me; he is guilty of no crime. He merely gave a little bread to a priest, who——"

"Priests! The worst of rebels. It is enough; he feeds the enemies of France—he feeds the guillotine." Robespierre answered with a convulsive smile.

"But is it a crime to be punished with death? Think, citizen, a little bread to a starving man. And we can pay if need be, any fine—anything. Oh! not death!"

"It is decreed."

"Mercy, mercy!"

Robespierre twitched his head impatiently. Yvonne had thrown herself on her knees, and the tears streamed down her cheeks.

"Ah, then it was false," she cried despairingly.

"What was?"

"They told me that you were once merciful and pitiful. That in our very town once you would not sentence even a criminal to death, and now—now——"

"Now it is for France, and these are traitors. Come, come, *citoyenne*, I have no time; the Convention waits."

"No, no, one moment, monsieur—stay. Your heart is a stone; you are ice; you will not give me my husband's liberty—I will buy it then."

"Justice is not bought," croaked the Dictator, folding his hands and pressing one into the other nervously.

"But if I denounce to you an enemy; one you have long sought?"

"His name?"

"The Marquis de la Mauricière."

Robespierre looked at her keenly. The only sign he made was a contraction of the lips and a deeper breath. Before he spoke again, he carefully brushed from the shoulder of his blue coat some powder that had fallen from his hair.

"And your husband's name is Mauricière," he said coldly.

"He is Roland's father."

"Then Lebon did well. These Royalist families must be stamped out."

"But my husband is a Republican."

"Bah! Where is this traitor now?"

"First, my husband's pardon."

Robespierre fixed his eyes upon the table in silence. At length he spoke, and his voice was softened; the Northern dialect sounded as musical as before it had been harsh.

"*Citoyenne*, you are a good patriot. The Republic, stern to rebels, can reward her daughters. You have denounced a traitor; France will give you a life in return. Let but your denunciation be complete. Where is the rebel hiding?"

"His son's pardon first."

"It is granted, *citoyenne*. A patriot of Arras has a double claim on Robespierre. Is he in Arras?"

"Pardon, citizen."

"Eh, speak."

"I would have the order for Roland's release."

"I have given you my word."

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"My husband's life must not depend on a word, Citizen Robespierre."

"Bah! you—well, well, you shall have it."

The Dictator took his pen—that pen that had given the guillotine so many victims. "Thermidor 3th," he murmured, and wrote; then, folding the pardon, he passed it to Yvonne, who thrust it in her dress eagerly.

"Now, *citoyenne*."

She drew forth a slip of paper and handed it to him. Robespierre read, nodding his head.

"You are a good *citoyenne*," he said, "and shall convey the warrant for the rebel's arrest with that for his son's release."

Once more he wrote. "Give me the pardon again," he said, looking up.

Yvonne hesitated, trembling.

"Tut! it is only that you may not destroy the one and carry the other safely."

She gave it to him, and he added a line more to it, placed both documents under cover, and sealed the packet with the seal of the Republic, One and Indivisible.

"If that seal is broken," he cried harshly, "the pardon is useless. Go!"

Heart throbbing, face pale, she left the room without a word, and the Dictator, with a cold, mirthless smile on his face, hurried to his place in the Convention.

* * * * *

The road from Paris to Arras is over a hundred miles of flat country. A test of endurance for a good horseman with relays of horses, but for a woman who had already covered the ground and was almost fainting from fatigue and anxiety, it was a task almost hopeless. But Yvonne rode for her husband's life. In Paris, by the greatest of good fortune, she had purchased a fresh horse; her own was too spent for use without a day's rest, and that rest she dared not make. A horse could go no farther—the woman, half mad with fear, strung to the utmost tension, conquered over-wrought nature and would go on till she reached the goal or till she dropped dead from the saddle.

But it was slow journeying—too slow for the prize at stake—and yet without constant halts, she knew she could not accomplish her task. Three days passed and still she was only at Amiens—reeling in the saddle and but half-conscious. Twice she fell fainting by the roadside, but twice, bruised and cut, she mounted again, desperate, when sense returned.

On—on till she should fall to rise no more. On—on! Twenty miles now, only twenty; and the early morning sun shone through the mist, over the trodden corn and the charred cottages of Picardy. Nature seemed to strive for her. The cold breezes of morning cooled her hot, throbbing forehead. The birds sang of hope, could she have heard their songs through the rushing and ringing noises in her ears. Even the road grew smoother and straighter, till as the mists cleared she saw in the distance—the citadel of Arras. Ten miles more; but, even within sight of the town she sank on the horse's neck—felt everything slipping away from her—her eyes grew heavier and the dull pain behind them greater, till it blinded her. If she should fail almost at the gates!

She heard the rippling of a stream to her right and feebly drew rein. It was her only hope, and she slid from the saddle with a last effort and, crawling to the brook, plunged in. The shock of the sudden coldness revived her, and as she dashed the water over her head, her eyes cleared. It gave her the temporary strength and relief she so needed. If that strength lasted but one hour it mattered not then if death came.

As she climbed to the saddle again, the water dripping from her hair and clothes, she looked back along the white road. A single figure was in sight—a horseman, spurring furiously, feathers and sash flying, the sun-gleam on his scabbard. Yvonne gave a cry and urged her horse to the gallop. There was danger to her in this hurried rider, and she convulsively clutched at the precious paper in her breast, for might not his mission be to delay her and seize the pardon—to prevent it ever reaching Arras?

It was for a life, and mile after mile they raced—the citadel growing bigger and plainer till the houses could be clearly seen, and the crowds gathering in the streets.

The red skeleton of the guillotine; the soldiers; the line of tarr-headed, red-smocked prisoners; the thronging multitude—all come into view as she passes through the gates, and hark! the *Ca Ira!* the death melody with which Lebon ushers his victims into the eternal silence!

She screams and waves the pardon on high. Her voice is powerless and dies in a harsh whisper. One sees her and shouts to the executioner; a yell goes up from the crowd. Lebon, the butcher, deliberately turns his back on her, and waves his sword for the doomed to ascend the scaffold faster. Faster! Oh, God! are there not enough to die! And there, see! Roland, her husband, fourth in the rank, and the great axe rushes down on the neck of the first.

She dashes into the crowd. "A pardon, a pardon!" Lebon takes it with a scowl, but Yvonne sees only the upturned face of her beloved.

The seal is broken; one glance, and Lebon gives to a soldier the warrant for the arrest. He looks at the other paper and suddenly his face clears, and he laughs a fierce laugh. "Proceed," he cries to the executioner, and throws the pardon back; "it is unsigned."

With an awful look of horror on her face Yvonne sees the truth. Her sufferings, her hopes, her almost superhuman toils have been in vain, and she falls into the outstretched arms of a citizen.

The crowd mutters; the *Ca Ira!* rises triumphantly. The axe grates and falls with a thud. Another head for the basket! Thud! Roland steps upon the planks, and with a look of anguish, turns to take a last farewell of his wife.

Another clatter of hoofs, and another rider—his feathers and sash fluttering.

"Stop," he cries between his laboured breaths. "Stop, in the name of the Convention. Robespierre is dead!"

Silence; and then a shout of joy from the multitude. France is tired of blood.

"'Tis false," shouts Lebon furiously. "Mount there—mount the ladder. *Scélérat!* on with the work. The drums, strike up; the drums!"

"It is true. Robespierre, St. Just, Couthon, Henriot—their heads are under the guillotine."

A cry of ferocious joy—a terrible cry—arises from the crowd and Lebon turns pale and wavers.

His power is gone, and even under his eyes the citizens, rushing to the prisoners, set them free and bear them off in triumph.

The Reign of Terror is over.

WALTER ROTHWELL.

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THE THREE MURDERS.

I.

WITH their bundles of linen on their heads or under their arms, their wooden shoes clattering against the broken stones on the road, beneath the soft rays of the rising sun, the women were going to the washing-ground, in groups of five or six, chatting light-heartedly, or singing as they passed by the last houses of the village of Kersaint.

The oldest woman, little and thin, with grey hair under her white head-dress, her eyes brightly sparkling from a face which bore traces of the ravages of the wind and sea, cried: "What chatterboxes! We will see presently whether you work as hard with your hands as you do with your tongues."

Still laughing, one of the young girls retorted, a malicious smile curling the corners of her mouth:

"Ah! Aunt Naïe, we will do as much as your daughter, who has not even come with us."

A ponderous-looking woman with a heavy jaw interjected: "She is, of course, still asleep, your daughter Haude, frightened of spoiling her fair complexion!"

But the old woman replied:

"If you only knew! The poor child was up and at work before any of you, seeing that every morning she has first of all to take the milk to M. Gurguy, and as you know, she goes straight from there to the stream where we shall find her."

The girl who had spoken before exclaimed:

"As for the poor lonely gentleman who came, nearly a year ago, to live among the ruins of the castle like the owls, I have ceased to wonder about him. Probably he has had a visitation. He makes me frightened! Whenever I meet him I cross myself and say a 'pater' or an 'ave,' it is more prudent!"

Naïe shrugged her shoulders.

"Idle gossip! Visitation indeed! There is more sense in him alone than in all of you put together, I can tell you. A good and brave young man, and not at all proud, as more than one of the fishermen at Port Sall knows well. Did he not relieve the orphans and widow of Baptiste Sauter who was drowned this winter? If he has no friend in his own class it is because he prefers people like us. This is nothing to what my husband, Jean-Marie Le Floc'h, says of him. He declares there is no one more learned in the world than M. Gurguy. He is always with his books and his writing, taking notes and describing lots of things one sees in the stones which show what happened in our country long ago."

"Why does he bury himself like a beast in this nest of adders of Trémayan, and not live as everyone else in the town of Kersaint like a Christian?" interrupted one of the washerwomen. Her neighbour added:

"I should die of fright among those old stones which can scarcely hold together, and which are certainly visited at night by evil spirits which one feels but cannot see. I shiver at the mere thought of it! Good heavens! If he is not their friend it is a wonder he is not frightened out of his wits exposing himself to these uncanny visitations!"

The old woman smiled, shaking her head.

"He is no more afraid of the invisible than the visible. You only need to see him out at sea in a great storm to understand that he is as courageous as any of our own men. I wager that to-day, in spite of this north-westerly gale, he is out with Le Floc'h to help him haul in the nets and tighten the ropes."

She glanced along the shore on which, as far as one could see, the foam of the waves shone white under the slanting rays of the sun, while one heard the regular booming of the big rollers dashing themselves against the rocks which are to be found along the extreme north-west coast of France, where the Channel meets the ocean.

Having passed the last house in the village, the women, turning to the right, took the road with a high bank at one side, leading to the sandy shore and skirting the forest which rises in front of the ancient fortification of the old feudal Castle of Trémayan. A large flock of ravens passed squalling above the women, looking downwards and disappearing behind the turning of the road.

"The breath of Death, which I thought I felt myself," exclaimed one young girl, throwing herself backwards with such a movement that the whole group for a moment stood still.

Naïe asked uneasily:

"None of them pecked you, Marie Anne?"

"Oh, no, thank goodness!" replied the young girl. She made at the same time an instinctive and protecting sign of the cross, for she knew the Breton superstition that anyone struck by the beak of a raven will die shortly.

Looking at the square keep of the castle, of which the imposing mass with its granite walls, in the thickness of which was the winding staircase forming the means of communication between the four storeys, rose towering above the general ruin of the other parts, another exclaimed:

"Look! I have never seen so many. What is the matter? Why are they so excited? And see, see, these are going in the same direction as the others."

The whole stretch of blue sky around the washerwomen was dotted with them, and their sinister "Crou, crou, crou," drowned the sound of the waves.

After a moment's hesitation and alarm the group of women continued their way on the words of Naïe Le Floc'h:

"It will not do to let these birds of ill-omen prevent us going to our work. Haude will make us all ashamed of being so late."

She listened for a moment at the side of the stream. Then running to catch up the others, she exclaimed:

"I believe I can hear her at work, if I am not deceived by all this noise."

They had begun to sing again when the youngest and gayest of the party, who was walking a little in front, turned to look at her companions:

"I can see Haude, she is already there by the stream, but if you think she stops her work—Ha! ha! ha!"

The others came forward confusedly, curious, and Naïe grumbled:

"What! What does she say, this impudent girl?"

The girl replied:

"She is lying full length in the long grass, asleep! Ah, well! one may be sure she has to make up for

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rising so much earlier than we did. But she does not seem to be disturbed by the noise the ravens are making just above her."

At some little distance one could see the stream in its bed of reeds and rustling grasses, making a patch of blue in the midst of the last green which still resisted the mellowing touch of autumn. Quite close to the washing-ground the form of a woman lay outstretched.

The old woman muttered, hastening her steps:

"Is it possible? Such a good girl usually! I must go to her!"

But one of the young girls, surprised that Haude was not awakened by their approach and the noise of the birds, faltered:

"Perhaps something is the matter. She may be ill."

Secretly uneasy Naïe demanded:

"Ill! What do you mean?"

She called:

"Haude! Haude!"

The large flock of ravens, disturbed by the sudden invasion, continued to circle overhead, and to chatter even more loudly than ever; and as the old woman hurried towards the stream, three or four were flying nearly at her feet between the tall grasses bending over the water.

A large flock of ravens passed above the women.

She uttered an agonised cry.

"*Mon Dieu!* My daughter! What is the matter with her?"

The others had hastened up to her, and the girl who a moment ago was chaffing, now terrified, pointed to the young girl's heart.

"Blood!"

Louder than the breaking of the sea on the sandy shore, wilder than the dismal cawing of the birds of ill-omen hovering in the air, a terrible lamentation arose, echoing and re-echoing amongst the old crumbling walls, and filling the valley with sounds of woe.

"Lord! Lord! They have killed my child, my daughter, my beloved treasure. Dead! Dead! Haude, my dearie. Oh!"

Kneeling in the damp grass, Naïe Le Floc'h tried to raise between her shrivelled hands the limp head with the cold, blue lips, pale, dim eyes, and dishevelled hair half hidden under the trembling reeds.

The wound in the throat was so deep that the head was nearly severed from the body, and there was no hope of restoring life. She lay stretched out a little on the right side, her arms thrown out in front of her. A bundle of linen lay at a little distance, as if the poor girl had been surprised as she was preparing to wash and, throwing her bundle down, had tried to escape.

Terrified, the women did not dare to stir, pressing round their dead friend, finding no words of consolation for the mother whose broken-hearted weeping rose and fell to the accompaniment of the roaring waves, and the sepulchral chorus of ravens.

II.

IN the autumn of the preceding year, when the tourists and bathers were leaving the country one after another, an antiquated old cab with its decrepit driver drove up to "la Grande Maison," the only hostelry in Plondalmezéau, a town to the north of Brest. The solitary traveller who alighted from this venerable vehicle, at least a hundred years old, a tall, pale young man, with black hair, took a room on the second floor of the hotel, announcing that he had come to explore the surrounding country, and wrote his name in the visitors' book as M. Gurguy.

He talked little, never received letters or visitors, only showing himself at meal times, when he displayed most abstemious and sober habits. He never joined in the ordinary conversation of the visitors at the *table d'hôte*, but was for ever seeking information about the curiosities and antiquities of that and the neighbouring cantons.

Always driven by the same old coachman, he visited successively all the picturesque and interesting places for miles round, looking for some traces of the famous capital of a colony of the Ossisonicus, the legendary

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Tolente. It was in vain, no vestige showed itself to indicate the site of the maritime city, pillaged and destroyed, we are told, by the Normans more than a thousand years ago.

He rambled over heaths, fields, and beaches, searching for those mysterious stones in which the country abounds, and which refuse so obstinately to tell their secret to the wise.

Nothing that he saw seemed to satisfy his curiosity, till suddenly, after an excursion to the coast of Port Sall and Kersaint, he returned completely transformed, with a radiant look in his eyes, and announced his definite departure on the morrow.

At an early hour he left in his usual cab with his luggage, taking the road to Port Sall—Kersaint.

At the Maison Blanche, where the roads branch off, he left the road to Port Sall on his right, climbing the little hill to Kersaint, which he drove through without stopping, and went direct to the ruined Castle of Trémayan.

To the astonishment of his coachman and the peasants, who, out of curiosity, had come from the neighbouring cottages, he had his bags carried to the ruined keep, and showed every intention of making his abode there, installing himself in a small hollow more like the nest of an owl than the dwelling of a human being.

With the assistance of the workman and the help of beams and planks he made his room habitable. His only furniture consisted of an iron bed, a table of white wood, some chairs, and a few table utensils. The opening towards the sea he could close with a shutter when he desired. He arranged for a neighbour to prepare his meals and look after his primitive household.

At first all the village was alarmed at this odd fancy, then, little by little, as the newcomer wronged or harmed nobody, the first surprise passed away, and they became accustomed to see him going and coming, usually silent, sometimes questioning one and another in the Breton language, which he knew very well, always absorbed in the customs, the legends, and the antiquities of the place.

He began to make friends with the fishermen of Port Sall, showing an ardent passion for the sea, venturing far by himself on the dangerous and troubled waters in a boat he had bought.

It was on the occasion of buying this boat that he got to know Jean-Marie Le Floc'h, and he soon began to look for him in preference to the other sailors.

One morning, not finding the fisherman at the usual rendezvous, and learning that he was laid up at home in his cottage at Kersaint, he went there to see if he could help him.

The door was opened by a young girl with fair hair and blue eyes, who appeared to be much astonished.

"Who are you?" he asked with interest.

A gruff, loud voice answered from within:

"It is my daughter, M. Gurguy, the only one left to us, Haude Le Floc'h, at your service."

And the fisherman, lying on his bed, continued groaning:

"This confounded rheumatism has laid me up on my beam ends, completely shipwrecked. Oh! ah! The chills one takes in our miserable calling to be sure!"

But the visitor only looked at the young girl, repeating: "Haude."

A voice explained from behind him:

"Haude is her Christian name, after St. Haude, whose tomb was formerly in our church at Laudunvez."

Just then Naïe Le Floc'h came upon the scene, dragging a cow at the end of a rope, and examining with curiosity the stranger of whom her husband had so often spoken, but whom she did not know.

She offered him a glass of new milk, and as, after drinking it, he complimented her on its richness, she proposed to send him some every morning by her daughter. The young man accepted the offer and went away musing, saying to himself under his breath the strangely charming name:

"Haude."

III.

AFTER this it was the custom of the Le Floc'hs to send their daughter every morning with the milk for the breakfast of the dweller in the castle.

However early she came, the young girl always found Gurguy seated before his table, covered with books and papers, working.

He would greet her cheerfully.

"Good-morning, little Haude."

And she would go away with a song on her lips as light-heartedly as a lark.

When she became accustomed to him she would talk to him. Very much surprised by his enthusiastic study of books and by his idea of living in such a weird place, one day she summoned up her courage to say: "Do you know that I need a great deal of courage to come here when the sun has scarcely risen? None of the country people would come a step."

"Why?" he asked.

She exclaimed:

"Why! Good heavens, the very name of this castle is cursed."

"The name?"

"Certainly. Trémayan means three murders."

This morning the merry face of Gurguy had suddenly changed, and he now said, frowning:

"Three murders! What nonsense!"

Haude insisted in a dull and trembling voice, as if she were afraid of arousing the ghosts of the slain:

"There were, we are told, many others, and if the ravens could only speak they could tell——"

She dared not finish.

He seemed so strange; his eyes had an odd light in them. Passing his hand across his forehead, then scattering his papers all over the table, he said nervously:

"Three murders! There was that of the daughter of Galon, then that of the steward killed by his master. Two, only two! The books, the stones, the ruins, nothing tell of more. But there must be reason for the name! There must be——"

He clenched his fists, a strange fury seemed to possess him, he added quickly:

"What folly! Go, go, leave me to my work!"

Already he had resumed his seat by the table, and was devouring with his eyes the pile of books and papers heaped up under his hands.

Haude went away, frightened a little at these words she did not understand, but she dared not tell the people anything of this little incident, and continued to take the milk regularly.

Meanwhile she saw what no one else noticed, that his temper, at first sweet and equable, became day by day more melancholy and sad, and that he became more absorbed in his studies, as if carried away by gloomy preoccupation. His cheerful "good-day" had now a mournful intonation.

He had never renewed the conversation on the dismal

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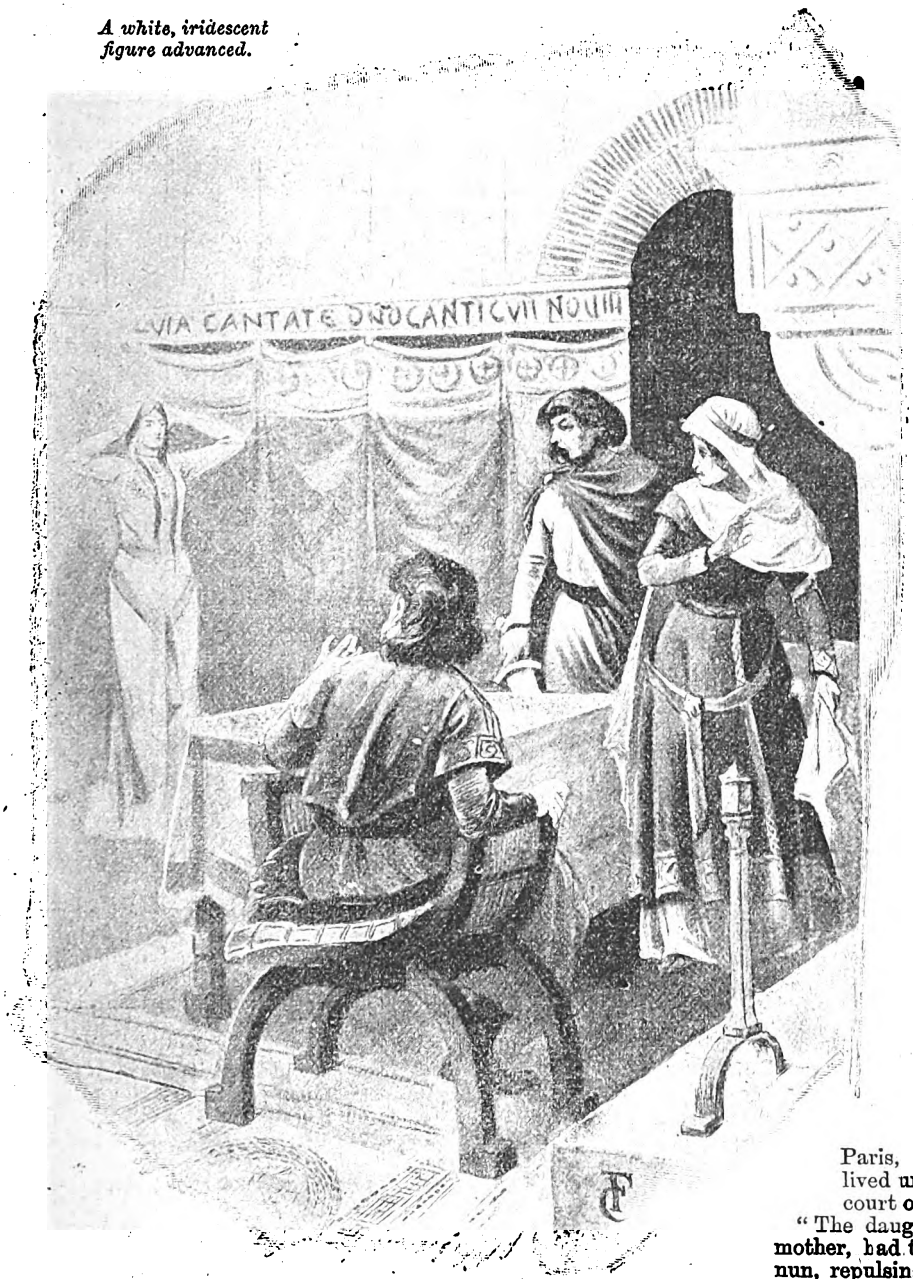

A white, iridescent figure advanced.

name of the old feudal mansion, but from his looks at times, and in his irritation of manner, the young girl understood that he was constantly thinking of it, and that it worried and haunted him.

Thus one day as she was leaving he asked:

"Do you know what happened in this castle in the very old times?"

She answered simply:

"I do not even know who owned it!"

He replied:

"You are quite ignorant of the history of your patroness, St. Haude! Would you like me to tell it you?"

Seeing him beginning to regain his old cheerfulness, she consented, and he told her the tragic event which happened fourteen centuries ago, in the reign of Childebert I.

* * *

"Long ago in the year 545, in the black month of November, the granite arches of the castle on the bay of Port Sall were under the sway of Galon, the rich and powerful Breton lord, who, in spite of his white hair and beard, had brought back from the Pagan island of Great Britain a new wife, Gwinufride, corrupted by the faith of Mayou and Pélage the celebrated Celtic heresiarch.

"He seemed to have forgotten his dead wife, the sweet Florence, daughter of Honorius, Prince of Brest, by whom he had had two children, a daughter, the fair Haude——"

"Like me, my name!" interrupted the girl in surprise.

He continued without appearing to have heard:

"A son, Gurguy."

"Like you," said she again.

But the narrator remained impassive, and proceeded with his story.

"Month had succeeded month since the marriage which caused the unhappiness of Galon's children. At the end of eight years the son, not caring to remain longer at home, went to Brest to see his grandfather Honorius, and from there to Paris, where for twelve years he lived unknown to his friends in the court of the King of France.

"The daughter, ill-treated by her stepmother, had taken the veil and become a nun, repulsing all the lords who sought her hand in marriage; banished to a farmhouse, she lived like the humblest of servants.

"With the gloomy November night came the storm. The sea howled like a famished wolf. The waves, driven by the wind, flung their spray against the stones of the castle.

"Galon and Gwinufride sat alone, silent, listening to the foreboding sounds without. The step-mother, shivering, threw anxious glances towards the door.

"Suddenly the heavy fastener opened, and Gurguy appeared, excited, haggard, his sword covered with blood in his hand, his eyes turned with glaring stare upon Gwinufride, who remained seated, a horrible fear at her

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heart, while Galon sprang up terrified at the startling sight he saw.

"'I struck her thinking that she was guilty. I killed her! Haude, my sister! Pity me! She was a saint!'

"He had barely finished before a mysterious light appeared in the darkest corner of the vast room with its massive pillars, and a white iridescent figure advanced. It was Haude, holding in her hands her head with its fair tresses, which she put on her body, so that only a purple line round her neck showed.

"With a voice that seemed to come from another world, she denounced Gwinufride as the true cause of her death. She said that her step-mother had deceived Gurguy, who had just returned from the French Court, and assured him that his sister had dishonoured her name. The unhappy man had pursued her, charged her with the crime, and struck her down before she could utter a word of protest.

"She had been permitted to return to reveal the crime, to punish the guilty, and to tell the murderer that to expiate the assassination he must go to the holy patriarch of Léon, the Bishop of Pol.

"With threats and curses on her lips, Gwinufride bounded from her seat, leaving Galon terrified in his armchair, but already the hand of death was upon her—a thunderbolt shot through the wall, dashing her to the floor, where she expired, vainly calling Pélage to her assistance.

"The luminous apparition disappeared.

"The next day they buried the unfortunate Haude with great pomp and honour in the church of Laudunvez, and Gurguy went to Occismor to confess.

"The expiation inflicted was a fast of forty days and forty nights, which Gurguy spent in a hut of leaves which he constructed in the middle of the forest adjoining the town of Laude-Tenok, until a raven brought him white bread.

"Then, understanding this to be a sign of pardon from Heaven, he went again to Pol, whom he found surrounded by his canons. On his entrance, a flame crowned the head of Gurguy, and the holy bishop of Léon, changing the defiled name of the murderer to that of Fauguy (Flaming fire), sent him to his monastery on the island of Batz, where he became the mitred abbot and founded the Abbey of St. Matthieu-fin-de Terre."

He ceased speaking, but the young girl, amazed, still listened, believing that he would show her the actual figures that he had so vividly depicted.

He concluded in a sepulchral tone:

"That was the first murder."

She left him, at once fearful and charmed, and for a long time the sweet image of her patron saint pursued her, hovering above her, so clear, so bright, so life-like that the least flutter of a sea-mew or gull made her suddenly lift her head as if she had felt the wings of the holy martyr caressing her.

Some days afterwards, when she was again with Gurguy, she said in a broken and hesitating voice, which was quite new to her, as she noticed his wild and restless look:

"You have not yet told me about the second murder."

An involuntary movement of defiance made her step backwards. He burst out quickly:

"It was done by one of the owners of this same castle whose wife was persecuted by a disloyal steward. But this lord killed himself in a tragic manner after wreaking his vengeance on the steward."

An exclamation of terror escaped her as she murmured:

"Perhaps that is why there are always so many ravens here."

Gurguy, lost in thought, answered:

"Ravens? Perhaps."

He seemed preoccupied, and she heard him repeat a great many times without understanding his words:

"Trémayan. Three murders! The third? Perhaps it is that which Taupry du Chastel committed when on the bridge of Montereau, his battleaxe split open the skull of Jean, the terrible Duge of Burgoyne, for delivering to King Charles VII. the tyrannical guardianship of this great feudatory."

Each time she saw him she found him more changed, looking more and more troubled. He would throw his books far from him angrily, uttering invariably the same words:

"Nothing! Always nothing! Trémayan!"

IV.

GREAT black clouds scurried from the north-west, veiling the sun which had shone in the early hours of the day, and the terrible waves dashed with wild roaring upon a thousand rocks, when the mayor and the doctor from Plondalmzéau came in all haste to the little stream beside the Castle of Trémayan.

Already there was a crowd of fishermen and peasants, gaping with horror at the corpse beside which the kneeling Naïe Le Floc'h sobbed, and conjectures as to the perpetrator of this atrocious crime passed from one to another.

While the gendarmes kept back the crowd, the doctor examined the dreadful wound. At length he said:

"Death took place four hours ago."

The mayor, pointing out the position of the arms and shoulders, observed:

"They say she tried to escape; and look, the head is nearly detached from the trunk."

Certainly the assassin was a man of exceptional strength. That would help to identify him. On the other hand, it was impossible to tell what weapon had been used to accomplish the murder. Was it a knife, a bill-hook, or a scythe? They could find nothing in the neighbourhood of the stream.

A gendarme volunteered:

"If we were in Africa I should say it was a blow of the yataghan. I have seen many of my comrades settled thus. But again, it would have needed an Arab wrist to strike such a blow."

As he was complaisantly explaining to those around him about the blade of which he spoke, one of the peasants said:

"Stop! It would be like the sabre in the room of the gentleman at the Castle."

A washerwoman added:

"It is true that poor Haude took his milk to him every morning."

But Naïe, raising her tear-stained face, cried:

"Good gracious! It is quite certain that he would never wish to do her harm!"

She was explaining that he was seldom seen except on the sea with her husband at Port Sall, when a gruff voice was heard above the noise crying:

"Haude! My daughter!"

And the father came on the scene mad with grief, his arms raised in a gesture of despair, while the stupefied women whispered:

"Le Floc'h has left his nets; can one believe it?"

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There was another outburst of despair when the unhappy man found himself in the presence of death, and in fierce, angry tones he asked:

"What scoundrel has done this? I will do the same to him!"

He opened his knife and stared round him with bloodshot eyes. They were obliged to reason with him a long time before they could obtain any information.

Certainly he had not gone to sea. He was too good a sailor to venture with such a wind threatening, but he had not been able to prevent Gurguy embarking alone as usual in spite of the strong swell. He was a madman or a fool to risk it. At present he was out there in the open sea.

His frightened eyes gazed at the tumultuous waves, and the angry clouds which were making day into night, a night of shipwreck, terror, and sorrow.

"This time he is lost!" decided a fisherman, after vainly trying to distinguish a sail.

Again all attention was concentrated on the little group weeping in their grief, in the centre of which was the corpse.

They had reascended the road leading to the beach, and gone some way in the direction of Kersaint, when a child of twelve years, coming from the ruins, said in a stifled voice to one of his comrades:

"There is blood in the gentleman's room at the Castle."

The mayor had heard. He laid his hand on the boy's shoulder, asking:

"What is that you say?"

The child explained that after the peasant spoke of the stranger's sabre, he had had the curiosity to go to see it, knowing that M. Gurguy was on the sea. Hoisting himself up to the loop-hole, of which the shutter had not been closed, he had seen the weapon and the blood.

The doctor said emphatically:

"We must go to see. We cannot wait for the magistrate. He will not arrive before the nightfall."

Leaving the disconsolate procession to go on to the Le Floc'hs' house, the mayor, the doctor, and the sergeant, went to the keep above which the weird cawing of the ravens still sounded.

As soon as the door was forced, they saw that the child had been right. On the white sheet of the bed there were large red stains, and across was thrown the yatagan wet with blood.

The chief gendarme said:

"You see I was right about the weapon." The mayor concluded: "Gurguy was certainly the

There was a crowd of fishermen and peasants.

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assassin. It is strange. The mother herself seemed to defend him."

But the doctor who had gone up to the table showed a paper on which were some lines recently written; he read aloud:

"Gurguy went to look for Haude, and having found her near a stream washing some apparel called her by name. She, not recognising him after his long absence, and not knowing why he called, left her washing and fled.

"Putting his hand on his sword he pursued and caught her, striking her on the neck so that he cut off her head."

A red smear as if a blood-stained hand had touched the paper terminated this fatal message.

They all gazed at him bewildered.

The doctor looked at the other papers and the open and closed books lying in disorder on the table; they were books relating to the antiquities of the country, historical studies—more particularly those concerning the Castle of Trémayan and its different possessors. There on the leaf of a book, conspicuous in big letters were the words:

"Trémayan—The Three Murders."

"Ah! that is it!" finished the doctor. "But he is mad, this Gurguy."

Little by little he constructed the drama, divining what had passed in the stranger's mind who must have imagined himself descended from the ancient lords, because of his name, which was that of the original owner.

Without doubt the meeting with the young daughter of Le Floc'h, whose name was Haude, had turned his brain.

Traces of this monomania were found in some lines showing a debate which Gurguy must have had with himself, a struggle against the growing invasion of murderous thoughts.

The task of the Court of Brest would be singularly simple. It was only necessary to leave the room as they found it, and to seize the culprit. The chief gendarme gave the signal to his men, one was placed to guard the door, and another sent to Port Sall.

* * * * *

The same evening when the magistrate arrived at Kersaint, some fisherman discovered on the shore facing the Castle of Trémayan, not far from the stream, a corpse much bruised by the rugged edges of the rocks. It was that of Gurguy, drowned according to the prophecies of the sailors.

Had he voluntarily sought death in a moment of consciousness, of lucidity, to expiate the murder of Haude le Floc'h, or was he simply a victim to his own imprudence? No one could ever know. His books and papers were carefully examined and only confirmed the first diagnosis of the doctor, but could give no information as to his standing in the world.

Without parents, family and friends, unknown to all, the unfortunate man was buried in a disused corner of the cemetery under the name of Gurguy, which was perhaps not his. Only the black ravens remained the faithful watchers in the ruins of the Castle of the Three Murders.

J. TOUDOUZE.

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A SEPARATION.

THE room which I inhabited at that time in Via Bagutta was really higher up than was needful. I told myself so four times a day, when I ascended the one hundred and twelve steps that separated me from the level of the throng in the street, but because when one had reached the top there was to be enjoyed a magnificent panorama of roofs and chimney-tops, I stayed there. Besides, in the course of four months I had made the acquaintance of all my neighbours: and usually among the neighbours of a bachelor there is someone that he would be sorry to miss.

It was there that I knew the oddest wedded pair that can be imagined. To say Signor Sulpicio and Signora Coneetta were one, is not a metaphor; for between them they hardly had as much flesh and bones as an ordinary well-set-up individual. But their united ages were a decade more than a century and a half. And if Signora Coneetta had taken the freak to stand upon her husband's head, she would have bumped the ceiling. Now, the rooms in that house are three metres and a half in height—eleven feet eight inches, by the English measure.

Whoever has solved these arithmetical problems will have before him, I should think, the precise likeness of these old persons, and sees them, as I do in my mind's eye, long, meagre, gaunt, with white heads, faces seamed by wrinkles, with sunken, gleaming eyes.

They had shared their joys and sorrows, bed and board for sixty years; and had gazed into each other's eyes until the two faces had grown alike, and but for their noses, they might have been supposed to be brother and sister. But those noses had persisted in remaining the antithesis of each other: that of the husband was hooked like an eagle's beak, and seemed to keep watch upon all that went into his mouth.

Signora Coneetta's nose turned up, as if prudently withdrawing in order not to embarrass the good mouthfuls. The comparison is not mine; they invented it themselves, at the wane of the honeymoon, in a moment of anger over a dish that tasted of smoke. It was the first cloud in their azure, an ugly cloud that rose from the dish to their noses, and then passed into their habits of feeling. They ended by believing themselves totally incompatible.

Coneetta spoke of returning to her parents, and Sulpicio was willing that she should do so, but as they were on the wedding journey the matter was deferred. But the fatal word had been spoken—a separation. The day after, Sulpicio recalled the morning discourse which his father-in-law had addressed to him; remembered how he had sworn to make his bride happy, a crowd of tender memories, of sage reflection, impelled him to induce Coneetta to remain under the conjugal roof.

On her part, Coneetta, as judicious a young woman as ever was, had called to mind her mamma's counsels, the "Yes" spoken at the altar, the envy of her friends who remained spinsters; she thought of the grief of her family, the secret joy and false pity of the other girls—and concluded that on the whole Sulpicio was not so bad, and that it was all the fault of that unlucky dish. Then the pair smiled, clasped hands and exchanged the kiss of peace. But there was a tacit understanding that they took each other on trial. That trial, having weathered a thousand tempests, had lasted for sixty years.

Now and then the neighbours were startled by a shrill scream. "That is Coneetta!" they said. And Coneetta it was. She had a way—when she had launched at her domestic tyrant all the charming epithets accumulated in her verbal researches of the past sixty years, without conquering the forces of his vocabulary—she had a way, then, of giving one final shriek. People ran to the scene and found that old Sulpicio had sought safety in flight down the stairs while Coneetta flung at him from the landing one last descriptive adjective.

The first cares to the injured were lavished on Coneetta; and we had learnt that these must consist in letting her talk until her wrath had evaporated. Woe to any who should pity her or tell her that her husband was not the right sort; for when her anger seemed spent, it would blaze up like a lucifer match, to protest that she wished to marry him and would keep to him; that what her Sulpicio was nobody could know but herself; nobody need teach her to read in his heart, she knew all about him, these many years, and he was worth all the rest of mankind put together.

When the storm was over, and the landing deserted, she would peer out from her room, look about her, her head shaking under its big black silk cap, slip down to the next floor, and knock at the door of Signora Nina, a young widow who lived with an infirm uncle who was a friend of Sulpicio. Coneetta knew that her man was very fond of his friend's young neice; and she not only was not jealous but begged the aid of Nina as a peacemaker. About the same time the fugitive husband would return stealthily into the house, climb the stairs, and invade, panting, my apartment. He knew that Coneetta loved me like a son, that a word from me would influence her, and trusted to me to restore domestic tranquility.

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My part as mediator was not difficult, and I do not think that Signora Nina had a harder task. As soon as Coneetta saw me, before I spoke a word of my embassy, she would press my hands between her knotty ones, and, mutely shaking her head and raising her eyes to the ceiling, express to me her sorrow for what had happened, her readiness to return to her wifely duty, her gratitude for my good offices. In fact the pair could not live apart; they loved as they always had loved, in warlike guise, but as greatly as mortals may.

When the repentant Sulpicio appeared in the doorway, with a careless and indifferent air, not wishing to show emotion in my presence, Coneetta would remember some stitch in time that would save nine, and begin to rummage in her pockets for her thimble and needlecase. Then I slipped through the door, or looked out of the window, or took up a book. Sulpicio would draw near to Coneetta—Coneetta would turn a little towards Sulpicio; I could see with the tail of my eye their trembling hands clasp each other, their faces near together, lit by smiles, a few tears run down their furrowed cheeks. Finally, they embraced fervently, and I continued to look in another direction, and talk about the weather, thinking within myself that those tears and smiles were altogether worthy of the springtime of life and a pair of rosy faces.

Once, however, the squall was so terrific, that before the two ships entered together into the safe harbour of domestic concord it took several hours and much diplomacy. The word separation had been pronounced by each, and neither would be the first to unsay it. Unluckily for their well-wishers, the husband and wife had gone out of the house, and by different doors. The servant, a semi-idiotic girl, understood nothing except that master and mistress were both out. I seated myself by the chimney corner to await their return. It was a glorious winter's day. My thoughts were rather amusing; I was trying to guess which of the pair would come home first. Which? Coneetta, no doubt. Just then I heard the *frou-frou* of a gown; I rose, turned, and found myself face to face with Signora Nina, the young widow of the first floor.

The signora appeared surprised to see me, and was quite embarrassed, all the more because, having entered with her accustomed familiarity, she wished not to have the air of committing an indiscretion; and she looked round to see whether someone would come and let me know, indirectly, that she was using her right of *entrée*. Meanwhile I bowed to her, and was about to speak. She forestalled me. "Signora Coneetta is not at home?"

"Nor Signor Sulpicio. I am waiting for one or the other of them."

"And I was looking for one or the other. I will come again later."

But the knowledge that both were away from the house seemed to disquiet her, and she did not move.

"If you would like to wait here, I will come another time," said I.

"Thanks—you probably are come in order to——"

"For the same reason——"

I invited her to take my place at the fireside; yet when she was seated there, I did not leave the room. Signora Nina did not know me, but I knew Signora Nina very well. Often, from my window above hers, I had noted the colour of her hair and vainly hoped for the opportunity to learn the colour of her eyes. Now the white little hands that I had seen beating a tattoo on the window-sill were playing with the tongs of the domestic hearth; I saw clearly the face that had been a mystery to me. Ah, the Signora Nina was beautiful, or at all events she pleased me very much.

She saw that I remained standing, and made me a courteous sign to be seated: we waited in silence for some minutes; no one came. Little by little, that silence weighed upon us; she spoke to me of Sulpicio, and I spoke to her of Coneetta. When she learnt that I was mediator between the old couple, she smiled slightly. What a charming smile!

"Such a pity," she said, "to live sixty years together without coming to a good understanding!"

"These are surface agitations," I observed. "They are really fond of each other."

She made a little grimace, and was silent. After a while she said: "What time is it?"

"Four o'clock."

"It is late. I must go. I will come back again."

"It really wants thirteen minutes to four."

Signora Nina smiled and did not go away. I did not know why, but my heart was full of joy-bells ringing.

Then entered Sulpicio and Coneetta, hand in hand.

"Is peace made?" Signora Nina and I questioned with our eyes.

"It is," the eyes of the old pair responded.

"I came to pay my respects to you," said the widow to Coneetta, "but it is late and I ought to go."

Coneetta replied with great good humour: "All the better that Signor Carlo was here to keep you company."

At this my heart beat harder, and I perceived that the widow blushed. She went away; I departed very soon after.

All day long I thought of Signora Nina: I dreamt of her all night; the next day I passed the forenoon at the window in order to see her, and had the good fortune to exchange a good-morning with her; during the next month I never failed to go at the same hour to the window, and always with the same happy result. One day I ventured to smile at her, the next day she deigned to smile on me—and five months and one week later, we were married.

We were happy. We lived in a pretty little house sufficiently far from the madding crowd; our windows were not overlooked by inconvenient neighbours; the rooms were sunny, and our new furniture gleamed in the light. Nina's old uncle had absolutely refused—as he phrased it—to set us up in housekeeping with his many infirmities, and had gone to live with a sister of his in the country. We were content to be alone; our rooms were decorated in pink, and filled with visions not less rosy. Nina had such grace of manner, such a sweet smile, a look so serene, a voice all music, and a certain way of placing her hands on my shoulders that meant "I love you"—that I could have spent whole hours in contemplation of her. She had a single defect: that of slamming the doors when she passed from one room to another. Often, startled from my fantasies by the bang of a door, I should have yielded to an impulse of irritation if her rosy face had not at once appeared before me.

And it must be admitted that I was a model husband to Nina. I never left her alone, or at least as little as my business allowed; I never contradicted her; I anticipated her wishes, never spoke an unkind word to her; I did a thousand childish things to amuse her. I had, however, one slight defect: I was horribly absent-minded; sometimes, absorbed in some foolish fantasy, I failed to answer her smile or her speech.

There came a day when I was unusually abstracted, and she banged a door louder than common. An "Oh!" escaped me; she heard, and I regretted it. But in vain. Another time, Nina caught me in a brown study; she walked on tiptoe and was very careful to make no noise in shutting the door. The clangour of the forge of Vulcan would not have caused me to leap quicker from my chair. I ran after her, embraced her—and we had a great laugh together. But the ice was broken; we had mutually admitted one thought; we were not perfection.

However hard she tried, Nina could not correct herself; only when she slammed a door, she took on a certain air, half contrite, half mischievous, that made her more beautiful. As for me, it was in vain that, caught with my wits a wool-gathering, I shook my head and stared—I became neither wiser nor handsomer.

Our honeymoon had lasted many months, unclouded. Then came a day, a day of July, when the sun glared and the heat was cruel. She asserts that she began the quarrel, asking me what I was thinking about with my head in the clouds. But it was I who gave the first offence in the form of a very little swear word *apropos* of a door. One mild sarcasm led to another, and soon I was sulky and Nina in tears. Another occasion ended in the same way, the next time the thing went further.

"This life is unbearable," she said.

"Indeed?" said I teasingly.

"Indeed! Ah, indeed! Oh, I knew that you were tired of me. It is almost a year that we have been married."

"Ten months," I replied.

"Which has seemed like ten years to you! Our happiness has lasted too long! Oh, how unfortunate I am! You will end by hating me, if you don't do so already—and I—I shall come to hate you!"

I wanted to catch her up in my arms and run about the room with her and her wrath—a precious armful—until she should cry "enough"; I wanted to fall on my knees before her and say my little prayers for her forgiveness—all sorts of things that an indulgent husband could think of, in order to make her smile. I glanced at her; she turned her shoulders to me; I took a step towards her and she ran into another room—and I, in a pet, descended the stairs, remorseful before accomplishing my fell revenge. I took a turn round the square, not being able to go far away, and keeping in view the little home where had been my happiness. I thought of Sulpicio and Coneetta; and told myself that there was nobody to act as peacemaker between my wife and me, and that we would not have stood it if there were.

I reflected: "This is the first time—who knows if it will be the last! I must go back to her, comfort her, and tell her that we never must do so again. But how will she receive me? What wouldn't I give to be sure that she will reply to my words with a good kiss! Then we would weep and laugh over the affair together, and never speak of it any more."

All these reflections brought me several times as far as the threshold of our house, and as often I withdrew; at last I succeeded in overcoming the spell, sprang through the doorway, ran upstairs four steps at once, and in an instant was face to face with Nina, who had come to meet me on the landing. She hid her face between her hands and did not speak to me. I put an arm about her and led her into the parlour; I made her sit upon my knee and gently took her hands away from my eyes, laid my cheek against hers, and begged her forgiveness. But instead of pardoning me, she burst afresh into sobs, threw her arms round my neck, and buried her face on my shoulder. My heart beat hard; Nina's actions were expressive of misfortune. What happened during my absence? After many questions and caresses and, on her part, a great sob:

"She is dead!" said Nina.

"Who?"

"Coneetta, poor Coneetta!" My wife was silent for a moment; then raising her head, she added: "Their separation has taken place."

"Who has told you about it?"

"A friend who came to see me; poor Coneetta passed away yesterday, very suddenly."

"And Sulpicio?"

"He is in despair; he does not speak a word; he seems dazed."

"I must go and look him up."

"Oh, my dear, go as soon as possible."

I went. The heart of the old man had not been able to resist the oppression of solitude; and at night, a few hours after his companion had been carried away, he laid himself down in his widowed bed with the certainty that he should never see the morning.

His dead face appeared to smile at me, and to tell me that not even death had separated them. I went home with sadness in my heart, a gentle sadness that did me good, I did not like to tell my wife the news, and was glad when someone else told it to her, in my presence. As soon as we were alone she clasped me in her arms as though she were afraid.

"Carlo!"

"Nina!"

She raised her eyes as if to read my thought, and slowly murmured these words:

"That will be the way with us, will it not?"

I. FARINA.

RESULT OF JUMBLED STORY COMPETITION.—No. 25.

THE first prize of £5 goes to Mr. Bernard Parry, 2, Sterndale Road, West Kensington.

The following receive £1 each: Mr. R. A. McWhirter, 32, Wake Street, Plymouth; Miss Britt, 32, Kensington Court Mansions, W.; Mr. A. S. Holland, 68, Longridge Road, Earl's Court, W.

£2 goes to Mr. M. E. Burne, The Mall, Sligo, Ireland.

Key to Jumble Story.—No. 25.

1	40	110	11	81	117	85	122	82
51	80	79	9	43	12	55	103	48
46	31	83	96	58	105	62	5	76
45	17	39	65	116	101	119	106	113
47	35	114	42	73	37	75	107	71
32	6	15	120	20	111	13	89	118
3	8	21	77	56	112	90	44	64
38	59	57	25	91	95	49	98	53
28	36	30	86	115	87	104	72	2
67	102	84	16	54	88	92	74	14
4	33	19	70	60	41	97	108	
50	109	29	22	94	66	61	10	
68	34	26	23	121	93	7	78	
69	24	27	63	100	99	18	52	

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By **ALLEN UPWARD**, *Author of "Secrets of the Courts of Europe," "The Prince of Balkistan," etc., etc.*

SUMMARY.

ELEANOR MARGARET OWEN is charged with the murder of her benefactress, Ann Lewis. Charles Prescott, who has known Eleanor since a child, holds the brief for the prosecution. His friend, George Tressamer, is in love with Eleanor, and holds the brief for her defence. The prosecution is vigorously pressed by John Lewis, deceased's nephew. The case comes on at the Mynyddshire Assizes. The result of the cross examination of Lewis by Tressamer is that public suspicion, which, for a time, rested on Lewis, is completely removed.

CHAPTER VI. (*continued*).

THE next witness was the butler, John Simons, who deposed to having fastened up the door at half-past ten on the night in question, and to having found the latch stuck on the following day. He further described the finding of the blood-stains on the bedroom door-handle. His cross-examination was listened to with interest.

"Has it ever occurred to you, yourself, to accidentally raise the latch too far in the same way?"

"Oh, yes, I've often done it, sir."

"Were you out on the evening of the first of June?"

The butler, a good-natured-looking man, with a pleasant smile, but whose mind was evidently rather unhinged by the position he found himself in, looked bewildered at this, and rather frightened. The barrister hastened to reassure him.

"What I mean is this. If you had been out some time during the evening, before half-past ten, would it not have been possible for you to have accidentally left the latch in this position?"

The witness looked relieved, and hastened to answer.

"Yes, of course, I might have."

Tressamer turned round to the jury to see if they appreciated his point. Then he resumed.

"You have known Miss Owen for some time, I think. Tell me, have you ever noticed that she was liable to nervous headaches?"

"I have heard her say she had a headache."

"What was the last time you heard her say so?"

The witness looked puzzled, and seemed to be trying to remember.

"Perhaps I can help you," said the barrister. "About this very time, now, just before this happened?"

"Ah, yes, sir, now you remind me, I remember. When she didn't come down that morning, I said to Rebecca: 'Very likely she's had another bad night.'"

"*Another* bad night? Then she was liable to insomnia?"

The witness stared.

"I beg your pardon. I mean, she sometimes did suffer from want of sleep?"

"She sometimes had bad nights, sir."

"Exactly. And you remembered she had been having them just before this?"

"Well, no, sir; I can't say as I do remember that."

The barrister frowned impatiently.

"Well, tell me this," he said: "do you know what she was in the habit of doing on these occasions, when she couldn't get to sleep?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever hear of her going out for a walk at night?"

The whole court was eagerly following this cross-examination, as the defence now began to be visible. But the answer of the witness fell like lead:

"No."

Tressamer looked deeply disappointed. He had been baffled just where he had evidently built upon success.

He only put one more question.

"You had a good many opportunities of seeing your mistress and Miss Owen together. Did they always seem to you to be on friendly, affectionate terms?"

"Yes, sir, always."

"Thank you."

This finished the butler's evidence, as Mr. Pollard wisely abstained from any re-examination.

He next proceeded to call the parlour-maid, Rebecca Rees.

A pretty, vain, pert-looking girl stepped into the box, and took hold of the Testament.

"Take off your glove," said the clerk.

She did so with some difficulty, as the thing had about half-a-dozen buttons to unfasten. Then she was sworn and proceeded to tell her story.

In a shrill voice, which visibly irritated the judge, she went on, and described how she had gone to bed, how she awoke at midnight and heard a sound proceeding from below.

"What was the nature of the sound?" asked the counsel who was examining her.

"It was a groan," was the reply, "like as if somebody was being hurt."

The prisoner's counsel here hurriedly turned over the pages of his brief till he came to a certain place, where he made a note in the margin.

"What did you hear next?"

"I heard the prisoner going downstairs."

The Judge: "What do you mean? Could you see her?"

Witness: "No, sir, I heard her."

Mr. Pollard: "She means she recognised the footsteps, my lord."

The Judge: "Don't interrupt me, please." (*To witness*) "Young woman, be careful. That is not the way to give evidence, as you know perfectly well. You musn't tell us

that you heard the prisoner. You heard footsteps, that's all." (*A pause.*) "Now, Mr. Pollard, you can go on."

Mr. Pollard: "Did you recognise the footsteps?"

His lordship frowned and shrugged his shoulders.

Witness: "I thought it was Miss Owen."

Mr. Pollard: "Well, now tell us what you did."

The girl proceeded to describe how she had got up and gone down to the front-door.

"How was it fastened?" was the next question.

"It was on the latch. The bolts were drawn back, and it wasn't locked or yet chained."

"Did you see whether the latch was up or down?"

"I object."

Mr. Tressamer had risen in a fresh burst of indignation.

"My lord, my friend has distinctly suggested the answer to the witness. I object to her being allowed to say anything about the latch after such a question as that."

"I didn't intend to lead her, my lord," said Pollard.

The judge hesitated for awhile between his natural desire to hear the answer and his fear that the witness was not wholly impartial. Perhaps a slight prejudice against Tressamer's hectoring manner had something to do with his decision.

"You should have asked her whether she had noticed anything about the latch," he said at length. "Did you?" he added, turning to the witness.

"It was *down*, sir," she returned, answering Pollard's question rather than the judge's.

The importance of the answer was chiefly in its disposing of Tressamer's suggestion that the butler might have forced the latch up. He turned round to the jury, and assumed the air of one who is being unfairly treated. But of course he could not help their seeing that the prosecution had scored a point.

Rebecca's evidence was continued till she came to where she heard footsteps ascending the stairs.

"How long was this afterwards?" asked Pollard.

"About ten minutes."

"Did you recognise those footsteps?"

"No, I didn't notice them; but I think they must have been Miss Owen's, or else I should have noticed the difference."

Tressamer ground his teeth. He was afraid to interrupt again, for fear of the effect on the minds of the jury. They are apt to think a man is losing when he interrupts too often.

"What happened next?"

"She went into the bedroom below."

"What bedroom?"

"Her own, I suppose, or Miss Lewis's."

"You couldn't tell which?"

"No."

"Well, and how long was the person, whoever it was, inside?"

"About a quarter of an hour, I should think. I thought she had come in for good, and gone to bed."

The Judge (*suddenly looking up from his notes*): "Look here, don't let me have to stop you again, or I shall do something you won't like. It's not for you to tell us what you thought. Confine yourself to answering the questions."

Mr. Pollard (*thinking the judge has finished*): "And then what did you——"

The Judge (*superbly indifferent to Mr. Pollard*): "Do you realise that you are giving evidence in a court of justice? You must be extremely careful—extremely careful." (*A long pause; Mr. Pollard afraid to begin again.*) "Well, do you ask her anything more?"

Mr. Pollard: "I beg your lordship's pardon. If your lordship pleases." (*To witness*): "After the quarter of an hour, did you hear anything more?"

Witness (*now thoroughly frightened*): "Yes."

"What did you hear?"

"I heard her come out."

At this point the judge threw down his pen, and threw himself back in his chair. Mr. Pollard hastened to take off the edge of his lordship's wrath by reprimanding the witness himself.

"You mustn't tell us that. You don't know it was the prisoner. What was it you actually heard?"

The girl now felt and looked ready to resort to tears. She really did not know what answer was safe, and prudently adopted a strictly non-committal form.

"I heard a noise below."

"What was the noise like?"

"Like someone going downstairs."

"Well, why didn't you say that? You heard footsteps going down?"

"Yes."

The judge took up his pen again and took down the answer.

"And did you notice the footsteps this time?"

"Yes; they were——"

"Stop! Not so fast. Answer my questions."

Mr. Pollard was by this time a little less nervous than the witness. He was really utterly at a loss how to frame his next question without incurring Tressamer's wrath or the rebuke of the Bench. At last he blurted out:

"Was there anything different about the footsteps this time?"

Tressamer opened his mouth, but the judge was before him this time:

"Don't answer. Really, Mr. Pollard, you are as bad as the witness. You know you ought not to put a question like that." Then, seeing that the poor young man was quite unequal to extracting the desired evidence, his lordship quietly took over the examination himself:

"Did you notice the footsteps this time when they were going downstairs?"

"Yes, sir—my lord."

"Did anything strike you about them?"

"Yes, my lord."

"What?"

"They were heavier, sir, and thumpy."

"Had you ever heard anything like it before? I mean, did they or did they not sound familiar in spite of this heaviness?"

"No, my lord; I don't remember."

"Did you go downstairs again?"

"No, sir."

The judge turned round to the jury with complacency, and smiled as if to say: "You see, gentlemen, how it can be done by one who knows how." Then he asked the counsel:

"Now, Mr. Pollard, do you want anything more from this witness?"

"No, my lord, thank you."

He sat down, feeling considerably the worse for his experience, and Tressamer got up.

He looked severely at the young woman for some seconds, and then suddenly asked her:

"Why do you dislike Miss Owen?"

At once the court was all ears. It was one of those strokes of brilliant advocacy which few men care to venture on. It was dangerous, but in the present case it was completely successful. The witness lost countenance, stammered, and with difficulty got out a lame denial.

"I don't dislike her particular."

"Do you like her?"

"No."

"Did you ever have any complaint against her when you were her servant?" (He intentionally chose a phrase calculated to irritate.)

"I wasn't her servant," was the angry reply. "I should be very sorry to be."

"I thought so. Tell me, you said to my learned friend that the first sound you heard on this night was like somebody being hurt, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"When did you discover that?"

"When did I discover that?"

"Yes, woman; don't echo me like that. You know what I mean."

"I thought so at the time."

"*What!*" The barrister assumed an expression of amazement.

"I thought so all along."

"Then why didn't you say so all along? When you were before the magistrates, did you say anything about somebody being hurt?"

"Yes, I think so."

"You think so! Remember you are on your oath, please, and that I have a copy before me of what you actually did say before the magistrates. When you were before them, did you say a syllable about a sound as if somebody were being hurt?"

"I don't know whether I did or not."

"I thought so. Did you tell the magistrate that you thought it was the sound of someone in troubled sleep?" Here the barrister read from his brief.

"Yes, sir."

"And that you thought"—here he turned over the page at which he was looking and glanced at the top of the next, so as to give the impression that he was still reading her exact words—"that the sound came from Miss Owen's room?"

The witness fell into the trap.

"I dare say I did," she answered.

The judge was equally taken in. He had read the depositions, but had not remembered their contents clearly enough to check the barrister. Tressamer went to another point.

Taking out his watch, he said:

"I want to test your notion of ten minutes. Will you turn round, with your back to the clock, and tell me when one minute has passed, after I have said the word 'Now.'"

All the jurymen and most of the other persons in court took out their watches to check this experiment. The girl turned round, and Tressamer gave the word "Now!"

"Tick—tick—tick—tick—tick——"

"Now!" said the witness, turning quickly round.

A general smile passed over the court.

"Seventeen seconds exactly, my lord," observed Tressamer. "The witness's ten minutes may therefore be put down as three. You have told his lordship that the last set of footsteps you heard sounded heavy when they went downstairs. Will you swear that they did not sound equally heavy coming up?"

"I didn't notice."

"I didn't ask you if you had noticed. Don't try and shirk my question, please. Will you pledge your oath that they weren't equally heavy coming upstairs?"

"No, I won't swear it."

"Have you any reason, except your dislike of the prisoner, for suggesting that those footsteps were hers?"

The judge interposed.

"Really, Mr. Tressamer, you mustn't put it like that. She says that she didn't dislike the prisoner, and you must take her answer. I allow great latitude to counsel in your situation, but you must treat the witness fairly."

"As your lordship pleases."

Tressamer sat down, rather glad to leave his question unanswered, as the effect thereby produced on the jury's mind would be better than if the witness had had a chance of offering her grounds for suspicion.

"Lucy Griffiths."

This was the housemaid, and her evidence contained nothing of importance. In cross-examination she admitted that she had detected no likeness between the descending footsteps heard by her and Miss Owen's. In fact, she had at first thought they sounded like a man's.

The next witness was the fisherman, who stated to Mr. Pollard that he had met a female about midnight on the eventful first of June, whom he at the time believed to be the prisoner. He thought so still.

His cross-examination elicited two facts: first, that he had once met Miss Owen at the same late hour before; secondly, that he had met other persons going in the same direction the same night, at or about the same time.

Tressamer chose to emphasise this point.

"Could you tell those gentlemen," he said, indicating the jury, who instantly tried to look as if they had been attending, and had not long ago given up the task in despair, "what the other people were like whom you saw?"

"Well, one of them was a man."

"Come, that's something; but it's not much. Can't you tell us what sort of a man? Was he tall?"

The jury instantly looked at Lewis.

"No; I didn't notice as how he was particular tall. Middlin' short, I should say."

"About my height?"

"Yes; about that. Summat about your size."

Tressamer laughed, and a smile went round the court at the serious way in which the witness gave his answer.

"Well, who else did you see?"

"I see another man afore then."

"Ah! Was he tall?"

"Why, yes; I think he was."

The jury again looked at Lewis. But that gentleman's face revealed no emotion, except a sort of sullen wrath which had overhung it ever since his last appearance in the witness-box.

At last, when all the other witnesses had been disposed of, the policeman was called and gave the usual routine evidence.

Mr. Pollard was rash enough to ask him:

"Who came to the station to inform the police?"

But his opponent at once objected, and the judge ruled the question out. Mr. Lewis's indignant declaration, therefore, which Prescott had struck out of his brief with such prompt disdain, fared equally ill in court, and was not allowed to get to the ear of the judge or jury.

At last the evidence was gone through, and then the prosecuting counsel stood up and made the final announcement.

"That is the case for the Crown, my lord."

"I will adjourn for half-an-hour," observed the judge, getting on his feet.

The whole court rose with him, and in a few minutes the entire place was empty.

CHAPTER VII.

HALF-AN-HOUR.

SCRAMBLING, rushing, hurrying, squeezing, talking, laughing, and sighing, the great throng poured out of the building and dispersed down the streets of Abertaff. One topic was on every tongue. The fate of the prisoner was the sole thing discussed. They weighed the evidence, they repeated it, they distorted it. Some were violently in favour of the prisoner, and considered half the witnesses to be committing perjury. Others were violently against her, and could not see, so they professed, a shadow of doubt in in the case from first to last. Others, again, in complete doubt as to how the case would end, wisely declined to commit themselves till they had heard more of the defence.

Then, again, these parties were subdivided into groups. There was the ignorant group, who knew nothing about the case, and went about asking questions of their wiser neighbours. There was the mysterious group, who suspected many things, but said nothing, contenting themselves with shaking their heads in corners, and suggesting that not half the real motives of the parties to the affair had come out at all. And there was the well-informed group of those who had watched the whole thing from first to last, and knew more, far more, about it than

the counsel on either side, or the criminal either, for that matter.

And they were not churlish in bestowing their information, either. There were the Lewisite partisans, who knew exactly the value of the jewels to a halfpennny, and how they were kept in a box under the bed, and how the prisoner had carried them off by stealth, and buried them somewhere in the sands of Newton Bay. Some of these, the more charitably disposed, could go even farther than this. They explained how it was that the prisoner had never meant to commit the murder at all, but simply to steal the jewels, but had been interrupted in the act by the unexpected waking of the deceased woman. They grew impressive as they pictured the elder woman suddenly roused from sleep by the midnight robber, and the emotions of that robber detected in the act of guilt. They could tell you how she started back in terror, and then, realising that ruin was upon her, succumbed to temporary frenzy, and with the weapon which she had brought to open the jewel-chest, dealt the fatal blow to her unhappy victim.

Roused from sleep by the midnight robber.

Others, less lenient in their views, had obtained quite different details. They could relate numerous previous attempts of the prisoner on the life of her benefactress. They knew how she had sought to introduce poison into her food, from which she was only saved by a miraculous chance, which caused her to be summoned from the table just as she was about to taste the fatal dish. Also, how she had on one occasion led her victim along the cliff with the well-formed purpose of pushing her over the edge; only the curate happened to come along and meet them, and accompanied them till the opportunity was gone.

The Owenite section, on the other hand, had their account, equally authentic, and, if possible, more minute and graphic than the other. They would tell you more about their villain, Lewis, than he himself could possibly have remembered. They took you back to his childhood. They started you with the well-known story of his beating his little sister, the sister in the North, whom he had refused to go and see. They explained the causes which led to his expulsion from school after school. They tracked him to Australia, and unearthed dark secrets in his life out there which would have made the bushranger Kelly reject him from his historic gang. Finally, they brought him back to England, a ruined desperado, intent on getting at his relative's wealth by fair means or foul. The robbery of her jewels was only part of his scheme. By killing her he obtained the whole of her wealth at once. Then a victim became necessary—a stalking horse to mislead the minions of justice, and whose punishment would insure his own safety. He was thus a double murderer.

So the tongues wagged. Meanwhile, the object of these rumours had made his way round in a towering passion to the seat from which his solicitor was trying to get away.

"What does this mean?" he cried, as soon as he got near enough to speak without being heard by others. "Are you playing me false? Where is Mr. Prescott?"

"He was called away into the other court," said Mr. James Pollard, the barrister's brother, who was a partner with his father in the Porthstone firm.

"He ought not to have gone. Your brother managed the case wretchedly. I wasn't allowed to say the most important thing of all."

"My brother did the best he could. No one could dream that Prescott would desert us like this. I shall never give him another brief, I promise you."

By this time they had got outside the door of the court-house. They turned towards a hotel close by, where a general luncheon was put on the table for the convenience of people having business in the assize-courts. The civil court had risen a few minutes before the other, and the place was crowded with solicitors, witnesses, jurymen, and the general public.

"Look here, Mr. Pollard," Lewis said, as they fought their way into the room, "I could have proved that about the jewels up to the hilt if I had been allowed. Why, my aunt was speaking to me about them that very night, and she said Miss Owen knew of them."

"And why on earth didn't you tell me all this before?" retorted the solicitor.

"I thought I had."

"Thought you had! Goodness me! that's just like you laymen. You keep back the chief points in a case, and then you're angry with us because we don't guess them by instinct. Why didn't you tell the judge this when he was examining you?"

"Because it wasn't said in the prisoner's presence."

"Pooh! Why, it was evidence of motive. But there, it's no good trying to explain the law of evidence to you. If anything's gone wrong, you have yourself to thank for it—a good deal, that's all. What will you take?"

And they fell to on the refreshments before them.

Meanwhile the barristers, whose self-imposed code forbade them to enter a public hotel room in a town where the assizes were being held, had straggled off, some to the County Club, and others to the common-room reserved for their especial use in the chief hotel of the place.

Among the latter was Tressamer, who found Prescott awaiting him anxiously, and trying, with poor success, to get through the wing of a fowl. He (Prescott) looked pale and dejected; but Tressamer rushed into the place in a state of exaggerated buoyancy, and called for a bottle of champagne.

"George, how goes it?" cried his friend.

"All went merry as a marriage-bell," returned the other. "Have no fear; keep up your heart, old man. Leave it to me; I'll get her off. Much obliged to you for going away, though. Young Pollard did come some croppers, I can tell you. Buller's against us, of course, on the evidence; but what do I care? I'll get the jury, see if I don't. I'll make a speech this afternoon the like of which hasn't often been heard in this dead-and-alive hole. Lewis, beware! Here's confusion to the guilty, and safety to the innocent!"

He had rattled on in a jerky, excited, nervous manner, and he wound up by drinking off nearly a tumblerful of champagne. Prescott could hardly make him out. He feared the strain of the last few weeks was unhinging his friend's mind.

"Gently," he said, remonstrating; "you must keep cool, or you will spoil everything. Beware of old Buller. When he is giving you the most rope, he is getting ready to come

Tressamer rushed into the place.

down on you most heavily at the end. I think you'll find it a weak jury. They will do pretty well as the judge tells them."

"Don't you be afraid, Charlie," retorted the other in the same unnaturally careless strain; "it's my case, and I know how to manage it. I've sworn to save her, and, by God! I'll do it, if I have to declare I did the thing myself! By Jove, didn't I touch up that scoundrel in the witness-box, though? You saw me, Beltrope?"

He called to another barrister, who had been present in court the whole morning.

"Yes, I know," answered Beltrope; "but you'd better be awfully careful, Tressamer. So far as I could see, your line of defence is that Lewis must have done it. Now, unless you're prepared with some very strong evidence against him, you'd far better change that tack before it's too late. You'll have old Buller dead against you, as Prescott says, and, I dare say, the jury too. Whatever you do, don't leave it in such a way that they must convict one or the other."

"Rubbish! You don't understand," replied Tressamer. "Wait till you've heard my speech, that's all. Well, I must be off." He drank some more champagne. "I want to have a wash just to cool my head."

And he darted out of the room to go upstairs. The other barristers looked at each other and exchanged meaning glances. They did not like to say much out loud before Prescott, who was known to be Tressamer's friend; but they whispered together, and the tenor of their whispers was precisely that of Prescott's own reflections.

So anxious did Prescott feel, that he at last resolved to bare his own feelings to his friend in the hope of thereby sobering him. He accordingly went up to his bedroom, where he found him with his head in a basin of water, and addressed him in very grave accents:

"George, you must listen to me. You have told me that you love Eleanor Owen, and, I suppose, as she has you to defend her, that she returns your love. Now, I have a confession to make to you. I love her, too."

"What! You, Charles!"

"Yes. You know I saw something of her as a child. I was fond of her then, I recollect. But to-day, when I saw her, so beautiful, so innocent, in that dreadful place, I found another feeling overmastering me. Oh, do not be afraid! She shall never know it. I shall not try to take her from you. I am not the sort of man to rob his friend. But, George, let me say this to you: that if anything—oh, the thought is horrible!—if any miscarriage of justice should occur, I shall blame you. I shall never forgive you if she comes to harm through your means. Be careful. Oh, great Heaven, man, do your best, your very best! It is the crisis of our lives—of all our lives. Beware how you fail to prove yourself worthy of your trust." And without waiting for an answer he turned away, and hastened back to his own work in the Nisi Prius Court.

In spite of the confident opinions expressed by the barristers, the judge's mind was less firmly settled than they supposed. Sir Daniel Buller was in the judges' private room at the court-house, sharing a dish of cutlets with Sir John Wiseman. Of course, they were discussing the case.

"I tell you what it is, Wiseman," the first judge was saying, "there is something in this case that hasn't come out yet. So far, there has been absolutely no real defence."

"You know, if that man who's defending her—what's his name: Tressamer?—thinks he's going to get off by attacking Lewis, he makes a mistake. I shall go for him if he tries it on."

"Most improper—most improper," assented Sir John. "I don't know what the Bar's coming to, I don't indeed! These young men are throwing over all the old traditions. The judges will really have to do something."

"You see, Lewis has acted a perfectly natural and straightforward part. He was bound to do what he did."

"I suppose you'll sum up for a conviction, then?" questioned the other judge, as he rose and put on his wig.

"No, I shan't," said Sir Daniel, helping his brother on with the purple-coloured garment which is worn in presiding over the civil court. "I shall just leave it to the jury. I don't feel a bit satisfied, and I'm very glad, for once in my life, that I have got a jury to take the decision off my shoulders."

And with these words he drew his own scarlet gown around him, and, grasping a small square piece of silk in his left hand, strode back to his seat in court.

At his entrance the whole assemblage rose, including the prisoner, who had been brought back a minute before. Then a start of horror ran through them, and Eleanor's calmness for a moment gave way in a faint gasp. For the object which the judge had just laid on the desk beside him was—the Black Cap.

(To be continued.)

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A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.—AN OFFER OF £10.

BELOW are given six sketches in their proper order. £5 is offered to the reader who sends us the most appropriate wording to go under each sketch, the whole to form a story descriptive of the illustrations, and £1 will be given to each of the senders of the next best five attempts. These competitions will alternate with the Jumbled Story competitions, at all events for a short time.

It is not necessary for competitors to have any literary ability. If you have a good idea, surely there should be no difficulty in putting it down in words. The whole of the story is limited to one hundred words, which may be distributed under the sketches according to the judgment of the competitor.

All that you have to do is to put down the number of the sketch, write alongside it the wording that you think most appropriate, inclose your attempt in an envelope (which should be marked "Picture Story"), and forward it to this office before Monday, January 18th.

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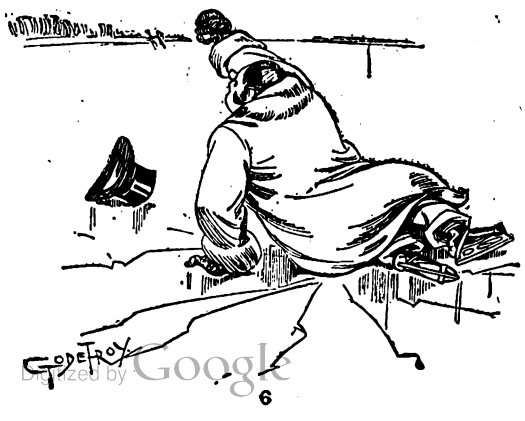

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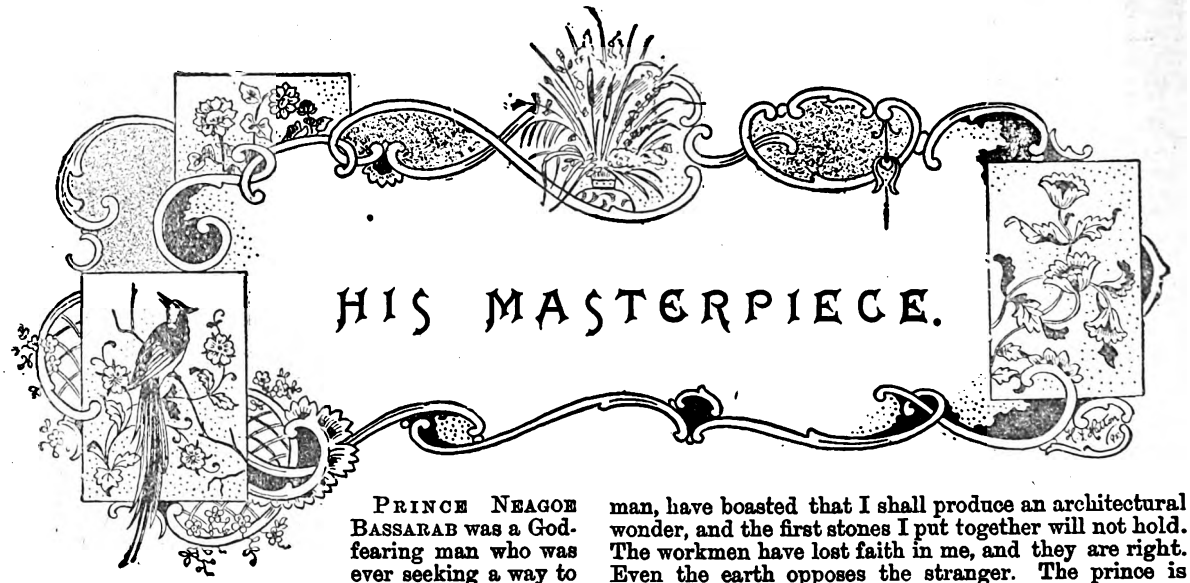

HIS MASTERPIECE.

PRINCE NEAGOE BASSARAB was a God-fearing man who was ever seeking a way to display his piety. He had built the churches of St. George, and the Metropolitan in Tergovischta, and the wondrously beautiful cloisters of Cosia and Tismana, the latter upon a rocky peak from which a cataract fell, and yet he deemed that he had not done enough. He longed to erect at Curtea de Argisch a church like no other in the world. He sent far and near for architects noted for their skill and originality to undertake the work.

Among them was a man named Manola. Some say that he came from Macedonia; others, that he was a Spaniard. He promised the prince to delight his eyes with a structure that in its harmonious union of Byzantine, Arabic and Persian architecture should be of unsurpassed loveliness. He chose the labourers that seemed to him most skilful, and began his work with infinite joy and zest, for he felt that his power was ripe, and that he was master of his art. But it was as if some evil spirit opposed him. No matter how deep the foundations were laid streams of water would gush forth, loosen the soil, and displace the stones. Daily they found the sand, but recently removed, had drifted back, and daily the walls had to be torn down and built anew. And when Manola, after working and thinking all day, left the place at evening with moist forehead and puckered brows, he knew in what condition he should find it on the morrow.

The labourers began to murmur, and were loth to work, saying that the spot was accursed and that a church would never be erected there. Manola had as much trouble with the grumbling men as with the refractory ground. Many a long night would he toss to and fro upon his bed in painful thought, then spring up and shed bitter tears. His sweet young wife, Anna, would also rise and gaze at him anxiously with her large, doe-like eyes.

"Tell me your thoughts, beloved. It makes me sad when you suffer and say nothing to me."

Manola drew her to his side, stroked her little hand, and bent his glance upon the ground, while she sought to read his sorrow from his countenance..

"I have been too arrogant. I, an alien and unknown man, have boasted that I shall produce an architectural wonder, and the first stones I put together will not hold. The workmen have lost faith in me, and they are right. Even the earth opposes the stranger. The prince is wasting his money, and 'tis said that he has angrily intimated as much. From every side enemies and envious people spring up who reproach the prince for having trusted me. I have won only shame where I hoped for fame. I know that it is childish, Anna, but sometimes I am infected with the belief of the people that the spot is bewitched."

Heavy sighs escaped his bosom, and he stared before him like one whose brain is in torment.

"Oh, what can I do? What can I suggest?" cried the young wife.

"You!" said Manola bitterly. "What can you, frail child, do where we men with wisdom and strong arms are helpless?"

He sprang up and strode restlessly up and down the small room like a caged lion the whole night. And so for many nights. Anna burned many a taper before the Virgin to win her aid, but in vain. The work did not advance. Manola became gloomier every day, until the labourers began to fear him. At last one of them mustered the courage to say:

"Master, there is an old superstition in our country, that has often proved true. If a building will not stand, a living person must be placed at the foundation, then will it last for eternity."

The workmen surrounded Manola, eagerly awaiting his reply to this daring speech. He stared at them, and the veins upon his temples swelled.

"And whom would you place there?" he finally asked.

The men glanced at one another.

"It must be one who knows nothing of it," they answered.

"But whom?"

"Master, at noon our wives, sisters, and daughters come to bring us food. Let it be one of them."

"And who will offer his?" asked Manola looking at them with the flaming eyes that they had learnt to fear.

They were silent.

"Well, who?" he queried again.

"The first who comes," came at last timidly from the circle.

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"Well," cried Manola, "then swear!" He raised his hand. "Then swear: The first who comes, no matter whose wife, sister, or daughter she may be, shall without delay or murmur be immured!"

"We swear!" whispered the men.

The sun seemed to mount so rapidly to the zenith that day, and many an eye glanced first towards heaven then into the distance. Not a word was spoken. The men's hearts trembled.

Manola had long stood with downcast eyes, brooding darkly. Now he looked up, and felt his blood congealing. There through the sunshine came a slender form in snow-white raiment; from her dark hair there floated a filmy veil; upon her shoulder she bore a pitcher. within her hand, a basket. 'Twas Anna, his young wife.

"Oh, Heaven!" he prayed, "hast Thou wholly forsaken me? Thou hast indeed punished my arrogance. Release me from my oath! I cannot do this thing! Bid me not sacrifice my young wife, all that I can call my own in this strange land, my happiness, my life! Send a tempest that she may come no further!"

As he stood upon the scaffold and prayed, he felt that all eyes were turned coldly upon him, and he knew that he would be made to keep his oath.

Then the heavens darkened. From greenish-black clouds came peals of sullen thunder and vivid sheets of lightning. There was a roaring and quaking as though the world was in its death struggle. A wind arose that bowed the mightiest trees and stripped them of their foliage. The men knelt and made the sign of the cross, but the young wife came calmly on, heeding not the tempest. She saw Manola's figure upon the scaffold outlined against the black, lightning-streaked sky, and she hastened her steps towards him.

"Heaven!" pleaded he, "now she has reached the brook, cause it to overflow that she may not cross it!"

And see, a rain descends as if the firmament had opened and every cloud had poured its contents upon the earth. Anna came nearer. And the brook swelled and foamed wildly. Not even a horse could swim across it. For a moment the whole landscape was hidden by the veil of rain. Manola clutched a beam and strove to pierce the vapour with his eager glance. Then all was still; the sun shone forth, and look! Anna has taken off her shoes, tucked up her gown, and is wading through the roaring flood. Manola stood motionless. His lips were white beneath his dark moustache as the men who gazed dumbly up at him could see.

The young wife was now but a few steps away, and she nodded and smiled to him who stood aloft, and in whose dark eyes lay the thought: "I had rather the stream had swallowed you than you should suffer this agony!" He descended the scaffold, took from her the basket and pitcher, and chided her laughingly for coming out in such weather. She noted a faint quiver in his voice, and asked if the work were spoiled again.

"Come down and see for yourself what was ruined over night. We are no farther now than we were yesterday evening."

She went down and viewed with troubled face the pools of water. the heaved-up earth, the displaced stones. Meanwhile Manola gave a signal and the masons began their work.

"Oh," said Anna, "I am in the way here. You must help me, husband, it is so high." And blushingly she extended her hand. He took it not.

"Stay down there a little longer, sweetheart. You can then see how quickly the men work. Besides, they have a fancy that the glance of your lovely eyes will make the wall stronger."

The stones had reached her knees. She looked on smilingly. Now they were up to her waist.

"Manola," she cried, "now you must lift me, for I cannot get out of here by myself."

"Yes, my love, when it is time. Just one more moment."

"Manola! The stones crush me. Manola!"

"Soon, soon it will be finished," and with his own hand he laid stone upon stone, and urged the men to work faster.

"Manola, the stones hurt me. Let them not build any more."

But he answered not.

"Manola, let them not cover my mouth and eyes! I am so frightened. Manola, where are you? Why don't you speak? Oh, jest not so cruelly! It will cost me my life! Manola! Manola!"

Just then they laid the last stone over the pretty young head. But the master made them work on and on. Noonday was long past, but no one thought of food. Naught was heard save impatient calls for brick and lime.

Lower sank the sun, yet higher rose the wall. The master swung his trowel with feverish hand and bent forward whenever the cry, "Manola!" came fainter and fainter from below. At last the workmen threw down their tools and declared they would not raise another stone. Night fell. Manola went not home. Like a ghost he wandered to and fro upon the scaffold which reared its black rafters to heaven against the moonlit landscape. Then he strode through the fields, but a spell

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seemed to draw him back to the building-place. He did not want to listen, yet he did so, and heard her still calling. There, silvery, cool, and still, flowed the Argesch. Surely its waters ought to wash away the sounds that tortured him so. He disrobed and stepped into the river, holding his head long beneath its dimpled waves. The water hushed the sounds. But scarcely had he ascended the bank ere he heard the calling again.

Months passed. The church with its five domes and richly decorated walls began to be a marvel of beauty. Then the work thereon ceased, for there was no money at hand. Manola raged. One passion yet lived in him, ambition, the consuming ambition to which he had sacrificed everything. No money!

Prince Neagoe assembled his councillors and asked them to levy additional taxes. But they shook their heads and said the country could bear no more. And was that structure, the glory of his reign, the ornament of his kingdom, to remain unfinished?

Just then the door opened and there entered in all her grandeur and loveliness the Princess Despina, robed in white satin, a mantle of blue brocade, edged with rich sable, clasped round her snowy throat. Over it rippled her soft brown hair almost to her feet. Upon her head was a cap of sable, from which to-day the diamonds were missing. No bracelets, necklets, or earrings were visible, but a silken veil fell like a spider's web over her slender form. In her hands she bore a casket containing all her jewels, which she emptied before the prince. "Take these and complete the church, else shall they be bedewed with the tears of women whose children are suffering from want." And she was gone ere the astonished men could reply.

The church was finished. Rightly was it called a wonderful structure. Each stone was carved and painted to represent a flower upon a golden ground, and no blossom was like another. The domes, the crosses, and the chains which held the crosses in place gleamed with gold—like the sun itself. Around the roof were golden doves that held tiny bells in their bills, and every zephyr made these peal with marvellous sweetness.

But Prince Neagoe, who so ardently wished to see the church completed, and his faithful Despina who had given all her possessions for it, had long closed their eyes upon the world, and their successor, Radu, was a cruel man.

All the scaffolds were removed except one small ladder by which the Prince ascended to the roof to view closely every detail of the superb work. Manola listened silently to the praise bestowed upon him. Even the cheers of the admiring multitude brought no smile to his face. His eyes burnt and glistened from nights of wakefulness and feverish thoughts. Prince Radu had seen everything.

"Well, Manola," said he at last, "would you pledge yourself to build a second church like this?"

"Certainly," answered the master. "The second should be a thousand times more beautiful. Now I realise my power." His face lighted up as he saw in his mind his next splendid work.

"In order that that shall not happen," said the Prince, "you shall abide up here, my excellent master. Your men shall destroy the ladder as soon as I descend. I would not part the master from his work."

Manola stood speechless upon the shining roof. From the vast multitude that a few moments ago shouted his praises arose no word of remonstrance. No hand was raised to rescue him. On the contrary they began to mutter: "The Prince is right. The master is in league with the devil. He walled up his wife with his own hand. He deserves the punishment."

Even his own workmen said: "We would not have done it. He forced us to take an oath. He helped wall herin, the poor woman. And she cried to him so piteously. He is a cruel, wicked man. Has he given us a kind word since that day? And it is to us that he owes the completion of this building. Let him starve up there. He deserves nothing better."

Not one pleaded for him. All gazed up with abhorrence at the man who had begun his great work in sin that would now be punished with death. But he stood with folded arms and saw the ladder removed; saw the people follow the prince who mocked him as he left the place.

He stood thus when night fell, and thought of his whole life; his boundless ambition to which he had sacrificed his happiness, his love, the only being in this wide, unfriendly world that he could call his own. Then there seemed to ring faintly from below the voice of his beautiful wife: "Manola! Manola!" Still the same sound that had haunted him so many nights and robbed him of sleep.

The night was sultry and there was no dew; like a flaming disc the sun rose and poured glowing rays upon the golden roof. All around the grass withered. Over the marsh hung a bluish, ghostly light. The Argesch seemed to have ceased to flow. Not even a gnat stirred in the hot air. Hunger began to gnaw, and thirst parched the lips and throat. The next night there was again no dew. Not the slightest moisture lay upon the roof. A marble stillness was upon everything.

On the second day Manola's brain grew giddier and giddier, and he heard Anna's voice louder and clearer calling him as she did in life, and as if she would appear before him the next moment.

Another long night during which his mind was darkened by fever. He tottered to and fro upon the roof, and wherever he looked he beheld Anna beckoning to him.

At dawn a soft wind arose, and all the bells began to peal. To the starving man they sounded like the voice of his wife. He reeled to the roof's edge, and with the cry: "I'm coming! yes, I am coming to you!" cast himself off. Where he fell there sprang up a fountain, but the water was salty, like endlessly flowing tears.

Fred Potter.

GET YOUR WIFE TO SIGN THIS.

Permit.

This is to certify that I....., the legally wedded wife of....., in consideration of his purchasing for me a copy of *Home Notes*, do hereby permit him to go where he pleases, and to drink what, and when he pleases. I furthermore authorise him to carry and use a latch-key, and to have and enjoy all the privileges and immunities usually conferred by the latch-key aforesaid. I want him to enjoy life while he is with us, as he will be a long time dead.

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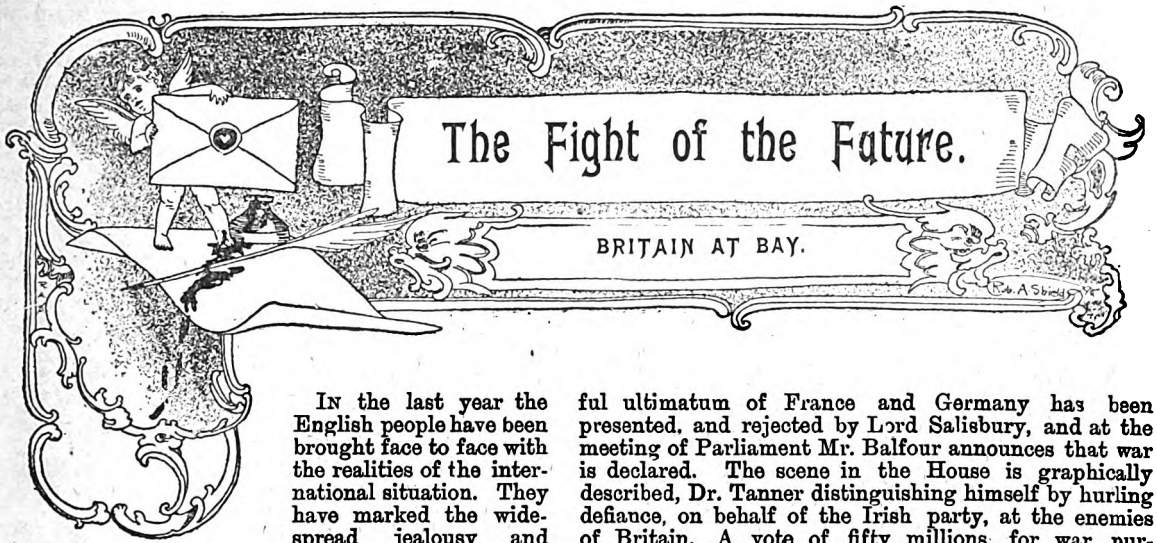

IN the last year the English people have been brought face to face with the realities of the international situation. They have marked the widespread jealousy and suspicion of Great Britain entertained abroad, and they have had to reckon up the possibilities and the consequences of a combination of the whole of Europe in arms against her. The present is therefore the "psychological moment" for a revival of those stories of the Great War to Come, several of which were published a few years ago; and Mr. Louis Tracy has shown his journalistic acumen by compiling another on the same subject. His spirited book on "The Final War" is one of the most exciting ever read.

In it he makes Great Britain confront the world in arms; and if the defect of his narrative is that he takes a view rather *couleur de rose* of the victorious progress of the British arms, his remarkable grasp of detail and strategic ingenuity enable him to put before us such a vivid and moving picture of a European war by land and sea that the interest of the reader is enchained from first to last.

We begin with a cloudless sky. A ball is being held at the British Embassy in Paris; everything is tranquil, peaceful, serene, to the public and outward view. The Ambassador and one or two attachés have had their suspicions that something was "in the air." But it is only when the official representatives of France and Germany make excuses for a hurried departure that the Ambassador makes up his mind that his apprehensions are right, and sends an aide-de-camp post-haste to catch a train to Italy in order to send a secret message to the Mediterranean fleet.

Meanwhile, at Versailles, there is a meeting of M. Faure, General Caprivi, M. Hanotaux, and Count Holbach, with General Gourko representing Russia. Their plan is unfolded. On the morrow war is to be declared against Great Britain by France and Germany. Preparations have been made for months past to invade England, and everything is in readiness to take the British Government napping and to smash the British Empire at one blow. Canada is to fall to France. East Africa to Germany, and the other colonies to be divided; while England is to be governed by a military council. Russia claims India and Turkey as the price of non-interference, while Germany demands Belgium and offers to give Alsace-Lorraine to France.

Next day all England is in commotion. The shameful ultimatum of France and Germany has been presented, and rejected by Lord Salisbury, and at the meeting of Parliament Mr. Balfour announces that war is declared. The scene in the House is graphically described, Dr. Tanner distinguishing himself by hurling defiance, on behalf of the Irish party, at the enemies of Britain. A vote of fifty millions for war purposes is passed, and a Council of National Safety, composed of the leaders of both parties, including Mr. Gladstone, is appointed.

Meanwhile every British cable has been cut by the enemy and England is really "isolated," the cables with the United States alone remaining intact. But the news spreads at once through the country of the imminent danger, and all is enthusiasm and indignation. At five o'clock that afternoon, May 3rd, 1898—that is Mr. Tracy's date—a vast fleet, with transports carrying 150,000 men is sighted off Worthing, but Lord Wolseley's measures have been taken with all speed.

The South-coast railways had engaged to deliver 20,000 men by nine o'clock, and fifty Maxims were to be on the sea-front by 7.30 p m.; while Lord Charles Beresford, in command of the Channel Squadron, was steaming hard for Spithead and would arrive at eleven.

But meanwhile the enemy are trying to land. This is the opportunity for local patriotism and discipline. The Mayor of Worthing, at the head of the local volunteers, occupies the shore and performs prodigies of valour. One landing-party is repulsed, though at great cost, and another; and resistance is effectually prolonged until the troops from Aldershot dash up under Sir Evelyn Wood and compel the boats to seek the shelter of the war-ships' guns.

Worthing is bombarded, but the shore of England is still safe. At ten o'clock another and fiercer attempt is made to land; but before it can be successful a sudden outburst of big guns from the sea, a series of tremendous crashings and explosions, and a rapid diversion of the search-lights towards the south causes an immediate cessation of firing from both sides; the British fleet has arrived upon the scene.

The Channel Squadron consists of only nine battleships, for all the most powerful ships in the navy are in the Mediterranean, in China, in North America, Australasia, and the Cape; and it has to face a fleet of thirty-six armour-clads—an appalling disproportion. But Lord Charles Beresford's object is first and foremost to destroy the transports and so save the land army, and his orders are to risk everything for that.

Aided by the surprise with which they come to the attack, the British fleet does frightful havoc. It is the

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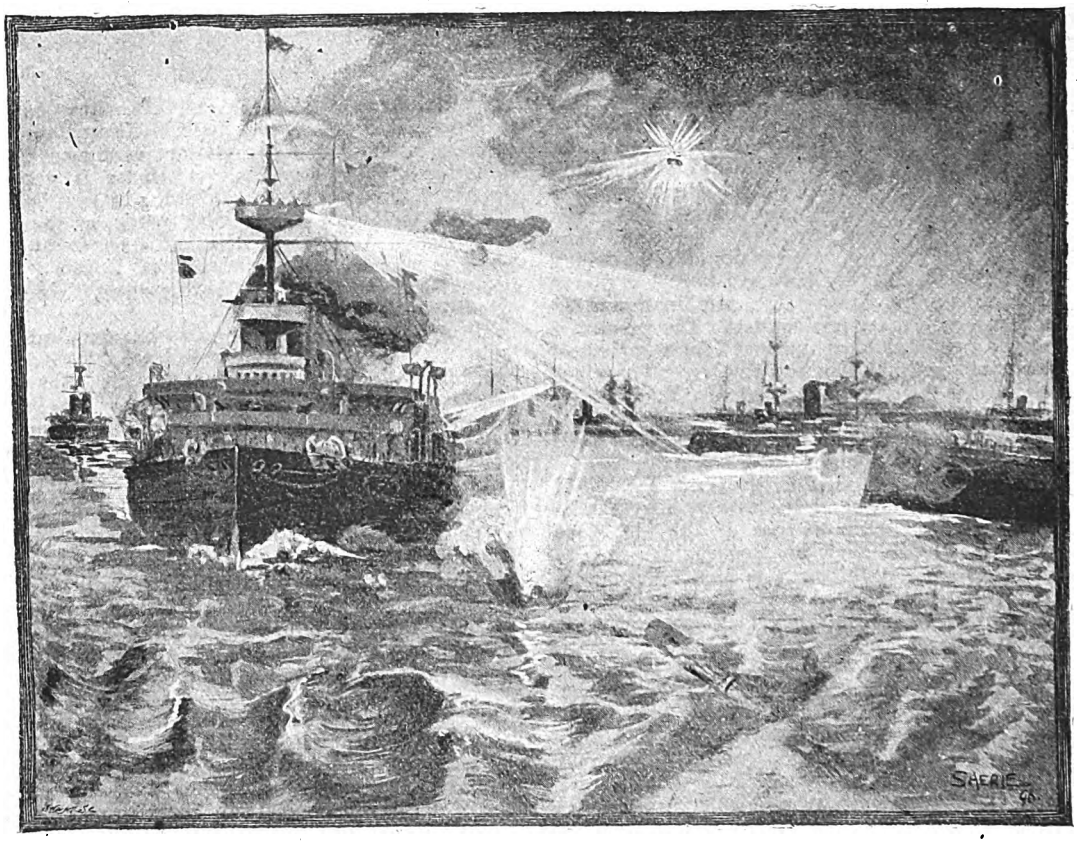
fiercest fight in history. In a few minutes the transports and their human freight and munitions of war are swept away into the deep waters of the Channel; and while the English fleet is utterly destroyed, it is accompanied by seventeen of the enemy's battle-ships, while the rest are so crippled that they have to steam as best they can away. Many extraordinary deeds of valour are done, and Lord Charles Beresford just manages to run the *Magnificent* ashore and save her from sinking.

This defeat of the Armada puts England into a wild ferment of joy and enthusiastic loyalty. The first-class army reserve has been called out, and the militia and

It was imperative, now that England is invading France, that enough ships should get safely through the Straits and away to Brest to resist any such movement by sea. Sir Michael Culme-Seymour has a fleet of seventeen battle-ships and cruisers, while the allied fleet has eighteen battle-ships alone and twenty-one cruisers. But the British Admiral has Gibraltar at his back, with its hundred-ton gun; and he manœuvres so that the enemy's battle-ships are compelled to come within its range. The colossal cannon sinks four ironclads and then bursts, but by that time so much damage has been done to Amiral de Monthier's fleet that he surrenders.

In England a great army has been organised. A pro-



It is the fiercest fight in history.

volunteers are mobilised. Ireland, Scotland, and Wales rise like one man. It is promptly announced that two expeditionary forces are to be landed on the shores of France and Germany. The Duke of Connaught and the Duke of York take their places with the expeditionary army; Lord Roberts commanding the attack on France and Sir Evelyn Wood against Germany.

Meanwhile events have happened in the Mediterranean. A brave lieutenant from Malta has got ahead of the French and German ships which were proceeding *viâ* the Suez Canal to occupy Aden and Perim; he dashes off on a torpedo-boat and blows up the Canal; while Sir Michael Culme-Seymour, with the fleet, waits at Gibraltar for the French and German battle-ships, which are moving out of the Mediterranean to join the attack on the British coasts.

clamation is made laying stress on the necessity of answering the attack made by France and Germany. They had tried to destroy the Empire, and danger would not be over until they had been taught a lesson by the occupation of Paris or Berlin, or both. But France and Germany could put six million men in the field; Great Britain has only half a million.

Another half million of volunteers are called for, and a reserve of three millions for reinforcements, Sir Redvers Buller being charged with the work of mobilisation. And simultaneously Lord Roberts and the Duke of York take the field against France, beginning with the capture of Havre; and Sir Evelyn Wood and the Duke of Connaught, supported by a fleet under Sir Nowell Salmon, make for the Kiel Canal with the secret object of occupying Strahlsund.

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Mr. Tracy describes both operations with great spirit; the capture of Havre, and the occupation of Strahlsund are successfully effected after some brilliant fighting. The result is that the active aid of Russia has to be sought, and the Tsar is induced to join the alliance and to send a fleet against Britain.

An unexpected consequence follows. The United States has been divided in opinion about the war, and the President had announced, though rather against the sympathies of the nation and of Wall Street, which inclined to England's side, that strict neutrality would be observed. Admiral Mahan is sent with a fleet to protect American commerce.

Admiral Mahan was personally all on the side of Great Britain, and he thought that the American people were the same; and when he meets Admiral Erskine with the North American squadron in mid-Atlantic, and hears that there is a possibility of Russia joining the coalition, he makes up his mind that his next instructions must be to join Great Britain if Russia sides against her. On he sails for Cardiff; and while the American ships are in port the Russian fleet also heaves to and sends an ultimatum to the mayor.

At such a crisis it does not suit Admiral Mahan's book to wait for a reversal of his present orders from his Government. The gallant American warns the Russian Admiral that he wants time to secure the safety of the American ships in harbour; and this notice being received with neglect, he promptly fights the Russian fleet and beats them out to sea; when they surrender unwittingly to Admiral Erskine, who is just arriving with battered ships after a successful but disastrous engagement with an allied fleet in the Atlantic.

Mahan is angrily remonstrated with by Mr. Bayard, the U.S.A. Minister for intervening; but a telegram from Washington announcing an American declaration of war against Russia and the allies, promptly put matters right. Henceforth the United States vie with Great Britain in prosecuting the war, and great feats of swift organisation, beating all records, are accomplished by American officers and men; America sends a large force to Strahlsund under General Miles, and the two countries hail with fervour the Anglo-Saxon alliance. England responds at once by drinking "corpse revivers" instead of the usual whisky-and-soda.

The further conduct of the campaigns in Germany and France must be read in Mr. Tracy's book. But this is not all that Great Britain can do. From India another great army is led against Russia. The expedition is excitingly described; the battle in Afghanistan in which the Russian Central Asian army is defeated, and the subsequent march on Moscow, being the occasion of some very vivid writing, with many incidents of heroism and pathos. The attack on Russia is assisted by a revolution within the empire on the part of the Nihilists, by which the Romanoff dynasty is overthrown. Eventually the British and American arms are victorious. Paris is taken, and the German Emperor accepts terms dictated by the Prince of Wales.

Some of the best hits of the book concern the German Emperor, whose little weaknesses, for lecturing on all subjects and for telegraphing when a chance offers, are cleverly taken off. Perhaps the neatest hit of all is the way in which Mr. Tracy makes Dr. Jameson bring off another raid and take the Emperor prisoner, thus settling an old score. A heap of other well-known men are also brought on the scene, and characteristic speeches put into the mouth of each. And as if the military interest of the narrative were not sufficient, two love-stories meander through it, connected with two of the bravest of the British fighting-men. Indeed, so full of incident is the book, and so lively in style, that once taken up, it is very hard to put down until it is finished.—From the *St. James' s Gazette*.

THE ESPOUSALS.

When the little Princess Othilde came into the world, the sight of her provoked unanimous cries of admiration and surprise; of admiration because she was indeed the sweetest, loveliest thing imaginable, and of surprise because she was hardly as large as the closed fist of a child!

As she lay there in her cradle no wider than your hand and no longer than your finger, you would have taken her for a humming bird, still featherless, in its snug little nest. The King and Queen never wearied of admiring her little legs and rosy feet not too large for a doll's stocking, her tiny body resembling a white mouse, and her face that the petal of a daisy could have hidden.

To be sure they were not a little alarmed at her diminutive size, and their royal dignity was somewhat ruffled at the thought of having given birth to the smallest dwarf ever seen, but they hoped their daughter would grow without losing any of her attractiveness.

They were sorely disappointed in their expectations.

While she retained all the airy grace you might wish to see, the tiny Princess grew so slowly that at the age of five she was no taller than a blade of grass—and she had to stand on tiptoe to pluck a violet, while playing on the lawns in the park.

Learned physicians were sent for and the costliest presents promised them if they could only make Othilde grow a few inches. They held mysterious consultations—crossed their hands on their fat bodies—winked knowingly from behind their glasses, invented nasty drugs that poor little Othilde had to swallow, and miraculous salves with which she was to be rubbed night and day. But all to no purpose whatever. Othilde continued to be the loveliest little dwarf, and when she played and romped with her favourite dog, as large as a new-born kitten, she could pass between its fore-legs without stooping.

The King and Queen, greatly perplexed, applied to the fairies, with whom they had ever been on excellent terms, and who hastened to the rescue: some reclining in litters of cloth of gold fringed with diamonds and rubies, borne by African slaves—others in chariots of the purest crystal drawn by four milk-white unicorns with manes

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of fire—while some found it more convenient to enter through the windows or down the chimneys in the shape of beautiful birds of paradise or of swift martins with purple wings. As soon as they touched the palace floor, however, they changed into lovely ladies dressed in silk and satin. One after the other they touched Othilde with their wands, took her up in their hands—for she was no heavier than a good-sized lark—kissed her, breathed on her hair, made strange signs over her, and muttered all-powerful words of magic.

Alas! the charms of the fairies proved as useless as the drugs of the learned men! At sixteen the Princess was still so small that one morning she chanced to be caught in a trap for nightingales, that had been set in the park.

The courtiers, whose interest it always is to cheer up their sovereigns for the reason that good humour tends to liberality, did their best to console the King and Queen. They declared that nothing was more ridiculous than a large stature, and that all tall persons were nothing but deformities. As for themselves, they said, why, they would have been enchanted to be half a foot tall—but Nature sets apart such favours for royal families alone! On seeing some tall fellow pass by they never failed to burst out laughing so as to please their sovereigns. The ladies-in-waiting of one accord gave up wearing high heels, which were then in fashion, so that the Princess might appear less diminutive beside them, and the chamberlains adopted the habit of never approaching the throne except on their knees.

This ingenious flattery did not always succeed in consoling the King and Queen. They often felt inclined to weep when they kissed their tiny speck of a daughter and hardly dared to touch her with the tips of their lips for fear of swallowing her up. And they kept back their tears, trembling, lest the mite should get soaked and die of a cold! As for Othilde she seemed not in the least distressed about her size, and took the greatest pleasure in admiring her small self in a hand-mirror made out of a single rather large diamond.

But habit wears out the most painful afflictions, and the King and Queen lost their sadness somewhat, and would doubtless have resolved not to grieve more in such a hopeless case—if something had not happened to renew their sorrow. The young Emperor of Sirinagor had heard so many accounts of the Princess's wonderful beauty that he fell deeply in love with her and dispatched certain ambassadors to ask her in marriage. You know that Fame, with the hundred trumpets, willingly flatters royal persons, and in this instance had divulged Othilde's charm and beauty without mentioning her size. The embarrassment that such a demand produced at the royal court can easily be imagined. It was out of the question to marry this dainty doll—no larger than a bird—to a prince of usual stature.

But the young Emperor's suit was the more preposterous as he was himself of an enormous height—being far more beautiful than any living prince, and taller than any giant. When he was born it had been impossible to find a cradle large enough to hold the huge baby, and they were obliged to stretch him out on some carpets in the throne room. At the age of three he had to stoop somewhat in hunting for birds' eggs on the topmost branch of oak. His parents, like those of little Othilde, had consulted doctors and fairies, but to no avail, for he had grown on and on in an excessive manner. When his subjects celebrated a victory and erected triumphal arches for their young prince, he was compelled to alight from his horse to pass under them, and no matter how high they might be, he never failed to strike the frontals with his helmet, on which was fastened a silver bird with outstretched wings.

Naturally, the King and Queen declared to the disappointed ambassadors that such a match was the most impossible thing in the world. But the young Emperor, who possessed a very fiery and warlike temperament, was by no means satisfied with the reply—he flatly refused to listen to reason—and the confession of Othilde's small size seemed to him an absurb excuse, invented to contradict his wishes. He put on his helmet in great wrath, making the silver wings tremble, and swore that he would avenge himself of such an insult by putting the entire country to fire and sword. He acted accordingly. Terrible battles were fought, towns were sacked, and whole nations were slaughtered.

Finally the King and Queen understood that they too would perish as well as their entire kingdom if they did not come to an understanding with the gigantic conqueror who was rapidly striding over burning forests and villages! They hastened therefore to offer him peace and solemnly promised to give him their daughter in marriage. A day was appointed for the meeting of the two lovers—it had to take place in the park for the conqueror would never have been able to stand up in the palace halls.

"Well," he said; "I do not see the Princess—will she not be here soon?"

"Look down at your feet," answered the King. And there she was, sure enough, hardly any higher than the flower-beds—so tiny and so fair in her dress of gold, her brow sparkling with gems! She appeared smaller still by the side of the magnificent young Emperor, whose armour gleamed and shone in the sunbeams.

"Alas!" he sighed—for he was much distressed at discovering her down there at his feet, so lovely and so tiny.

"Alas!" said the little Princess, for she too was very sad on seeing him up there so far off—so handsome and so tall! And they had tears—she in her uplifted eyes, he in his downcast eyes. But even as they looked at each other she was growing taller and taller and he was rapidly shrinking. Love, more powerful than the fairies, had united them. Presently they were almost of the same height, and their hands touched—like two lovely roses on one stem.

JESSIE ROGERS.

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OR,

The Romance of a Lost Continent.

By **Geo. C. Wallis,** Author of *The Winning of Gunhild,* etc.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE END OF ATLANTIS.

I HAVE said that we purposed repairing the *Ravager* and, in her, quitting this luckless land. It was easy to propose and lay our plans, but not so easy to accomplish them. Penares, with fifty men, made an effort to reach the ship and tell our plight to the seventy sailors left on board: and after a day's striving, was compelled to return with only half his band.

Once I set out, with two hundred of the oldest and best-trained warriors in our little garrison, and we fought our way for half the distance with almost superhuman energy. There, however, we were stopped by huge barricades piled across the tortuous way, and the incessant attacks of the swarming mob of madmen, till, weary and hopeless, we had perforce to retreat, leaving some eighty of our friends upon the scene of combat. It grieved me sorely to draw blade anew on my own countrymen, yet there was no help for it, so lost were they to all sense of order.

When I tried to talk with them they answered only with defiant yells of rage, and when in our pity we gave the starving multitude a portion of the food from our store, they fought so fiercely with each other for it that more was wasted and more of them died in the savage struggle than gained a morsel of the boon.

From the tower top we could see the sailors busily repairing the vessel, and fearing that they would put to sea without us—knowing that she was victualled for a long cruise—we made signals to them, after the failure of the sallies, both by day and night, at last attracting their attention and making it understood by the signs all seamen are familiar with, who we were and how we were placed.

At the end of the second month her masts were fixed and a new helm in place, and Orlanis and I looked at her from the distance with fury in our hearts to think that so good a ship lay there and we could not get aboard.

My admiral bore it so ill that one night, when all save the sentries slept, he woke me, praying that I let him try to creep through the city in the shades, and reach the vessel. I could only give consent, and but that I could not leave my wife and Didron lightly, would have gone with him.

As he passed out he was joined by Atris—who had grown dark and silent as the grave since the night of fear—and together they two stole into the outer darkness, threading their way with caution through the slumbering town. They met with little difficulty on their journey, being only two, and moving always in the shadow, and just as the daylight shone upon the column top, we received and answered the signal that told of their success.

Meantime, keeping pace with the famine and pestilence, and our misery and despair, the sea drew in upon the land relentlessly on all sides, lessening the shelving margin of the doomed country until the northern shore was within a half-day's journey, and the southern portion of the city, including the harbour, and the house and garden where Briseis had once lived, lay a fathom deep under the plashing surf, and the tide rose and fell amid the ruins of deserted dwellings.

Storms were frequent, long-lasting, and fierce, in those days of desolation; therefore, you may imagine the sudden chill of fear which smote me when going, as was my custom, to signal with the crew of the ship, I saw that it was gone!

The night had been wild and dark, the shrill hurricane

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blast shrieking round our quaking column like the raging cry of a thousand demons from the lower shadows, and when, through the fresh, vigorous, rain-washed air of the morning, I saw no trace of the vessel on which all our hopes hung, I feared that the northern gale had carried her out to sea, and left her a sinking wreck.

Said Valdo, joining me on the dizzy height, and speaking at the top of his voice to be heard above the whistling of the wind:

"The clouds are still driving fast, and there is a bank of lowering dulness in the north that I like not."

"And there is something missing in the south that I am concerned with," I roared into his ear, pointing to the vacant shore.

"So there is," he shouted back with a calmness and a carelessness in his tone that I could not share; "they have but put off to escape the wreckage near the coast, and will doubtless return when the elements have worked their fury off. But hist! dost hear that low rumbling roar to the north and east?"

"And see that line of white advancing on us swifter than the rising tide? Ay," I bawled in sudden eagerness, "dost know what it portends?"

"By the God of Truth, that do I!" he cried, hurrying to the steps, down which I followed him in break-neck haste, "'tis the last sinking of the land and the last great ocean wave, helped on by wind and tide. 'Twill sweep over this fragment of dry land as over a sunken reef, and yonder wretches will be drowned like vermin in their holes!"

"Haste!" I answered as we flew down round after round of the winding stair that never seemed so long as then. "Haste! or those we love will not have time to get to the upper storeys ere the flood is on us! Haste!"

Right lustily we toiled that morning, getting our wives and children safely placed on the highest floor, then labouring with might and main to secure as much as possible of the sadly small store of grain, and to draw as much water from the well as our scanty vessels would hold.

That done, we withdrew our sentries, fastened up the doors and casements, covered down the mouth of the well, and rêtired to the upper storeys, waiting the coming of the conquering sea.

Below us, in the city and on the plain, the gaunt thousands, roused from their fitful sleep by the roar of the advancing surge, ran to and fro in new-born terror, wailing and shrieking in their madness.

Many climbed to the roofs of the houses that were still whole, whilst others clustered round the foot of the tower imploring assistance or admittance, which, of course, having regard to our own safety, we could not grant.

We had not long to wait in silent suspense before the rushing tide was boiling round us, its impact making the massive column tremble and totter with appalling violence.

It was our one thought, as we watched the inrush of the deluge from the north-east, whether the tower, with all its strength, would withstand the awful force of the raging sea; and when we felt the ground quake and the floors dance beneath our feet, all feared the worst.

But the foundations, as I have told, went deep into the earth, being built on the solid rock, and after the first contact the seething flood passed by with more of noise than danger in its passing, sweeping away the groups of famished wretches huddled together on the lee of the tower, as straws before an autumn gale.

Higher than the highest ruin in the city was the on-pouring tide, and when, bearing on its foaming crest a formidable quantity of uprooted trees and floating wreckage, the water from the northward met the rising water to the south with a sudden swirl and thunderous sound, not one of the hapless creatures at their mercy was left alive.

The water eddied fiercely for some hours after that, shaking the tower in its fury and battering the sides with the many fragments borne upon its ruffled surface, and when all was once more tolerably still, we who gazed from the upper floors of the high column were all who remained alive in the land of Atlantis.

The city, with all its burden of sorrow and sin, lay fathoms deep below the waves, and the birds of the woods and housetops could find no resting places for their feet. The tragedy of Atlantis was at last complete, and no feature was wanting of the horrors foretold by the mouth of Unim, Priest of Truth.

Amid the shrieking of the gale and the lashing of the angry waves, night settled down upon desolate expanse, and those who could sought their rough couches to drown their fears in sleep.

Three days of despair slowly passed over us, perched in our solitary tower, nothing upon the sea breaking its grey monotony save the homeless flight of the gulls, the storm-birds rising on the waves, or the swarming of the ground-sharks over the place where the city had been.

In those three days we seemed to pass a lifetime of suffering and grief, for the water gave out and the sea had crept in, filling the lower chambers, so that we could get no more.

The fell disease which had devasted Kronos was not yet gone from us, and on the weakened frames of many fastened its deadly grip with ease. On the afternoon of the third day our Didron, our one remaining child, was stricken down by the plague, and we put him to rest along with many others in the salt water that filled the lower halls.

We wept not over him as over Vesta, though our hearts were torn with equal grief, for the fountains of our tears were dry, and we said aloud that it was better that he should go before us than be left to perish of thirst at the last. So does grief seek to deceive itself.

It was on the morning of the fourth day that, having risen early to gain the solitude of the column summit, I saw a sail to windward bearing down upon the tower. Although at first it appeared no larger than a gull's wing, I soon noticed, as the ship drew nearer, the Egyptian cut of her canvas, and knew her to be the good old *Ravager*, which we all deemed lost.

With indescribable joy I watched her swift approach in the soft glimmer of the morning; nor till she came within hailing distance, and I had heard and answered the welcome shout: "The *Ravager* has come to the rescue of her King!" did I tell the glad tidings to the remnant of the faithful garrison. When I did, all was at once confusion, and many wept for joy who thought that sorrow had left them no more tears to shed.

Without delay we got aboard, taking as much food with us as the ship would carry, and easing round the helm, put off and steered from the silent, lonely tower for the far-off West.

When the mad revolt broke out in the city we numbered 400 men and 200 women and children, while the ship held seventy sailors; when we set forth on the pathless ocean for the last time our company all told was only 150 men and forty of the weaker sex and younger years, so busy had been the arrows of Amarunth.

The tale my two brave officers told was very simple. Orlanis, always an expert weather prophet, had foreseen the coming of the storm and noticed the sudden sinking of the land, and though against the wish of many others, had deemed it his duty to put out to sea.

After struggling with the tempest for three days, they got command of the ship again and so came to our relief, being themselves greatly relieved to find the tower still standing.

"I thought it cowardice to leave the shore while you were exposed to all the fury of the gale, but I am only a clumsy landsman compared to Orlanis," Atris said with the grimmest of grim smiles upon his haggard face.

"It was wise to follow his desire," I answered, and thereupon commended my captain warmly for his skill and promptness.

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But my thought hurries on to the culmination of my life story and the coming of the end, which Unim had wisely withheld from my knowledge. As the sturdy vessel ploughed her way through the western waters in the clear glow of the morning light, our faces cheered and hands sought hands in thankful tenderness.

For myself, I felt as though a weight was lifted from my mind, and I was free to end my days in peace in a foreign land, for was not life left in us at the last, and hope renewed, and love, that is stronger than life or hope, still making joy within our hearts? And were not the stout timbers of a veteran vessel creaking beneath our feet as the wind in her bellying sails bore us from the scene of the last act in the mournful history of Atlantis?

Yet scarcely had we voyaged from the sun till the watch-tower sank low on the eastern horizon, when the sharp eyes of a sailor discerned two ships fast sailing from the south towards us, one, the larger, pursuing the other and smaller, and gaining slowly but surely upon her as they drew rapidly towards the path we were steering. I seized the helm and pointed the *Ravager* so as to meet them without delay.

"'Tis as well to greet them one by one," I said to Orlanis, who stood at my side in the prow, trying to make out the vessels, "for we know not who they are, and one enemy at a time will be enough for us."

"I like not their looks at all, King," said he, "and also, I seem to know the smaller ship by sight. Mind you not once going aboard a long, low craft like that, against my desire?"

"By the Spirits, 'tis Tirhak the Pirate, whom I told to search for the ship of Listra!" I cried, motioning Valdo and Atris to me, "and now the thought is in my mind, the greater ship is like the phantom craft that I saw from the shores of Kronos on the even when the Sleeper was slain! To arms, men! and below with our wives and little ones! We have yet a fight to win ere deliverance is ours!"

"The time shall find me ready," answered briefly-spoken Atris, his hand on his sword, and a gleam of fire in his hollow eyes; and Valdo said:

"Nor shall I be wanting, whose love is the greedy blade, and whose bridal bed has ever been the field of war!"

"I have no fear for your prowess," I said, "and the pirates, once at bay, will strike while they have strength to stand; but I sorely wish our iron-beak were still at the prow, for then we should have no need to board."

The two ships, both with full spread of canvas, were still foaming on, the pirate being within a league, and the other craft but half that distance astern of her, and coming up regardless of our presence, hand over hand. She flew the selfsame flag that the rebels of Ulmeca had chosen, and we were sure now that she was the mysterious vessel of outlawed Listra, and did not wonder that Tirhak fled for Atlantis rather than fight her alone, so great was her size and swift her speed.

The *Ravager* herself could not have raced through the flying spray faster than did that cursed craft, whilst she could carry a crew at least double the number of ours.

"We shall be upon them presently," said Orlanis, "up with the Royal Banner, and let them know our reputation!"

"And pull her up short when we meet the first," I cried. "We must talk with Tirhak before aught is done."

So saying I ran below, and clasping Briseis in my arms, bade her be of good cheer, for one of the ships was a friend, and the wanton who had slain our youngest son should meet her just punishment ere the sun went down.

"Yet be not harsh, my husband, my love!" pleaded my sweet wife, encircling my neck with her white arms, and kissing me with all a maiden's sweetness. "If she will pass on without drawing weapon, so let it be, for surely blood enough has been shed in these last months. Yet if she will not, and you must strike, strike hard, and show no mercy for my sake, for I have a strange fear of this leman in my heart, and I could rest in peace did I know the salt waves plowed above her body. Think me not cruel, husband, for it may be a warning of the spirits that troubles me, but be not thou the first to provoke the strife."

"Dear one!" I cried, letting her rest for a moment in my arms, as she had done in that fair garden now under the sea, "dear one, it shall be as you wish in all things, and fear not for me in the worst, I pray, with 'Sunderer' in my hand—it is a staunch friend."

I left her then, and went on deck, but how her sweet eyes followed me till I had climbed the stepway, and was out of her sight!

Orlanis now stood at the helm, and with him my two officers and Penares. Taking my trusty blade from its sheath, I cleaned it well from the stains of rust that had gathered on it, polished it, and sharpened its matchless edge upon a piece of soft stone, moistened with oil.

As I laboured, and the ringing metal shone and sharpened in my grasp, the old war spirit crept into my soul with all its thirst for a foeman's life, and its longing for the clash of arms, and as I worked, I sang till the others caught the spirit, and grim faces flushed at thought of a coming struggle. Our prow was now level with the pirate's bow, and I hailed the long-bearded old man who stood in the stern of his ship as both banks of oars flashed out, backwatering, and we came to rest.

"Whither in such haste, old friend of Didron?"

From the gangway of his vessel the white-haired old pirate answered me, his voice still ringing full and strong.

"To Kronos, King," he said, "bringing you the ship you sought in vain!"

There was a twinkle in his eye and mirth in his voice, that made us laugh in spite of ourselves.

"Or meanest thou that yonder ship is bringing thee, my Tirhak?" I queried, pointing to Listra's craft, which was now rapidly nearing us on the larboard tack.

"There may be a leaven of truth in thy saying," returned he, "for I thought I should surely lead the enemy into a trap if I could only bring her near the coast, though it seems there is no coast as yet, and yet I could swear by all the gods that three days agone I was not two days' voyage from the shore! Canst unravel me the mystery?"

"Let us settle with the foe first," I said, cutting him short in his garrulous career, "and then we will talk of vanished coasts and sunken cities. Art willing to join us in a bout with the swift sailing craft?"

"Ay! and that without second thought!" he cried, buckling on a blade that one of his hardy men brought. "If my time has come, I could not wish to die in better company or in better fashion. It hath always been my desire to close my eyes before an enemy's face, with a sword in my hand and a shout of battle sounding in my ears. Lead on, son of Didron; thou shalt not find the pirates hang back for fear of a woman's crew!" and the burly old sea-rover, who had just deemed discretion better than rashness, put his ship about, shaking his huge fist the while at the oncoming foe.

"Seemeth as though our Princess hath a large crew aboard," muttered Valdo, "or she would not come forward so readily."

"That may be," I said; "but many or few, we shall fight her if she wants a fight, though she shall herself decide. Furl sails, Orlanis, and let us trust to our oars alone, as Tirhak is doing. Keep her head forward, and get ready the grappling chains."

Now we were within hailing distance of the strange ship, nor had I long to take note of her lines and build and admire her with a sailor's critical eye, when in calm, clear tones that I remembered well, this greeting came across the water:

"Welcome, Arnon of Atlantis, Macis of Thinæ, deserter and traitor, welcome!"

There was deep sarcasm and contempt in the words and the manner in which they were spoken, there was deeper

scorn and blacker hate in the face of the beautiful fury who uttered them.

The ship was tearing towards us through the water like a living thing, the white spray rising before her sharp curved prow like a fountain of foam, and the erst Princess stood near the helm, the keen wind casting her flying draperies behind her and tinging her cheeks with freshest red as she called her mocking salute and ill-concealed challenge to us.

For answer I would have sent her a shower of arrows and leaden bullets; but, remembering my weakness before her wanton charms and my promise to Briseis, I replied, fitting a shaft in my bow meantime—a shaft with her name graven upon it:

"Greeting, Listra! Welcome to Atlantis, from whence you have so long been a stranger, though rumour has it that you paid us a visit once in the night, when none could see your face and be captivated with its beauty. As you wish to land again, the way is free, and I will not make effort to put off your visit."

"Art turned into a weakling, or in thy second youth?" asked the fair rebel, laughing an evil laugh to her crew; "thou, Macis the Fearless, Arnon the Iron-fingered and the Iron-hearted! Forsooth, strange things happen in these days! Surely, when I chase thy hired spy nearly to thy palace—if it be yet standing—thou wilt require some explanation?"

The graven shaft shook in my hand with rage as I listened to her insulting speech, and Tirhak scowled black defiance at her taunts. Still I controlled myself, giving her another chance, though now the ships were close, and behind the beautiful speaker I saw familiar faces.

"'Tis not my wont, Listra," I retorted, "to brook flouts and sneers from any, least of all from the false lips of a child-slayer. But the Queen bade me pass in peace if it might be, so that each could go our way without strife. As for my comrade of the long-ship here, you will not despise his mettle when he turns at bay."

I could not have used worse words to calm a jealous woman's passion, and I might have known it, were not slowness of wit my greatest failing.

"Thy coward comrade I despise no less than thyself," hissed the Princess across the space that separated our keels, "and know that I spurn thy meek Queen's gracious intercession as the bereaved lioness would mock at the mercy of the hunter who had slain her lord and feared herself! No, spare yourself speech, who fear to fight because your gentle love is aboard!" she said, as the bulwarks of the vessels grated, and Tirhak, like ourselves, having pulled in his oars, raspcd adown her leeward bow, "I will say my say before I strike, Macis, and it is this: Now that your dear one is within my grasp, and you are fleeing from the wreck of your land, the chance for which I have plotted and longed has come, and I shall not let it slip. Recall, my Macis, the words I spoke to you in the palace, when your Queen foolishly gave me life and liberty. Recall them—then ask of me if I pass in peace! You are in my power now, my false-faced warrior, and your mild-eyed Queen as well. Fight, then; and may a thousand demons drag your footsteps down to the darkest shadows!"

Then came the cry of war, the rattle of grappling chains, the clash of sword on sword, and a flood of men poured over our bulwarks ere we had time to draw in rank; and the strife began.

(To be continued.)

"AN AMERICAN EMPEROR."

JEROME K. VANSITTART, the richest man in the world, a product of American monopolies centring in a few families, and finally in a single individual, meets and falls in love with Mademoiselle Honorine de Montpensier, who similarly comprehends in her own person all the legitimist claims to the throne of France. He proposes to her and is rejected on the ground that she can marry no one but the Emperor of the French, as, although by the Salic Law a woman cannot ascend the throne of that country, she is compelled to preserve her right of inheritance.

A wild idea that he shall pit his brains and his money against the French Republic, takes complete possession of Vansittart, and he seriously plans out a campaign towards that end. He first consults his most trusted financial agent, Mr. Peter Studevant, and arranges for no less a sum than two hundred and fifty millions sterling to be at his control within the next eighteen months. He also arranges for a magnificent palace of wood, glass, and iron to be sectionally built in New York and shipped to Paris. As his scheme is principally to win the regard of Frenchmen of all classes by a huge and successful commercial and national undertaking, he secures the services of Mr. Walter C. Maclaren, a noted young American engineer. The latter, with an English and a French engineer, is dispatched on a secret mission to Northern Africa.

With Vansittart is staying his old friend, Dick Harland a light-hearted and straightforward but impecunious young Englishman. Vansittart takes him into his confidence, and half-jocularly appoints him his Master of the Horse. The millionaire picks up in Central Park a whole-souled and honest vagabond named James Bates, otherwise known as Arizona Jim, and after a queer *rencontre*, selects him to be the Captain of the Guard.

After some months of quiet thought and preparation Vansittart sails for Europe with the characters already mentioned; the Comtesse de Fontainbleau accompanies Mdlle. de Montpensier as her companion.

He wins the hearts of the Parisians by his lavish generosity and exhibition of sympathy with everything French. One day he is visited by M. de Tournon, Minister of the Interior, against whom he is warned by Honorine. Tournon and he set out for the levée at the American Embassy.

The above is a synopsis of that part of Mr. Louis Tracy's serial, "An American Emperor," which has already appeared in *PEARSON'S WEEKLY*, and will enable you to pick up the thread of the story at once. Naturally it is only a very, very bare outline.

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TO THE DEAF.

A Gentleman who cured himself of Deafness and Noises in the Head after fourteen years' suffering, will gladly send full particulars of the remedy post free. Address L. CLIFTON, Amberley House, Norfolk Street, Strand, London, W.C.

A KISS.

I HAVE been vegetating, like a turnip, in this forsaken place for more than ten years now, and ten years hence I shall probably be still smouldering away here in unaltered circumstances, as far as human possibility can foresee; and yet be it understood I was, and still am, a very promising young man; all my friends, nay, even my enemies, agree that I might aspire to lofty and exalted positions in my native land. Alas! History repeats itself, and my undoing was brought about by a woman, and that woman was the Queen herself. This is how it befell:

I was ridiculously juvenile when my disgrace overtook me; let us say nineteen years of age. One afternoon, charmed by the softness and warmth of the early spring air, and pushed forward undoubtedly by unkind fate, I betook myself to the sheltered glades of the royal park, that I might muse undisturbed beneath the glorious linden-trees, whose branches met in gothic-like arches fifty feet above my head. I sauntered idly about, revelling dreamily in the soothing sights and sounds which gratified my senses on every side; the deep silence of the forest remained unbroken, save for the hum and whir of insect life, and the psalm-like sing-song of the quiet river which followed the avenue trod by an aimless foot.

I seated myself on a moss-covered log by the river where it widens into a miniature lake, and from whence a fine view of the palace arose in grey cloud-like splendour before me.

The dip of oars, languidly drawn through the water, aroused me from my day dream. I leant forward curiously, wondering who the intruders might be, when the sound ceased abruptly, and in the stillness a summer duck with purple throat and bronzed wings drifted by, calling gently to its mate; then the dip of oars sounded again, while in the gathering dusk I discerned the prow of a small boat rounding the curve, and hidden among the bushes I watched the occupants.

A young woman wielded the oars; she was in all the glory of early youth and beauty; slim and shapely she looked, as she pulled the little craft with easy strength through the placid water, her bare arms gleaming like satin in the waning light. Holding my breath, I studied her fine, proud features, the beautiful eyes, the delicate curve of the divine mouth. Filled with ecstasy and rapture, I wanted to fall on my knees and pray. It was the Queen of France.

I had loved her secretly for a year or more, and it was of her that I had come to dream in solitude through the long, soft hours of this spring afternoon, which seemed an emanation from her gracious person.

In the stern of the boat sat Her Majesty's pretty little nephew, Prince Louis, lightly holding the silken cords of the tiller. Absorbed in reverie, the Queen, with her small head thrown back and her swan-like throat exposed to my adoring gaze, continued to row in the golden light of the setting sun.

A sudden shrill cry rent the air, awakening me from my beatitude, and to my horror I saw the little Prince tip over the cranky boat and fall into the water, while the Queen caught at the branches of a tree and clung affrightedly thereto. In less time than it takes to tell I was swimming in the river after the child, whom I seized and brought to shore; then I turned the boat over and started to rescue the Queen. I took her lovely form (which had been made for Kings alone) into my arms, seated her in the craft, and rowed to land. She watched me with her marvellous wide-open eyes, in terrified silence, until at last feeling *terra firma* beneath her feet once more, she flew to her nephew, her boy who lay almost swooning upon the ground, and covered his little face with tender kisses.

Then turning to me she said with deep emotion: "You have saved his life, and I will give you in return anything which you may choose to ask of me."

"*Anything!*" I echoed hotly, while a thrill quivered through and through my frame and shook me from head to foot. Astonished at the suddenness of my reply, her eyes sought mine in wonder. I knew not what she read in their depth, but she blushed deeply and lowered her eyelids. As I have mentioned before, I was very young at the time, and although it may not behove me to say so, I was reckoned one of the handsomest youths at Court. The Queen knew me well, and had often smiled upon me when her eye, by chance, met mine fixed upon hers in speechless but most eloquent adoration.

As she hesitatingly lifted her glorious eyes to mine again, I saw a sudden flash of light pass through them which sent the hot blood tingling through my veins, and flinging discretion to the winds, I repeated: "*Anything!* Really? Does not your Majesty wish to recall her words?"

She made a negative movement of the head, while her colour deepened, and I, idiot that I was, madly enamoured of her beauty as well as of the glamour of royalty which hung about her like a perfume, begged in almost inaudible accents for "one kiss, only one."

"Your youth alone can excuse such presumption," she murmured reproachfully; but before the words were out of her mouth I had caught her beautiful head in my two hands and laid my lips on hers. In that wondrous second I felt the fresh delicious mouth tremble and return rather than repulse my caress; but I was quickly brought to my senses, as the Queen pushed me hastily aside and one of the Court Chamberlains advanced towards us from an adjacent by-path.

All this, and indeed it was little enough, reached the King's ears in due time, and the Queen was brought severely to book for her indiscretion. She unhesitatingly admitted the facts, I understand, but, ah me! did she ever confess that for one half second we were accomplices in that gentle kiss?

Being without fortune, and dependent on my Sovereign's bounty, it was but a span before I found myself just here, in this outlandish place, sent as secretary of legation. I am surely buried alive, unless it may please Heaven to gather my amiable master to a better world. There are moments in which I curse myself for a knave and a dolt, but toward Eastertide each year I receive from the royal palace a box of fresh and fragrant jonquils, and then rapture fills my soul, and I would not change places with the highest functionary in the land.

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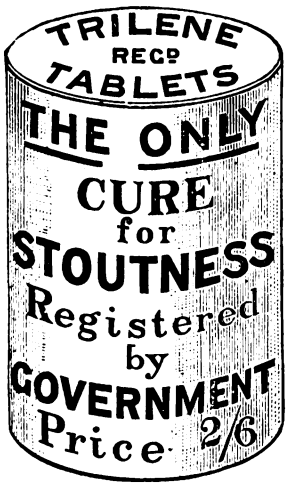

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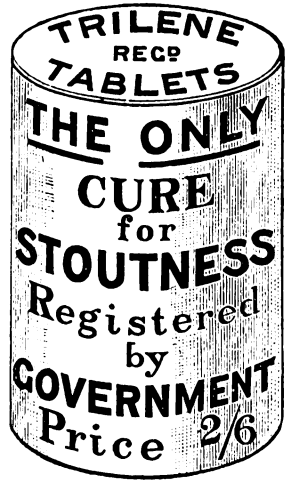

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87, Alexandra Road, Norwich.

"GENTLEMEN,—I have had some boxes of your Tablets for my wife, and she has derived great benefit from them.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Illustrated Family Novelist, November 30th, 1895, says: "A great many women who are plump by nature worry about their stoutness. However, there are some perfectly safe remedies for embonpoint, among them being the Trilene Tablets, which are not only safe, but absolutely beneficial to the general health, and speedily produce the desired effect."

MR. TAYLOR, Church Farm, St. James, Halesworth, says: "I have lost quite 2 stone since taking your Tablets."

"6, Brighton Terrace, Hull.

"MRS. JOHNSON has much pleasure in saying she has derived great benefit from your Tablets."

"3, Castle Road, Deal.

"MRS. J. PEARSON is glad to say she is much thinner."

Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.

MISS S. J. PRITCHARD says: "They have done me good. I am 21lb. lighter already."

"Bretton West, near Wakefield.

"MISS L. LANGFIELD has taken a box of Tablets, and is already 7lb. lighter."

MRS. HUTCHINSON, 46, Irwell Street, Widnes, Lancashire, writes: "I have taken three boxes and am reduced a stone."

A. D. BILLINGS, Bell Inn, Aldershot, writes: "Have derived great benefit already. Less in size and weight, and breathing greatly improved."

25, Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.

MISS M. FLAVELL says: "I have lost 2 stone, and am much better in health."

Extract from *Bury and Suffolk Times*, June 15th, 1894: "Miss Atherton sings and dances as piquantly as ever, and is a marvel of agility, considering how much flesh she has put on of late. Her friends should induce her to take a course of Trilene Tablets, about which I hear wonderful things. One portly acquaintance of my own by merely a few weeks' use of these little Tablets, has reduced his bulk perceptibly. I am assured the Tablets are harmless and tasteless, and that the Trilene Company in Finsbury Pavement, London, are doing an enormous and ever-increasing trade."

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NO. 421. FOR WEEK ENDING JANUARY 23RD, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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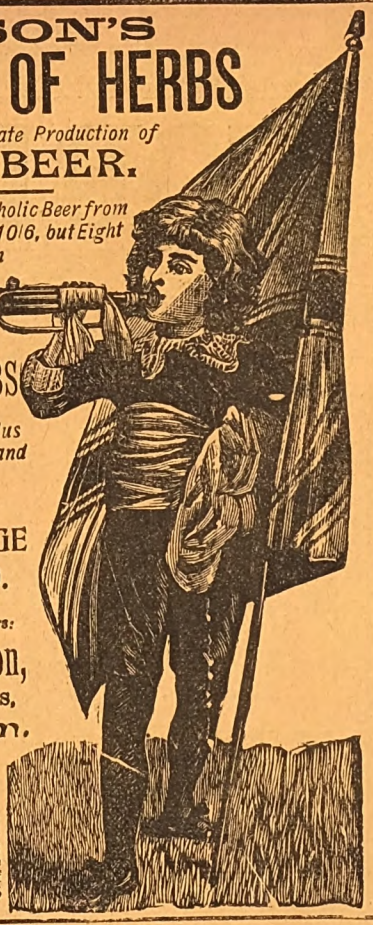

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In consequence of the **JAPANESE** and **CHINESE** War we have on hand a large quantity of Pure Chinese Spun Silk Handkerchiefs (21in. square) suitable for PRESENTS. We offer these to the readers of *Short Stories* at the very low price of **1/1** (post free). This splendid offer will only be open for fourteen days, and will not be repeated. Address—

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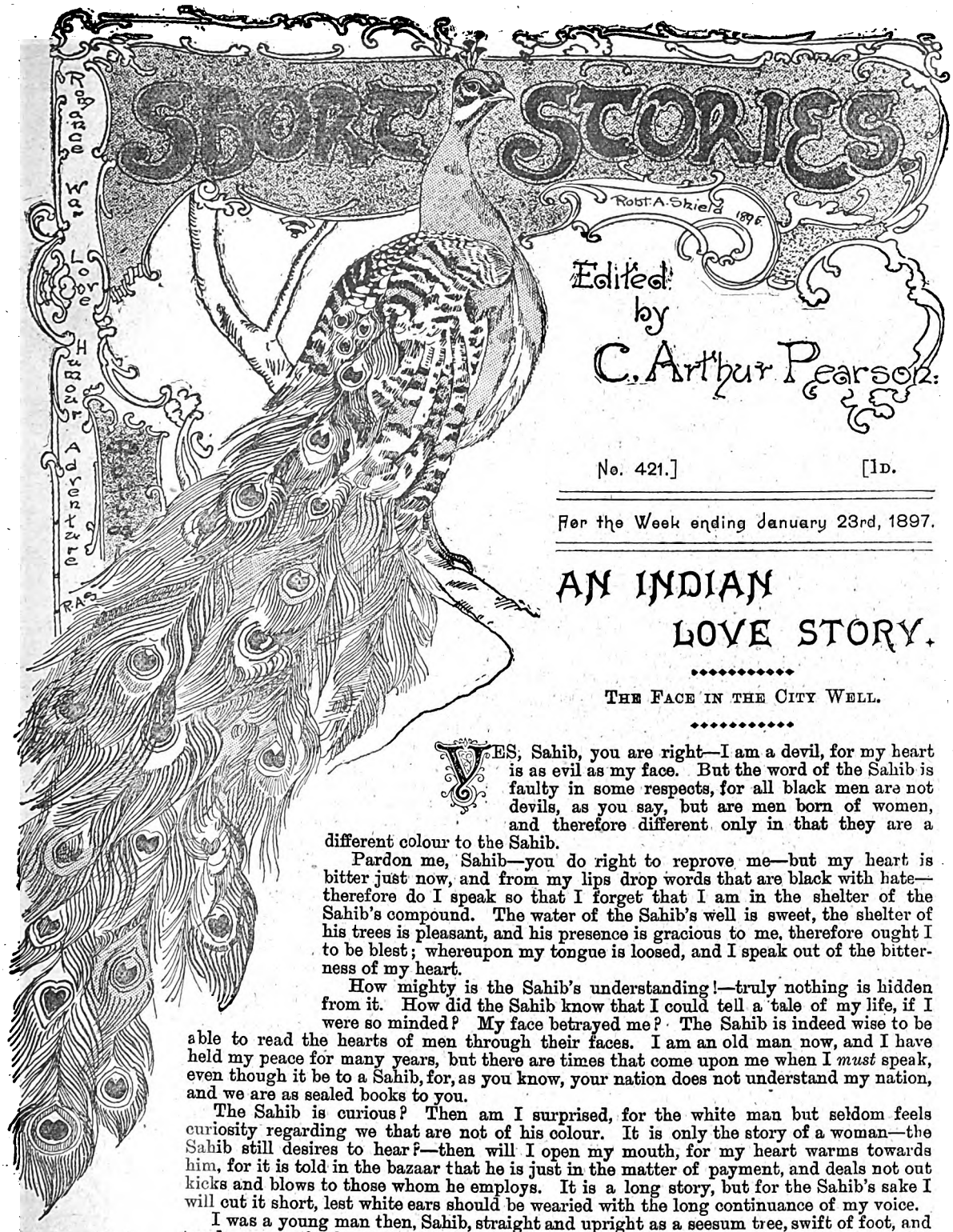
When a Lady (who has discovered a simple means of self-cure) will be happy to send particulars of same to any sufferer from this distressing complaint, free, on receipt of stamped addressed envelope. Address, **Mrs. TREVOR WELLS, 327, High Holborn, London, W.C.**



No. 421.] [1d.

For the Week ending January 23rd, 1897.

AN INDIAN LOVE STORY.

The Face in the City Well.

YES, Sahib, you are right—I am a devil, for my heart is as evil as my face. But the word of the Sahib is faulty in some respects, for all black men are not devils, as you say, but are men born of women, and therefore different only in that they are a different colour to the Sahib.

Pardon me, Sahib—you do right to reprove me—but my heart is bitter just now, and from my lips drop words that are black with hate—therefore do I speak so that I forget that I am in the shelter of the Sahib's compound. The water of the Sahib's well is sweet, the shelter of his trees is pleasant, and his presence is gracious to me, therefore ought I to be blest; whereupon my tongue is loosed, and I speak out of the bitterness of my heart.

How mighty is the Sahib's understanding!—truly nothing is hidden from it. How did the Sahib know that I could tell a tale of my life, if I were so minded? My face betrayed me? The Sahib is indeed wise to be able to read the hearts of men through their faces. I am an old man now, and I have held my peace for many years, but there are times that come upon me when I *must* speak, even though it be to a Sahib, for, as you know, your nation does not understand my nation, and we are as sealed books to you.

The Sahib is curious? Then am I surprised, for the white man but seldom feels curiosity regarding we that are not of his colour. It is only the story of a woman—the Sahib still desires to hear?—then will I open my mouth, for my heart warms towards him, for it is told in the bazaar that he is just in the matter of payment, and deals not out kicks and blows to those whom he employs. It is a long story, but for the Sahib's sake I will cut it short, lest white ears should be wearied with the long continuance of my voice.

I was a young man then, Sahib, straight and upright as a seesum tree, swift of foot, and handsome as the leopard that crouches among the rocks; strong also was I, so that the wrestlers in the city dreaded my approach. The Sahib looks in my evil face and wonders if what I say is true, but before God my word may be believed, as the Sahib will discover if he questions the old men of the city. Truly my face is ugly now so that no woman may desire me, but it was not always so. The Sahib grows weary—I will begin.

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It is strange to speak of this matter, therefore does my tongue travel a crooked road and take a long time to arrive at the beginning!

It was the third day after the feast of the Mohurrum —the Sahib was not in the country then or he would know that never has there been such riots as during that time. It was shortly after the Mutiny, and the hearts of men were in a state of turbulence and unrest, therefore they fought until the troops were sent among them and blood was spilled like water, so that the terror of the English was driven deep down into the hearts of all who saw and took part.

But three days had passed since the riots had been crushed, and the city was lying quiet as a whipped cur that had not yet recovered from its wounds. And as I sat by the well that stands in the the centre market place, and thought on these things, a woman came to draw water. She was a respectable woman, Sahib, for her face was covered up from the sight of men, her eyes only being visible; and I watched her as one might watch any other living thing that came that way. And as I sat thus, I noted that the wheel upon which the rope of the bucket runs was stiff, wherefore I arose and set it right.

And as I glanced idly down into the water of the well, the woman's cloth fell aside so that I saw the reflection of her face—then the next moment she had covered it up and the reflection had vanished. And in that instant, Sahib, my heart had grown hot with love, for the face of the woman was exceeding beautiful, as beautiful as that of a houri from Paradise ; such was the beauty of her face that it might dwell for ever in the hearts of such men as saw it!

Yes, the Sahib is right—English women are also beautiful, but that is, so long as they are tall and fat; but the white Mem Sahibs only touch our eyes, whereas the native women touch our hearts.

And as I sat and dreamt, the woman passed away down the road that leads to the nether part of the city, and no man knew that I had seen her face. And at once a great longing seized me to know who she was and whence she came, wherefore I sought out Dudder Bux, the letter-writer, for he knows the whole business of the city, and is also willing to talk upon it should a man approach him rightly.

And when I had sat and drank* tobacco and talked upon many things that were far from my heart, I said: "Saw you the woman who came and drew water while I sat by the side of the well?"

And Dudder Bux smoked his hookah for a while, and then replied:

"I did."

Now my heart was burning with impatience, wherefore I said:

"Tell me, O Dudder Bux, who the woman is, and where she lives."

Then Dudder Bux laughed long and loud.

"Ho, ho!" he cried, "where the flowers are there the bees come. Thou art going the way of the multitude, for the fame of her beauty has spread; but she is not for you, she is about to be betrothed to the Keeper of the Thana. Even were she free her father would not give her to you, for he is a hard man, and grasping withal."

But I still craved to know her name, so that at last I prevailed upon Dudder Bux to tell me.

Then cried I:

"Take your pen, O Dudder Bux, and write this letter for me to the woman, for my heart is hot with love."

But the letter-writer would not, for he said it was an evil thing, and that through her father would the Judgment of God be visited on his head.

It was hard work, Sahib, but at last I prevailed upon him by the offer of much money, so that he wrote this letter:

"Thou art as a houri from Paradise, and in the light of thine eyes lieth man's knowledge and happiness.

"Thy lips are the gates of love, thy mouth is a ruby temple, thy teeth are the pillars thereof; but thy voice is like gems dropped from the Throom of God.

"Thy hair is a mesh within which to catch and hold men's hearts captive. My heart waiteth for thee; thou art my life and my love!

"My heart is hot with love; it melteth before the light of thine eyes and the magic of thy lips. Open thou therefore thy heart to me that I may enter and dwell therein."

Thus did he write, Sahib, under my guidance; then folded I the letter and gave it into the hand of one who might be trusted, with instructions that he was to deliver it into the hand of the maiden when she was alone and there were no other eyes to see.

And after many days had passed, I received an answer by the hand of Dudder Bux, wherefore I knew that the messenger I had sent was to be trusted. And the maiden wrote little, for she was shy, so that the pen trembled in her fingers; but she said that what I wrote was evil, for it was not the custom to write unto young women such letters as the one I had sent. But she knew not the uprightness of my heart towards her, Sahib, or she would not have written this thing.

And that night, Sahib, I went out and stood in the shadow of the babool tree that is on that side of the road facing her father's house, and there I played on the zither and sang songs such as the men of this country sing to the women they love. And after a while her father came forth and looked round, but seeing no one he went within again. But the woman I saw not, for she was in the courtyard sitting with her mother and the other women of the household.

And the next morning early I went and knocked against the door-posts of her father's house, so that the door was opened to me. And I, having called her father out, spake upon the matter that was nearest my heart, and besought him to give me his daughter in marriage.

Then he laughed scornfully, and looked upon me with an evil smile. "Ho, ho!" he cried; "so *your* heart also is inclined that way! The story of my daughter's beauty has gone abroad, so that I might, if I were so minded, build the foundations of my house upon the young men who stand as suitors in the shadow of it."

Now this was a crooked saying, and as I pondered upon it, the man stooped down and digged a hole in the earth—so large, Sahib. And he, having done this thing, rose, and said unto me: "Can you fill this hole that I have digged with rupees? If so be that you can, my daughter is yours; for I am, as all the bazaar says, a hard man and fond of money."

Then was I sad, for my substance did not run to so much. But I cried:

"Tarry yet awhile, and I will earn the money quickly, and then come for your daughter."

And he answered:

"I will tarry."

* *Smoked* tobacco. This is a literal translation of a Hindustani idiom.

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Then waited I the whole of that day, and when the sun had set, the woman came forth, and looked upon the rising moon. And I drew near, and revealed myself to her carefully, for it was not in my mind to frighten the maiden, and drive her from me.

And she looked upon me with the startled eyes of the fawn, for her heart was shy as the hearts of young maidens are when they know not the power of love.

"Was it you," she cried, "who wrote to me by the hand of Dudder Bux, the letter-writer?"

"It was indeed I," I made reply.

Then for many moments we stood silent. And at last I minded me that the time was short, and that I had much to say before I left her. Then drew I near, my lips burning like live coals with the love that was in my heart.

"Heart's delight!" I cried, "the time is short, and I have much to say unto thee."

And at my presumptuous speech the woman turned and would have left me, but that I held her back.

"Nay, nay," said I; "be not afraid; for I would not harm thee if I could."

Then held I her tiny left hand, Sahib, and as I gazed upon her rosy-tipped finger-nails that were like unto the morning sun upon the clouds, my tongue broke its bonds, and I spoke words of passion and love to the maiden, until I felt that she trembled with the echo of the storm that was within me. And as I looked down through her eyes into her heart I saw the first dawn of love, and felt that already the victory was half mine.

Then cried I: "Heart's Heart, uncover to me that I may once more look upon thy beautiful face."

And she turned away her head and said: "Nay, this is an evil thing that you say to me. Would you have me be as the English Mem Sahibs who flaunt about in the light of day with uncovered faces that all men may look upon them?"

Then answered I with passion and love trembling upon my lips: "I ask this thing, Heart's Delight, because my heart is burning with love for thee. I swear before God of the honourableness of my intention towards thee, wherefore I pray that thou wilt do this small thing."

And the woman was silent for a long time, but by the light of the moon I saw that she trembled at my presence. Wherefore I went softly, and parted the covering that hid her face, she forbidding me not, and, Sahib, I kissed her upon her beautiful lips as it is the privilege of an Englishman to kiss the woman he loves. Thus was our love ratified that night! Then did she return to her father's house, and as for me, I went back to dream of Mothi, and how I might win her.

Yes, Sahib, my tongue is so dry that it cleaveth to the roof of my mouth by reason of the long converse I have had. The Sahib is indeed gracious, but I cannot drink of the fire-water, for it is forbidden in the Koran.

The story draws to its close. There is not much more to tell. The next morning, Sahib, I left the city, and, having arrived at Fyzabad, I borrowed the character certificates of a man who was now too old to work, and took service with a Contractor Sahib who was at that time making much money under the Government, and became a bearer such as the one who sits without in the verandah. And the men of that city said I was a rogue, but, Sahib, in those days my whole thought was of Mothi, and how I might find the money that her father required for her.

And after much time had passed, I left the Contractor Sahib, and returned to the city of my people. But my heart trembled within me through some unknown fear, so that I sought out Dudder Bux, the letter-writer, and begged him to tell me all that had passed in the city since my departure. And when I had heard all, I rent my garments and tore my hair, for Mothi's father had taken her and given her in marriage to the Keeper of the Thana. And having drawn from Dudder Bux the place where she now lived, I repaired to that quarter of the city and took up my station outside the house.

And as I stood thus, there came to my ears the low sound of a woman crying, and the dull thud—thud of a stick upon living flesh; and my heart grew hot within me so that I leapt over the wall and stood inside the courtyard. My tongue now refuses to dwell upon what I saw there, Sahib, but at the time my brain swam and my heart grew fierce so that I leapt upon the man and wrestled with him until he fell. Then took I off my shoe for I would not defile my hands with striking him, and smote him many times on the face with it.

And the man lay very still and moved not. And Heart's Delight watched it all with quiet, frightened eyes, and when all was over she came gently to me and I led her forth. And in the Market Place I hired a horse and together we left the city and rode night and day with fresh relays of horses, for we were riding with happiness and love as the prize.

And at last we reached a city far enough south of the Ganges, and there we tarried a week—and to this day, Sahib, my old heart throbs when I think of the divine happiness of those days spent with my Mothi!

And at the end of that time there came men who seized and bound me and took me before a magistrate, Sahib, for they said that the Keeper of the Thana was dead, and that my hand had slain him. And for many days I lay in prison, my heart rent with thoughts of Mothi's loneliness and unprotectedness; and at last they brought me forth, and the case was heard. And when I comprehended the sentence, Sahib, I cursed the day that I was born and behaved like a madman; but they paid no heed and only laughed in my face.

And for thirty long years I toiled in the prison yard, and in that place I was accounted as one who was mad. And when the sentence was accomplished, Sahib, I came forth, my body bowed and shrunken with age, and my hands rough as the elephant's hide, by reason of the many ropes I had twisted and the hempen mats my fingers had woven. Then did I seek Mothi with passion and love still hot in my heart, but none knew aught of her, and her name had passed away like a shadow passes away at noonday.

But at last I found an old man who remembered the woman, and from his lips I learnt that Heart's Delight had died in that city of want and privation—with none to care for her. And the light of her beautiful eyes was for ever quenched, and her lips for ever silent! Ah, Sahib, I am old in body, but hearts take long to die.

Nay, the Sahib does not understand the people of my nation, or he would not offer money—let the Sahib throw it to the passing beggars, for my spirit is still proud, and silver cannot heal broken hearts.

The Sahib is my friend; he does well to reprove me; but he is a young man and does not yet know what it is to love. . . . . I was mad to talk upon this matter; let us drink tobacco together, and I beg that the Sahib will forget that I have opened my lips and laid bare my heart.

FRANCIS GLOVER.

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A MESMERIC FEAT.

THEY were talking about mesmerism in the green room of the theatre. Terrell, the manager, was there, and did not believe in it at all.

"Mesmerism is simply another word for trickery," he said confidently.

"Pardon me, but have you ever witnessed any mesmeric phenomena?" asked the man with the dark, penetrating eyes. He was a newspaper man, a friend of one or two of the chief actors, and haunted the green-room. Terrell had seen him there before, and did not take kindly to him—perhaps because Fred Upham, the newspaper man, had bothered him to accept a play of his. However, a theatrical manager cannot afford altogether to offend the Press, so Upham was not interfered with.

Terrell answered him rather curtly, however.

"Thousands of times," he said, "what they call phenomena; men eating candles, and all that sort of nonsense; but it is all trickery."

"Mind, Mr. Upham is a mesmerist himself," put in the leading lady.

The manager shrugged his shoulders.

"Would you like to see an exhibition of what I can do?" asked the journalist quietly.

Terrell shrugged his shoulders again.

"Would you care to wager that I can't stop your play to-night by mesmerising the company?" went on Upham, as quietly as before; and they all laughed, Terrell among the rest.

"I am quite serious," said the journalist, "and if Mr. Terrell does not object to my making the experiment—as he can hardly do after his assertions—I shall be happy to show him how easy it is to rule the wills of subjects whom I have been allowed to bring a little under my mesmeric control."

"What would you do to us?" asked the leading lady.

"Simply make a few passes before you went on. I should not, of course, send you into the mesmeric sleep, or you could not go on at all, unless I willed you and directed your actions!"

She turned to Terrell.

"Oh! do let him! There's a dear."

The manager frowned.

"I can't have my plays humbugged about even for your sake."

"But, according to you, I cannot do anything," said Upham. "If there is nothing in mesmerism I cannot affect your play at all. Will you agree to a wager?"

"Come, Mr. Terrell," said everybody, "you cannot refuse to back your assertions."

"It is too absurd," said the manager.

"But there is no harm in having a little money on it," said Edmund French, the comedian. "Mr. Upham is welcome to make as many mesmeric passes on me as he pleases, if the experiment is made on the monologue, but I don't think he will be able to prevent me going through my piece."

Edmund French was acting a monologue, called: *The Lost Will*, as the first piece every night before the drama. *The Lost Will* had been written by a well-known dramatist—Terrell never under any circumstances risked a play not written by a well-known man—and it was not much of a success.

Edmund French made as much of it, of course, as anybody possibly could: but it did not go very well for all that.

Perhaps this is why the manager allowed himself to be cajoled and bullied at last into wagering one hundred pounds that Upham could not, while sitting in a box on the following night, prevent Edmund French from performing the piece, or make him act in any unusual manner during the performance of it.

The wager was put into writing, and both Terrell and Upham deposited their hundred pounds with one of the company.

Terrell called upon Edmund French to give his promise that he would not play any tricks, but French shook his head.

"No, Mr. Terrell, I know perfectly well that if I did, I should leave your company on Saturday night. And I can't afford to do that, even if Upham offered me all his £100 as an inducement."

Terrell laughed.

"How well you know me," he said.

* * * * *

Next night every member of the company who had not to be dressing for the drama was in the front of the house, anxious to watch Fred Upham's experiment.

The journalist had made a few impressive passes over Edmund French after he had dressed, and then

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went with the manager into a private box before the curtain went up.

"Does French play nothing but light comedy?" he asked carelessly, when they were seated.

Terrell laughed his rather unpleasant laugh.

"He does not get the chance. They all think they are taking the wrong parts. French thinks he has the making of a serious actor. Comic men invariably have; but it is lucky for the public that we managers keep them to the parts that they can really do."

"I think I'll make French play a serious part to-night," said the journalist thoughtfully; and as he spoke the curtain went up.

Everybody who had heard of the experiment to be made, glanced at Upham, who, as the curtain rose, fixed his dark penetrating eyes with a concentrated look of command on the face of the actor.

Half-way across the stage French seemed suddenly to feel the effect of his commanding glance. He had come in as usual with the little skip of a comic old man, but now he suddenly stopped dead. The members of the company ceased to look at Upham, and fixed their eyes of anticipation on Edmund French. His panic was only for a moment—the ordinary spectators could hardly notice it—then he walked to the seat that he had to take by a small table, but he staggered as he walked with uncertain steps, and when he reached his place, sank down with his arm on the table, and his face on his arm.

"Why, the man is drunk!" said Terrell.

And when French spoke his voice sounded as though the manager was right. Most of all, he was not speaking his lines, but something quite different. The audience, however, noticed nothing wrong, for the words were coherent and intelligible, although they certainly were not the words of *The Lost Will*.

His apparent drunkenness seemed part of the play. The words were even interesting, and there was a listening hush over the place, which was not usually noticed when *The Lost Will* was played.

"It is a trick," said Terrell, but Upham, with his dark eyes fixed on the actor's face, did not seem to hear.

His cheeks were unnaturally pale, and drops of cold perspiration stood on his forehead.

"French shall suffer for this," growled the manager again, and Upham, with his white, concentrated face, turned to him with sudden excitement.

"Be silent, man, unless you want a fiasco. Leave me alone, and I will pull you through. Distract my attention, and see what happens."

The manager glanced at the stage again in obedience to the journalist's directing finger.

The actor was sitting quite motionless, with a vacant look on his face. Terrell was conscious now that he had stopped speaking in the middle of a speech at the instant that the mesmerist had turned his eyes from the stage.

"For Heaven's sake, go on," he said, conquered. As Upham turned back the play went on again, the astonished manager not speaking another word during the whole performance.

The piece that French was giving Terrell had never heard before; it seemed to him to take hours delivering. In reality, the monologue was quite a short one, and occupied less than half-an-hour, but to the anxious manager expecting every moment that something might disturb the mesmerist's attention, and cause the piece to break down ingloriously, the minutes passed like hours. Even in his agony of suspense the manager could not help noticing Edmund French's acting. It was the most wonderful part of the whole affair. He was completely transformed, and played with a depth and passion that astonished those who knew his ordinary acting in comic character, clever as that was. He had always been able to make the audience laugh. To-night, in this strange little monologue, he was making half the audience cry. When, all too soon for everybody but Terrell, the curtain came down, there was a perfect hurricane of applause, and the actor was called again and again.

Next day there was an enthusiastic notice in one of the principal morning papers, whose critic had been lured there in time for the monologue by a note from the leading lady. He could not say enough of the play or of the acting. "Without any notice on the programme and without even changing the scenery of *The Lost Will*," he wrote, "there was produced last night at the theatre a short play which was as remarkable for its quite abnormal cleverness and beauty, as for the modesty of its anonymous author, who allowed it to appear without even a title." The critic went on enthusiastically to describe the beauties of the monologue, and then gave a quarter of a column to Edmund French's acting.

In the afternoon Upham received a visit at his rooms from Terrell and the actor who held the stakes.

The latter handed over the two hundred pounds, and Terrell asked if it were possible to get a copy of the monologue, which French had delivered under the journalist's influence.

"It was a splendid thing," said the manager. "Where on earth did you get it from? I suppose you must have known it yourself word for word?"

"Yes," said Upham quietly, "it was a little thing I offered you six months ago, which you said would not do at all."

"Well, I hope you will offer it to me again," said Terrell. "The public will expect it now. I only hope French will act as well when he is not under your influence."

"Oh, I expect he will," said the mesmerist, with a smile; but it was not until almost a year after, when his plays were asked for everywhere, and French had married the leading lady and joined another company, that Upham handed him back his one hundred pounds and explained how anxiously he and his "chum," Edmund French, had been to get a hearing, the one for his plays, the other for his serious acting.

"But that pause when you took your eyes away?" stammered Terrell.

"Oh! the pause was in the play," laughed Upham.

W. J. MORGAN.

RESULT OF POST-CARD COMPETITION No. 1.

(NEW SERIES.)

TWO GUINEAS have been forwarded to Mr. ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, 52, Dean Street, Glasgow, whose anagram ran as follows: "Ye yarn a heap, *P.W.*"

Result of Coupon Collecting Competition.

Full names and addresses of winners in this Competition will be found in *Pearson's Weekly* dated January 23rd.

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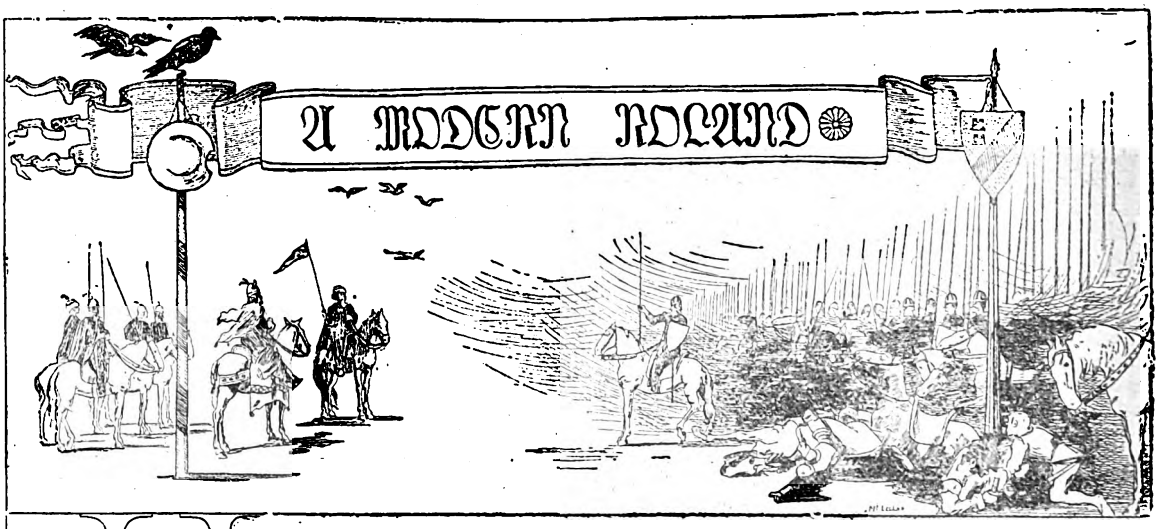

IS name was Roland, which was very fine, as everyone will admit. It was also Perkins, which was not so fine; he admitted that himself. He was, in fact, so keenly conscious of the disproportion between the two names that he came at last to be known as plain Perkins. This was, no doubt, partly because of his own persistent avoidance of his christian name—"Yours truly, R. Perkins," he always signed—and partly because of the ferocity with which he was accustomed to resent the familiar appellation "Roley," which an injudicious wag had on one occasion, and only on one, ventured to couple with "poly." It was after this that he dropped the Roland from his signature and adopted the one given above.

Mr. Perkins had been left an orphan at the early age of seven and had passed the age of wisdom, as defined by the law, before he learnt aught of the history of his celebrated namesake, which will be the more readily understood when it is stated that Mr. Perkins had been indebted for his early education to the Parish, by which estimable institution he had been, when twelve years old, bound apprentice to a hairdresser.

As Mr. Jackworthy's business improved, so also did the position of his young apprentice, till, at twenty-two, behold our Roland the prop of Mr. Jackworthy's declining years and practical manager of his very lucrative concern.

So far Mr. Perkins had been happy. His life, if not flooded with continuous sunshine, had, at least, not been darkened overmuch by clouds of trouble. It annoyed him, certainly, to be obliged to resent any trifling with his christian name; but this was only occasional, for at the time of this history few people knew the significance of the letter R, and fewer still would have cared to inquire.

Mr. Perkins always breakfasted early with a good appetite, saw that everything was in apple-pie order, appeared fresh, rosy and smiling before, or rather behind, each successive customer, and conversed with astonishing fluency and apparently tireless iteration on the state of the weather, past, present, and to come. Were a customer indiscreet enough to indulge in a conversational bolt, Mr. Perkins would gently lead him back to his favourite topic with a persuasive insistance before which the most aggressive were wont to yield. Once, indeed, the flow of his speech had been checked, when a certain farmer, broad of chest and rubicund of visage, had, at the first allusion to the weather, so heartily objected to the same, that Mr. Perkins, catching sight of the scowling face in the mirror, judged silence to be the safest, if not the best reproof, and presently bowed out the offender with a dignity worthy of his noble name.

Up to the age of three-and-twenty, then, Roland had been happy. Then there befell the one great event of his life—he fell in love. Not with saucy Miss Jackworthy, whose bold black eyes flashed many a bid for admiration at the customers as they passed through the shop, or lounged over the counter, paying for a smile the price of half-a-dozen bottles of Jackworthy's Marvellous Trichopoietic Fluid, done up neatly in pink wrappers with a yellow slip inside, whereon was set forth in six different languages the virtues of the persuasive compound, together with a couple of illustrations, showing how a bald-headed young man, after using three bottles, became the proud possessor of a head of hair which a Papuan might be excused for envying.

Not with the fair face of Arabella Morl, whose father was in the drapery line round the corner, and who three times at least every year announced in his plate glass window "Great Sale of Remnant Stock! Must be Cleared at any Sacrifice! Bargains! Bargains!"

Not with Miss Leonora de Vancy, on whose charms, ample enough, and displayed in anything but a niggard fashion, Mr. Perkins was accustomed to gaze without a touch of emotion in the music hall where, after the shop was shut, and he was free to come and go as he liked, he was occasionally wont to forget the labours of the day.

No, not to any of these did the great heart of Roland yield, but to—I must out with it—to the Lady Maud Ellanton, the daughter of his Grace the Duke of Marlshire! Yes, there it is in plain English, and you may smile at it, laugh at it if you will; but it is true.

It was soon over, this first and last passion of Roland Perkins, and it came about in this wise. One night a

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belated customer, hurrying from the saloon, left behind him an old book, which Mr. Perkins, noticing, carried to his room for safety. After supper he dipped into its pages, where, among a number of quaint tales, he read with deep attention of the story of his namesake, the type of knightly chivalry, Charlemagne's great paladin, Roland. A fanciful account, no doubt, but one which absorbed the reader, and gave to the name he bore and had learnt to detest a new interest and fascination.

"I must learn more about this chap," said the little hairdresser to himself, and accordingly, one day—a holiday—he refused the offer of a drive with Miss Morl and her brother, and found his way instead to the British Museum.

Arrived there, the astonished attendant found for him the literature which Mr. Perkins in his ignorance could but lamely ask for, and far into the afternoon he read the legends of the great king. True, many of his first illusions were dispelled by the hard facts of history, but these he put aside, and clung to the romance which the sweet singers of old time had woven round his hero—his very own, his namesake.

As he walked homewards in the gathering darkness, Roland's step was light and springy, his head was held high, his eyes shone, and his whole being was aglow with a new and entirely pleasureable excitement.

In that one afternoon the young man's horizon had widened immensely, the great book of the glorious past had been opened for him, and as he turned its glowing pages his heart grew hot within him to think that this magnificent heritage was his, his own imperishable possession.

Life held now a deeper and a sweeter meaning; he was no hero, it might never be his to play a hero's part, but he bore a hero's name, and that, he vowed, should be rescued from the limbo to which he had ignorantly consigned it, and set like a jewel in his cap, plain for all folk to see.

As Roland drew near Mr. Jackworthy's house, which adjoined the shop, he saw that estimable man standing at the door, gazing anxiously up and down the street, and as he perceived his assistant approaching he uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.

"Ah, Perkins," said he, "I'm glad you've come home early, for there's an important job on hand. As soon as you have had your supper you must go to the Duke of Marlshire's house to dress Lady Maud's hair for a costume ball. Mr. Poulter"—the second assistant—"usually goes there, but as there's no knowing when he'll be back, and the message says to be sure and send in good time, you'll have to go yourself."

"Very good, sir," answered Mr. Perkins; and, his supper finished, he set out, somewhat excited at being thus suddenly introduced into the mansions of the great—a privilege hitherto monopolised by Mr. Poulter—yet at the same time confident in his skill as an artist, and rejoicing at the opportunity to display it. Had he known; could he have foreseen, perhaps—but he did not know, he could not foresee, and so he went.

Arrived at the great house, Mr. Perkins was shown into a room, where he waited patiently for the appearance of the lady. The day had been a fatiguing one for Roland, unaccustomed to pore over musty tomes, and his brain was already tired with the weight of its newly-acquired store of knowledge, which coursed through it in a strange, fantastic jumble of fact and fancy. How long he waited he never knew, but presently, as he sat in a chair before the cheval glass, Mr. Perkins' head drooped forward on his chest, the curling tongs slipped from his hand to the floor, and he dropped heavily asleep.

He awoke with a start. To his dazed eyes, only half opened, the mirror and his own sordid reflection therein were invisible, and he looked, or thought he looked upon an apparition from another world, so exquisitely beautiful in his opinion was the face at which he gazed, so lustrous, so angelic were the soft, kind eyes which looked into his own.

In one moment, however, the dream faded and reality took its place, and with many stammering apologies the sleeper rose to his feet. But that moment had done its fatal work, and Roland Perkins, lifted in spirit by his afternoon researches into a sphere infinitely removed from that of his commonplace, every-day existence, fell bound, metaphorically, hand and foot before the charms of the Lady Maud. Fell into love so passionate, so wild, so hopeless, that only the sublime pathos of it saved it from being supremely ridiculous.

Down sat Lady Maud, all unconscious of the havoc she had wrought, graciously supposing, and even condescending to inquire if the hairdresser had had a hard day's work. But Roland was mute, and with his

His eyes . . . bent upon the fair head before him.

eyes resolutely turned from the mirror, and bent upon the fair head before him, he went deftly and swiftly on with his task.

Only at last, when it neared completion, he raised his head, and forced himself to look. In an instant his brain swam, and his senses took temporary leave of him. He was intoxicated, mad, and from his dry lips escaped

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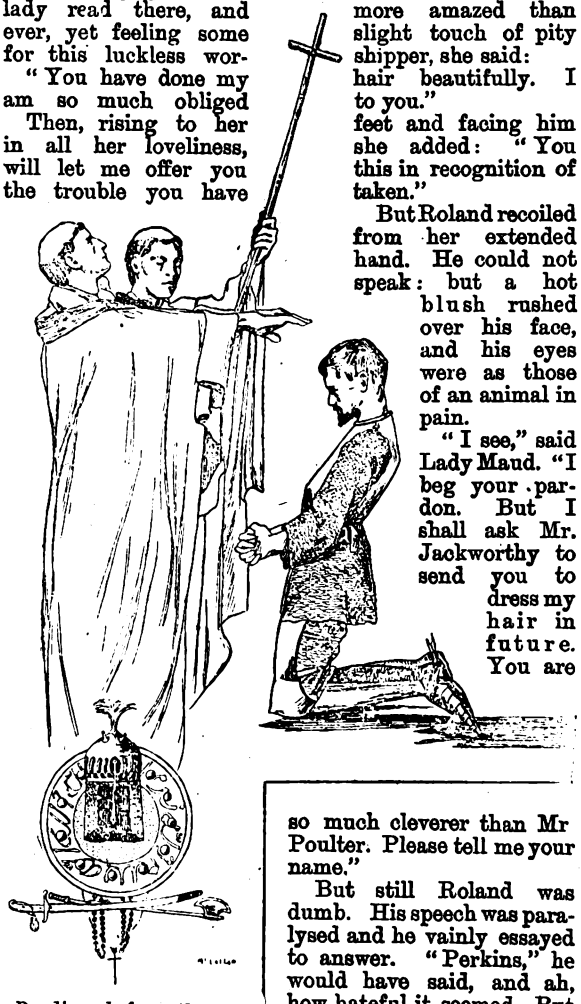
an inarticulate sound, so curious in its intonation, that Lady Maud glanced swiftly at his face in the glass, there to encounter a look so wild, so agonised, and withal so terrified at its own temerity, that she stared back aghast, only to drop her eyes a moment later and smile complacently at this visible effect of her marvellous beauty.

Presently she looked again, and still Roland, forgetful of everything else, gazed at her face in the mirror. But now his expression was changed. Dumb misery, hopeless longing, patient submission to the inevitable the lady read there, and more amazed than ever, yet feeling some slight touch of pity for this luckless wor- shipper, she said: "You have done my hair beautifully. I am so much obliged to you."

Then, rising to her feet and facing him in all her loveliness, she added: "You will let me offer you this in recognition of the trouble you have taken."



Bending before the priestly benediction.

But Roland recoiled from her extended hand. He could not speak: but a hot blush rushed over his face, and his eyes were as those of an animal in pain.

"I see," said Lady Maud. "I beg your pardon. But I shall ask Mr. Jackworthy to send you to dress my hair in future. You are so much cleverer than Mr Poulter. Please tell me your name."

But still Roland was dumb. His speech was paralysed and he vainly essayed to answer. "Perkins," he would have said, and ah, how hateful it seemed. But not a word would come, suddenly his tongue was loosened, and unable to control himself, impelled by a force he could neither comprehend nor resist, he drew up his form, while from his astonished lips burst the words: "Roland de Ronrcesvalles!"

Not less astounded was Lady Maud. For one brief minute she stared at the sorry figure before her, and then, as she buried her face in her handkerchief, peal after peal of irrepressible laughter broke from her. When she raised her head again she was alone.

Out into the night sped Roland, shame on his brow and rage in his heart. Where he went he never cared, but his feet intuitively bore him to his home, where, throwing himself upon his bed, he tossed and turned all through the most miserable night he had ever known.

Too unlearned to be able to analyse his thoughts, too unused to deep emotions to divine his own disease, he only suffered, suffered as an animal under the torture of an undeserved lash. A sense of burning shame oppressed him that he should be as he was, mingled with a fierce longing to be he knew not what. And at last towards morning he fell asleep and dreamt. And who shall say whence came his dream?

Spread out upon a far extending plain glittered the spear head of a great army, awaiting the shock of battle. Anon it came. Arms clashed, and mailed forms were hurled bleeding and dying to the dust, while myriads of arrows, hurtling through the air, drank deep of the hearts' blood of knight and squire, with little care for high or low degree.

On the one side the fair faces of the Franks; on the other the dark-visaged Moslem host. Christian or Islam—which will gain the day? Now one side, now the other surges forward, only to reel back shattered before the impenetrable phalanx opposed to it. But slowly, surely the turbaned hosts press on.

The Christians waver—recoil—fly. No, not yet. Out from among them bursts with sudden fury a knight. Superbly mounted, in splendid armour, of firm stature and exalted mien, he spurs to the front, his drawn sword dripping with blood. It is enough! At mere sight of him the Christians gain new courage, and once again their faces are turned towards the foe. "A Roland! A Roland!" is the cry from a thousand throats, and backwards, ever backwards, the Moslem torrent is swept, wave rolling back on wave, the dying piled upon the dead, till over all the banner of the victors waves, and above that scene of hate and carnage rises supreme the peaceful cross of Christ.

And now once more the shout is borne upon the air, long and loud. "A Roland! A Roland!" and bending before the priestly benediction, the knight of Blaives bares his stately head, tossing to his squire his shattered casque and dented shield, and then, as he lifts his eyes to heaven, wonder of wonders, the dreamer beholds his own face! His own face glorified, transfigured, ennobled a thousand times, but still his own, and with a shout of mingled terror and triumph he awoke.

"Perkins," said Mr. Jackworthy, as they sat at breakfast, "you must have done uncommonly well last night, for there's a note come this morning asking me to send you back again to-night to dress Lady Maud's hair."

"It must be Mr. Poulter that's wanted," answered poor Roland, shivering slightly at the recollection of what he had endured.

"Not at all," said his master; "it's you. The note says to be very particular to send the same young man who was there yesterday. It's you, right enough."

"Very well, sir," replied Mr. Perkins; "I'll attend to the order." And pushing away his plate, he rose to begin the business of the day.

All through the long morning and afternoon he went about his work mechanically, but his thoughts were far away, and in spirit he fought once more that glorious fight, or rode in joust and tourney, while over all and watching all, holding for him the crown of victory, smiled the queen of beauty; and her face was the face of Lady Maud.

At length the weary day came to an end, and Roland set out once more for the Duke's mansion, and

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presently he stood again in her ladyship's room, his heart thumping against his side, and that dry feeling about his mouth and throat which he had experienced the night before. All in a moment Lady Maud stood before him, and then the memory of his shame overcame him, and he hung his head in agony.

Lady Maud, however, sat down without a word, and the hairdresser began his task. Only when it was completed and he turned to go, she rose and faced him.

"I was very rude to you last night, Mr——"

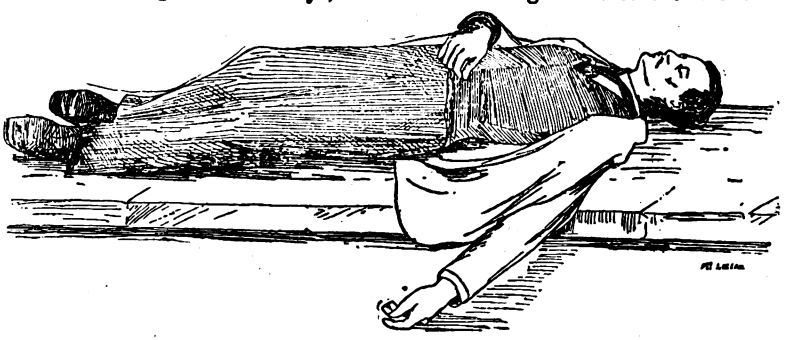
"Perkins," he interrupted hurriedly. "And don't name it, my lady. I made a fool of myself. I had been reading—and I was tired—I forgot—I—I——" he stammered, and hung his head again.

"And I hurt your feelings, Mr. Perkins," said Lady Maud. "Believe me, I did not mean to do so. Will you forgive me?"

Roland cast one swift glance at her lovely face, lit with a tender smile in which was no suggestion of derision, and then with a grace no one could have suspected in him, he sank upon his knee, and lifting the hem of her gown to his lips, pressed a passionate kiss upon it, and before she could recover from her surprise, had hurried from the house.

For a moment Lady Maud stood perfectly still. Then she smiled: then she laughed a light little laugh. "Poor fellow!" she said softly to herself, and descended to her carriage.

How it came about no one could exactly say, but coachman and footman were flung different ways, and lay stunned and bleeding on the road, while the splendid horses, mad with terror, dashed along, dragging behind them the carriage with its light burden, Lady Maud and her mother. The Duchess shrieked, but Lady Maud sat still, with white, set features and lips compressed, as, leaning forward a little, she waited for the end.



It came. Out from the throng of horrified onlookers on the pavement dashed a man, and hurled himself at the horses' heads. Kicking, plunging, rearing, they bore that clinging figure along with them in their wild career.

But the man's arms were strong, and the heart in him was big, and ere the willing hands that rushed to help could do aught, the horses were checked, and the danger was past. But, even in the very moment of victory the near horse lashed out his iron-shod hoofs.

There was a dull, sickening crash, and the brave rescuer fell headlong to the ground just as a couple of stalwart policemen grasped the reins, and forced the trembling horses to a standstill.

Then, while the Duchess lay moaning on the cushions, Lady Maud opened the carriage door and stepped out.

"Who stopped them?" she inquired, then she saw and recognised the prostrate figure, and rushed with a little cry to his side.

"He's done for, poor chap," said a bystander. But Lady Maud paid no heed to the words, as, kneeling there in the dusty street, she raised the head of her deliverer and pillowed it against her breast, her hot tears falling thick and fast upon him.

Slowly the eyes of the stricken man opened. His face was fat and square and commonplace, but a smile that transfigured it to the likeness of the knight of his dream played for one instant over it.

"My Lady!" was all he said, and in that supreme moment, leaving the transfiguring smile upon the dead lips, the spirit of Roland Perkins took its flight.

REGINALD HORSLEY.

Jumbled Story Competition.—28.

ON page 106 appears a story, each line of which is numbered. The lines are all in their wrong position, and the prizes mentioned below are offered to those who write on a sheet of paper the numbers of the lines in the order most nearly correct. The title is jumbled up, and should be correctly given *and pasted on the paper containing the effort.*

The conditions are jumbled in the following paragraph as an example. The correct order of the lines is given in line 10.

1 SHORT STORIES on or before *Monday,*
2 awarded to the readers whose solutions first
3 *JUMBLED STORY.*
4 Four Prizes—one of £5 and three of £1 each—are
5 *January 25th,* and envelopes must be marked
6 correct. In the event of a tie, the prizes will be
7 reach this office.
8 All attempts to be delivered at the offices of
9 offered to the readers whose keys are most nearly
10 4—9—6—2—7—8—1—5—3—12—11—13—10.
11 a sheet of paper the figures in the order they
12 Competitors in doing the story should write on
13 believe to be correct, thus:

£400 IN CASH PRIZES.

£100 is offered to the reader who collects the greatest number of coupons from ***Short Stories*** and ***Pearson's Weekly.***

Another £100 to the reader who collects from ***Home Notes.***

Another £100 to the newsagent who collects from ***Short Stories*** and ***Pearson's Weekly.***

Another £100 to the newsagent who collects from ***Home Notes.***

Readers must not collect newsagents' coupons, and they should lump ***Short Stories*** and ***P. W.*** coupons together. ***Home Notes*** coupons are to be collected separately.

ONE HUNDRED POUNDS FOR A WEEK'S WORK.

HUNDREDS OF CONSOLATION PRIZES WILL BE GIVEN.

No Coupons are to be sent to us until Jan. 1st, 1898.

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JUMBLED STORY No. 28.] [See Page 105.

HE THEN BIT GOTTODS.

Dorminster was driving his phaeton in the park, this he did not seem to mind—probably because men, as will be seen, are as obstinate as women.

He swung the greys round, and turned back.

"You brutes," he said, punishing them with the sweetest, girlish face in all the world.

For an instant this charming sight was flashed with his sister at his side. The greys were fresh things, you know, from a distance, and he fascinated an Indian, or a Zulu in war-paint, Society found him away. Dorminster pulled them in savagely.

At the time Dorminster was a pet of Society.

With a great cry Dorminster sprang forward, remarking that he was going to shut himself in his confound——"

"Good gracious," said his sister, "I thought you darted through the canvas, the picture fell in two, that it was not wise to bolt away from pretty faces.

A clever artist, with hair artistically long, young, blue eyes, and a laughing mouth. Dorminster took him with a rush past Lady Orchadson's carriage. He half turned in his seat to try and put in driving performance with merry eyes, and the whip, "why can't you behave yourselves, when your brother falls in love with your greatest *distingué*, although perhaps not so interesting as she had never existed. And the greys learnt again the reins, "her daughter, her carriage, her footmen, on his brain; then the greys bolted again and drew his bow, and then—why, then his eyes fell on the girl alone behind the canvas, and a moment later she's gone."

The girl was leaning on the rails, watching his girl friend, and considers his case as hopeless.

So Dorminster and his sister—always "His girl for whom I would give my life, my art, everything that I possess, to have one glance from. You and her pug dog may be swallowed up in the frankest of laughs on her lips.

On the way back he was silent and moody, only his lips were near to hers, and she—well, she obeyed him interesting enough.

"Did you see the girl leaning on the railings, and clear away a pile of pictures and costumes, and to introduce you."

"Such a dear creature," said hostesses, "so very like you. How do I know that he really loves you? Dorminster came in. He threw his hat in a corner, and folding his arms, looked sadly at the picture, and the face was the face of the canvas brought to life. He set a piece of canvas on it, and began to draw.

"Whatever is the matter," cried his sister, "were I knew you."

The girl had disappeared as completely as though everyone but Lady Orchadson didn't want him to make space for a large easel that he drew forward.

"Lady Orchadson," said Dorminster, pulling at some new paints."

"Come," she cried, "quick, I want to show you the girl whom I love, the girl whom I worship, the sister," in spite of brains and beauty—were to be with would-be mothers-in-law.

In his studio, Dorminster began feverishly to have them at our next reception."

"Let's get away from this horrid crowd," said her friend, and did the best thing that she could downstairs to her visitor.

Lady Orchadson, for instance, arranged that he betrayed her. "Well, I will confess to you, dear. I have heard of her."

"And who may she be," inquired the visitor in laughing at us as we rushed past?" said Dorminster, "and go home."

Downstairs his sister was laughing over the events that morning, and absorbed his attention. They may see her for two minutes while I go out to buy the door.

She went to her brother's studio, and knocked at the picture. There! isn't it lovely? And exactly me immensely. But that was long ago, and before he comes back and looks at it, just put your knife and a girl's face looked timidly up at him—"I am dying to see him."

A girl's face appeared on the canvas; just a girl's charming, and his sister—so handsome, we *must* face, looking up to you, with a suggestion of merry studio, and was not to be disturbed. At which his sister knew that he had been saved at least from what is the best thing to do. Quick, he's coming!"

"I will write to her," said the sister, "and ask her of the morning. It is something to be amused at his art, to have one glance from you. Test him? you so very anxious to see the Orchadsons?"

She sent the letter by the first post, and two days worked on this with infinite care and skill, pausing later the fair unknown, that Dorminster had seen with your brother. I saw him at exhibitions and should meet her daughter on every occasion, and that at one time I fancied myself very much in love to come for a fortnight, and then—we shall see."

"How is the interesting brother," she asked. Well, I will tell you what he said. He said that he for one fatal moment, came to the house.

"Oh, impossible," cried the girl. Yet her blush met at all the best houses. He was overwhelmed down into her eyes. Then he bent his head, until he's fallen in love with. He won't see anyone."

He took his hat, and went out. His sister ran through, and slit it, down and across, and let him knife, and stand behind the picture—so—and when would give up everything that he possesses, even one mother-in-law.

"He's very busy painting a picture of a girl whom were in love in that quarter."

"I will fetch him down," said the other, "and see your genuine face behind it. Then you will see all innocence. "Oh, that Orchadson girl, I suppose. My dear girl, that's easy enough. Take this palate do—surrendered to him.

She darted from the room, leaving the trembling Dorminster. "I am in love with her. And now marry the girl. For in matters of this description sighing heavily. Suddenly the blade of a knife and took the girl's face in his hands, and gazed only to mix new paints.

"It is you," said the sister slowly.

"Come in," cried Dorminster, "come in and see bowels of the earth for all that *I* care."

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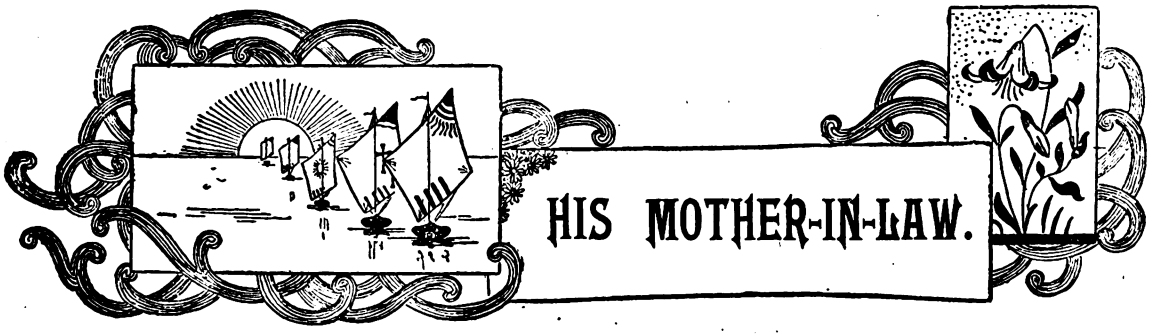

HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW.

MRS. BULPER was a very remarkable lady. Whenever her name was mentioned it invariably produced a series of little shudders. Yet none of her friends absolutely disliked her.

When she was present they would smile on her affectionately, and listen to her utterances with respectful attention; they even came to her for advice—for Mrs. Bulper was a lady of great knowledge and experience—and were always ready to declare that "anything she didn't know wasn't worth knowing." Yet no sooner was she out of sight than the manner of her friends would undergo a most surprising change. They would draw a deep, inward breath, raise their eyes, shake their heads, and murmur "Gorgon," "Vampire," and declare in whispers that Mrs. Bulper chilled them to the very marrow of their bones.

When a lady is pronounced by her friends to be a "Gorgon" and a "Vampire," it must be evident to the meanest capacity that she must differ in many ways from the rest of her sex.

Mrs. Bulper was unlike the majority of married women in two respects. First, she was always changing her husbands; and, secondly, she was always changing her furniture and other belongings.

This requires explanation. Mrs. Bulper had buried four husbands, notwithstanding which another gentleman was forthcoming who was willing to give this much married woman his name and provide her with board and clothing. Mr. Bulper made her fifth. All the other husbands had expressed their entire satisfaction with the lady's behaviour during their lifetime and testified to the sedulous attention she had bestowed on them during their last illness.

Yet the breath was scarcely out of their bodies before the relict began to look about for a successor. It will hardly be believed but she was scarcely thirty when her fourth husband died. She then remained a widow for nearly eighteen months, and at the end of that time began to entertain the most gloomy anticipations as to the future. She did not ascribe her failure to secure another partner to any decrease in her personal attractions, for Mrs. Bulper was one of those compact little women whose bright grey eyes and healthy skin defy the ravages of time.

Furthermore she had borne her bereavements remarkably well, and the doctor's certificate silenced the voice of calumny. No, it was neither to the finger of time nor to the voice of slander she attributed this prolonged widowhood.

It was simply the result of over competition. The market was glutted with widows.

Still, for all her gloomy prediction, she managed to hook a fresh fish. The lady had a snug little income of her own, and this fact became known to Mr. Bulper, who was on the look-out for a lady so situated.

The gentleman had no weaknesses or superstitions of any kind, and being absolutely devoid of fear led the lady to the altar. One child, christened Rosie, was the result of this union, a soft-eyed, flaxen-haired creature who grew into a very pretty woman and won, when she was about eighteen, the hand and heart of Mr. John Clayton, a prosperous young stockbroker living in London.

Deeply attached to his child, Mr. Bulper, after her departure, spent so much of his time at the club that Mrs. Bulper looked round for some relaxation, and soon found in bartering and exchanging an amusement quite to her taste.

She took in all the exchange papers and studied them with as much intentness as a betting man bestows on the current odds. This new taste soon developed into a positive craze. If she bought a black silk dress one week, she was sure to exchange it for a brown one the next. The sealskin jacket was parted with for a carpet, her hearthrug for a coal scuttle, her gold watch for a sideboard, and her own sideboard for an oil-painting.

She worked at this hobby with such indefatigable energy that the changes in her home rivalled the changes in a kaleidoscope. It never presented the same appearance two weeks running. Fresh things were constantly coming in to replace those going out.

When quietude reigned among her furniture, she turned her attention to her husband, with the result that he frequently sallied forth in the evening arrayed in garments which a day or two before had been worn by someone else, although the gentleman was too engrossed by his club to pay much heed to his wife's doings.

Even when on retiring to rest one evening, he found the bed so high that he had to climb in with the aid of a chair, and the next night, not being able to find the matches, undressed, and, mounting the chair in the dark, stepped into space and came down heavily. He only swore a little, and presently forgot all about it.

The fact was, that he didn't care a brass farthing about his wife's hobby. She couldn't exchange the house for another without his knowing it. He knew the knocker, was familiar with the number, and that was enough for him.

After his death it transpired that he owed quite a large sum of money, and an execution being put in the house, Mrs. Bulper had to move into lodgings, where she quickly found it was not considered legal to exchange and barter without the consent of the owner, which in this case, being the landlady, was not forthcoming. Thus circumstanced she fell back on her own belongings,

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and, after she had exchanged everything she possessed in the world for something else, suddenly remembered she had a daughter, and that she was well married and moved a good deal in society.

Who could tell? Why, she might be able to secure another partner. True she had had a surfeit of husbands, but she disliked a solitary life, and soon convinced herself that even the society of a fresh mate would be preferable to the solitude of the widow. So when Rosie came to her husband one day with tears in her pretty eyes, saying:

"Oh, Jack, dear, poor papa is dead, and the shock has so prostrated mamma that she hasn't been able to write to me before; and she is all alone in the world, Jack, and quite broken down with grief; and there is the spare bedroom, dear, which is always being used by your friend Mr. Yardley, whom you know I never liked, and she will leave us, dear, as soon as she gets over the blow."

Jack hummed and hawed a good deal. He didn't like the idea of a woman who had had five husbands residing in his house, but when Rosie hinted that Mr. Yardley was coming too often and that he stared at her when Jack was not looking, he consented, and the next day Mrs. Bulper received an invitation from her son-in-law, and immediately began preparing for her departure.

Jack had sent his invitation with some misgivings. He knew nothing practically of mothers-in-law, except from the types presented in novels and farcical comedies, but it was better to have the relict of five dead husbands occupying the spare bedroom, than a fellow who stared at one's wife when the husband wasn't looking.

In a few days Mrs. Bulper arrived with a great number of boxes, containing a most miscellaneous assortment of things. She was delighted with her son-in-law, enraptured with her grandchildren, but not quite so sure that the house was furnished in good taste.

Rosie, who was not as yet aware of her mother's recent developments, was alarmed.

"Why, mamma, dear, Jack and I purchased everything together, and were most careful."

"Very likely, my dear," rejoined her mother; "but you must remember you are both very inexperienced, while I—well I have had more than one home, as you know, therefore I must know something about how one's house should look. This drawing-room suite is very handsome, I admit, but the blue in the carpet kills it, positively kills it."

Rosie looked startled, but realised in the course of a few weeks that all such defects as "bad contrast," "want of harmony," "doesn't blend well," were to be remedied.

Before Mrs. Bulper had been in the house a month she had thoroughly imbued her daughter with her own ideas.

Rosie had always loved our spring or autumn sales, where everything is sold at a reduction, but purchases even at a sale were expensive, whereas in exchange and bartering the excitement was just as great, and the expense nothing. But it behoved them to be cautious. Jack liked his home and belongings, and had pronounced them "deuced cosy," and he had rather a masterful way about him when angered, so Mrs. Bulper, with the skill of an old hand, rearranged the rooms one by one, leaving those which Jack used to be dealt with last. The two ladies thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Bartering was a new sensation to Rosie and an indispensable one to her mother. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays they devoted to inspecting the goods of other people. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays they remained at home to exhibit their own.

One Wednesday evening they missed a train at Finchley, whither they had gone to inspect some bed-linen which the owner was willing to exchange for several dozen of Jack's old claret, a very fine wine. When that gentleman knocked at his street door that evening he noticed that the servant who admitted him was a new-comer. This, however, did not surprise him, for since the day when things began to be daily moved out for other things to be brought in, servants had been exchanged as often as the furniture. Jack started slightly as he hung up his hat. He did not recognise the hall lamp, and he could have sworn his umbrella stand had had a plate glass back. There was no plate glass in the one he was looking at. Then he went into the sitting-room, looked round for a moment, beat a hasty retreat, and regained the street.

"I must have gone in next door," he murmured, but no, there was his number. What did it all mean? He rubbed his eyes; yes, it was his house, so he knocked again and was re-admitted by the same servant, who eyed him suspiciously and asked if his name was Clayton. With a sinking heart he went over the house. All the old things were gone. Carpets, furniture, curtains, pier glasses, all new—well, they were not exactly new, but they were new to him. Then a thought struck him, and he went into his study. His oak escritoire was gone. In its place reposed a mahogany one. Thick drops of perspiration stood upon his brow. There were a number of letters in the top drawer which he had intended to destroy years before. He realised in a moment that his wife had bartered it away. He also remembered seeing the newspapers devoted to that branch of commerce lying about the house. The lady who had his desk would, of course, find a key to unlock that drawer, and after reading the letters, would return them—not to him, he knew the sex too well for that—but to his wife.

They were letters he had received before his marriage. It was all through that old "Bluebeard." He had been a fool to let her in the house at all.

Presently the ladies returned, and a pretty scene ensued. Jack kept his temper till he ascertained the address of the lady who had his escritoire, and then he let out. He gave Mrs. Bulper to understand that she might change her husbands as frequently as she pleased, but she shouldn't change his furniture. Finally, he declared that he hated the look of the place, and should spend the rest of the evening at his club. But he did not go to his club; he drove straight to the address he had secured and recovered the letters. While he was tearing them into pieces on his journey home, he had time to consider his position.

His mother-in-law must go, he was determined on that. Rosie hadn't been the same woman since her mother had been in the house. If it hadn't been for that lie of Rosie's he wouldn't have had her there at all. He had spoken to Mr. Yardley about looking so earnestly at his wife, and he had denied it. He didn't want a row. Mrs. Bulper was a sensible woman, and would listen to reason, so that evening he broached his plan.

"Lor', mamma," exclaimed Rosie, horror-stricken, "you surely wouldn't marry again."

"My dear," said her husband philosophically, "your mamma has looked so happy since her bereavement, that I

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can see she realises that widowhood is not without its advantages."

"I'm afraid you're right," sighed the much-married woman.

"Of course I am," continued Jack, "when one is a widow one knows where one's husband is, but when one of yours was alive I will bet you didn't."

"You speak truly," replied Mrs. Bulper solemnly; "from first to last I never knew how Mr. Wallace, my second husband—no, he was my third—spent his evenings."

"But," returned Jack, "I think it my duty to inform you that anyone whose life is associated with the figure five is certain, according to statistics in my possession, to fall a victim to some dreadful calamity. Therefore, I say, sooner than deprive Rosie of a mother, marry once more for the sake of your only child."

Mrs. Bulper quite understood the drift of all this, and when a few days later Jack gave a party to which none but bachelors were invited, she exerted herself to the utmost, and gushed and frisked about in the style which had been so successful before. Jack's friends thought her a very nice sort of woman, so they said, but they eyed her with the same sort of curious look one assumes when gazing at a showman's bearded lady or tattooed man. They drank Jack's whisky and smoked his cigars, but they wouldn't have married the mother if she had been worth a million. They knew all about the five husbands. Jack had often spoken of them and made all sorts of jokes on the subject.

There was one gentleman, however, a Mr. Harryman, who was willing to make the sixth. Mr. Harryman was not well off, being only the transfer clerk in a South African Gold Mining Company which might pay 50 per cent. dividend this year and be in liquidation the next. Mrs. Bulper discovered this, and refused him. Jack was greatly annoyed, and spoke very sharply on the subject to his mother-in-law, and another scene took place.

"You must really understand, Mr. Clayton," cried the widow, "that when I promised to marry again I did not promise to marry anybody. I'm not of a speculative turn of mind where husbands are concerned. In addition, though not an old woman, I do not care to marry a man who may be years before he gets into a good position. Find me a husband who can keep me in comfort, never mind his age, and never mind his health, but mark, he musn't drink or gamble, and he must have a good income."

"You won't find him on this planet," groaned Jack, "I should advise you to travel."

"Travel at mamma's time of life," cried Rosie. "No, you'll stay with me, won't you, dear?" and then the two women embraced and mingled their tears while Jack walked out of the room speechless with rage.

In a few days the ladies felt their courage revive, and things came in and things went out as before. One day there would be an easy chair for Jack and the next there wouldn't. He was constantly missing articles of wearing apparel, and on one occasion found himself putting on a pair of trousers much too small for him. He flung them out of the window.

Small wonder that he was constantly quarrelling with his mother-in-law, who invariably found an ally in his wife, who had now lost that tender shyness of manner which had constituted her great charm in Jack's eyes. The soft persuasive tones were gone. In a word the timid, retiring creature had been transformed into a hard business woman.

"Thank God," groaned Jack, "the children are all right. She hasn't been able to infect them."

But at dinner one Sunday—he never dined at home now, except on Sundays—a thrill of horror went right through him, a dull despair settled on his faculties when he saw his eldest boy, Guy, exchange a piece of his Yorkshire pudding for a piece of his sister's meat. Jack said nothing, but the look he gave his mother-in-law boded ill for that lady.

Jack Clayton was no fool. He was a member of the Stock Exchange, where simplicity and innocence are unknown qualities. Mrs. Bulper had chosen to match her wits against his, and she must take the consequences.

A few evenings after a Mr. Pilsby, an old friend of Jack's father, called. Jack introduced him to the ladies, but did not treat his guest with any great cordiality, admitting, after he had gone, that he had never liked the man. "He is, however, very well off, and has a lot of property, besides being part owner in a vessel of enormous tonnage."

Mrs. Bulper pricked up her ears as she heard this, and received Mr. Pilsby the next time he called with marked *impressement*.

This seemed to greatly anger Jack, who confided to his wife that it was shameful of her mother to lure the old idiot on for the sake of his money. This was, of course, repeated to the lady, who redoubled her attentions.

Mr. Pilsby was not a pleasant gentleman to look at. He was small and mean in person, his skin was yellow and shrivelled, and his general appearance savoured of what is known as *grimy*. But he was part owner of a vessel of enormous tonnage.

"You are sure of that," she asked Jack one day.

"Quite," was that gentleman's reply.

Mr. Pilsby was ardent, and the lady was not shy. The gentleman proposed, was modestly accepted, and a few weeks later, to the delight of Jack, his father's old friend led his mother-in-law to the altar. The honeymoon was spent at Broadstairs, in the retirement of which place she had leisure to study the character of her new mate. Being a woman of experience she soon probed her new partner to his uttermost depths. The result filled her with the profoundest misgivings. On her return to town she had him watched, and presently discovered the whole truth. She had been tricked.

Jack was smoking his pipe one evening in placid contentment, watching his wife, who had now resumed her former self, and promised to barter no more, when Mrs. Pilsby entered, dragging her husband after her.

"Rosie, your husband is a villain," screamed the infuriated woman. "I have been and married his clerk."

"Well," said Jack coolly, "he is none the worse for that."

"But you told me he was part owner of a vessel of enormous tonnage."

"So he is. Aren't you, Pilsby?" said Jack sturdily.

"I believe so, sir."

"I don't believe it," shrieked his wife. "Prove it!"

"Go on," said his employer, "prove it."

Mr. Pilsby then took from his pocket a small piece of wood which he handed to his wife. It was well varnished, and attached to it was a label on which was written: "This piece of wood is a portion of the *Royal George*."

ARTHUR GOODRICH.

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Or, THE ROMANCE OF A LOST CONTINENT.

By GEO. C. WALLIS, Author of *"The Winning of Gunhild,"* etc.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"SUNDERER'S" LAST STROKE.

THE arrow sped from my bow, driven by the full force of a strong bow and a lusty arm, but my aim was hurried and shaken by the sudden rush of men, and, missing the Princess by a hand-span, the shaft was fixed, quivering, in the mainmast of her ship. She laughed a little, bidding one of her men draw it forth, and placed it in the dainty quiver that hung from her ivory-white shoulders.

I soon had my hands too full of work to follow her further movements, for her men were many and well armed, and by a cunning stratagem had divided our force in two, thus holding us at a disadvantage. Valdo and Atris were together in the stern, defending the cabin-way, whilst Orlanis, Penares, and myself were cooped up in the fore of the ship with a dozen men only.

But I never lost heart when "Sunderer" flamed before me, and right vigorously I played upon the heads and arms of the foe with its shining blade.

Though I had not had good practice with it for many years, I found that my hand retained its cunning, and the wild joy of fierce encounter came back to me with all its first freshness. So terribly I smote and slashed and cut and pierced with its keen razor edge, shearing alike through armour and shield and head-piece, that the enemy drew back a space, fighting at respectful distance, and trusting to the heavy rain of arrows from their own ship to bring me down, as it had brought seven of my men.

Presently, however, the attack closed in again, and the galling shower of missiles ceased, lest it should do equal damage to friend and foe, and in the forefront of the boarders came the Lord Dison, whom I had last seen at the Court of Listra, when I sent him sprawling on the ground for his insolence.

He was a stalwart soldier, though he carried a sinister face, and I saw that his teeth were set, and his eyes blazed with the fury of a pent-up passion. He used a great, broad blade, heavy and short, and excelled in swordcraft.

"Ha! Dison!" I cried, that I might, by enraging him, disturb the calm that a soldier should always bear, "thinkest to touch me with that clumsy flesher's knife? Hast forgotten my skill in the palmy days of old?"

"Not I," he answered, drawing nearer and waiting for a chance to dash upon me, "nor have I forgotten thy cowardly boastings. But for the fair Princess I had then done with thee what I must needs do now. How likest that, turncoat?"

His ugly weapon shot forward and upward, cutting a long gash across my chest, which but for my springing backwards sharply would have been my death.

"As much as thou relishest that!" I retorted, parrying his second stroke, and passing "Sunderer's" keen edge across his left shoulder, and unnerving his arm so that the shield fell clanging to the deck. Then we parried and cut, and slashed and pierced, and rattled blade on blade in right good earnest, till the fight around us ceased, and men stood to watch us as the fire flashed from our whirling swords.

I never thought that mortal man could stand against my skill so long as did this man, but I was weak from hunger and thirst and distraught with sorrow and anxiety besides, whilst he was fat with good living and strove for a stern revenge.

Long and savagely I played my steel upon him, attacking, defending, pressing him sorely with long, sweeping strokes and anon beating him back with a pitiless rain of blows which hacked his armour to shreds but tired my arms.

I got him down upon his knees once, only to let my sword slip from my grasp ere I could strike, and once he sent "Sunderer" spinning from my hand into the lee scuppers. For a moment I shook with fear; the next I closed with him so suddenly that his blade was rendered useless, and fastening my iron grip upon his throat, came nigh to pressing the life out of him.

However, I was not minded to slay him that way, so I let him go, and seizing my sword again, waited till his breath came back.

Then doggedly we set to work again, with feint and stroke and ringing of metal, but now I had the best of it, for his breath came fast and short and his arm was unsteady.

Now I toyed with him, not wasting my strength, and as I grew calmer and more confident he lost his coolness and struck at random, till, with a false motion, I threw him off his guard, and my trusty blade passed through his heart like a flash of light. He leapt up without cry or sound, then fell headlong on the deck.

"So endeth the days of the Lord Dison!" I said to the foe. "Let Nayrahn, whom I saw with him on your ship, now come forward if he wishes such an end!"

The enemy answered me with shouts of rage, and closed in upon us again, fighting more furiously than before, and the sharpshooters perched in the rigging of Listra's vessel began to gall us afresh, one accursed shaft laying Orlanis dead at my feet ere a dozen moments had passed.

I was growing warm to the work now, and, despite my scratches, made dreadful havoc in the opposing ranks, forcing them back foot by foot, till I joined hands with Valdo and Atris, who were holding their own well. United, my crew made bolder show, and encouraged by my exhortations and the loud din of strife

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from the windward side of Listra's ship, where Tirhak and his pirates fought, pressed the foe slowly to the bulwarks, dislodging also the few who had got foothold on our spars.

Suddenly there arose a wild cry for help from the *Ravager's* cabins, and a dense cloud of smoke poured up the ladderways, followed by forking tongues of fire. The deck grew hot, and the foe, startled, scrambled back to their own vessel as quickly as they could, endeavouring to cut the grapnel chains as they went.

Calling to my men to fall upon them and prevent their accomplishing their desire, I sprang to the wooden stair, and, despite the volumes of suffocating vapour, dashed down into the ship's interior. In a single glance I saw that the fire was running along the passages, and that the woodwork aft was blazing furiously, as though saturated with some inflammable liquid, and at once guessed that the foe had poured burning oil into the ship through the rowholes, unseen and unheard by us who were fighting above.

Raving bitterly at the malice of her who had caused this cowardly thing to be done, I groped my way to the cabin where Briseis was, brushed through the throng of frightened women who crowded round me, seized her in my arms and bore her to the fresh air of the deck. She was benumbed with the stifling smoke, nor recovered until I placed her against the mast and fanned her lovely face with Dison's dinted shield.

Then her sweet eyes opened slowly, resting their glance upon me, and she said:

"Now that I can see thy face, Arnon, I am content. Let me not stay thy hand from its duty."

I cannot explain why it was so, but at that speech of my Queen's, a great wave of love swept over me, sweet and thrilling as the first flush of joy felt by a favoured suitor, and kneeling down on the hot deck I placed my arms about her and pressed her willing lips to mine in a passionate caress, again and again.

"Thou art my love," she murmured softly, "but the Spirits grant that this be not our parting kiss."

Then I tore myself away, and with the help of others, brought up the women from below, only just in time to escape the fire, which had now firm hold of the ship's timbers.

Soon the flames leapt roaring up the stairway and out at the rowholes, the pitch between the boards of the deck began to boil and bubble beneath our feet, and smoke rolled in dark masses along the vessel's length.

I examined the boats, and found, as I expected, that the foe, in their brief visit, had stoven their bows in, leaving them useless as rotten logs. Our danger was pressing; we had no choice.

"On board Listra's ship with you all!" I cried, "if you do not want to be fuel for this fire! First our toughest warriors, and next we who have to carry our children and wounded. Up with you, my merry men, and see that they do not cut the linking chains. We will set her ship afire whilst we fight, and then we shall escape in Tirhak's craft. Forward with you, and no quarter!"

The brave fellows obeyed, though they numbered less than fifty now, and made their way on the foe's deck so splendidly, that, but for the ceaseless rain of arrows from her crosstrees and spars, we should have got our weak ones over safely. As it was, besides my Queen, only ten who were not grim-faced warriors placed foot on the other ship.

It was the prow we gained, and, placing our charge in such shelter as we could, we turned our faces aft and joined in the bitter fray. On Tirhak's deck the battle was still prolonged, the white-haired old pirate still heading his reckless men and seeking to cross swords with the traitor Nayrahn, who there led Listra's forces.

The rolling billows of smoke now swept across the deck to larboard, blinding our foes and giving us a moment's rest, which we utilised by binding our wounds and watching the old sea-dogs.

Presently Nayrahn met the grizzled veteran who so persistently sought him, and then their weapons flashed and rang, and their respective followers cheered them on. But the pirate, though a man of well-knit sinews and of passing toughness, was feebled with his age and weary with his previous exertion, and his eyes were not so steady as in his youth; so it was not long before the blade of the traitor did its work and found its way through the old man's heart.

Next moment the bow of Valdo bent, and a shaft flew whizzing in the air, stretching the victor lifeless at the side of his vanquished foe.

"Methinks that traitor will trouble us no more," said my officer grimly.

Now the pirates drove back the rebels to their own ship with a great rush, slaying them by scores as they ran, and leaping on board in hot pursuit, joined with us and pressed our foes slowly back into the stern. As we went forward, however, fresh men came up the cabinways to reinforce the foe, and from the pirate craft smoke and flame suddenly shot up, showing that she, too, had been fired by the rebels from below.

Our position was now precarious in the extreme, for the *Ravager* was already blazing like a furnace, Listra's vessel had caught fire from it, and the wind still blowing from that quarter, beat back the men who strove to cut the grappling chains or pour water on the conflagration.

Thus all three ships were ablaze on a solitary sea, and we who were on board—the sole survivors of Atlantis—instead of uniting with each other for mutual safety, were doggedly striving to spill each other's blood on the heated deck! Oh, the folly and the madness of it! and the fiendish hate of the woman who caused it all!

All told, the armed men who rallied round me now numbered seventy only, whilst the rebels mustered one hundred odd. Listra I had lost sight of for a time, but as the flames got firmer hold of the lower timbers, she appeared on deck, taking her stand in the stern, and urging on her men with madly eloquent words.

Outnumbered as we were, we still pressed on, slowly gaining ground, and heartily thankful that the clouds of smoke had dislodged the marksmen from the rigging. The roar of fierce-fanned fires was all around us now, the drifts of warm, blinding smoke swept across the deck in billows of vaporous discomfort, well-nigh taking our breaths, and causing our eyes to run with unwilling tears; and the crackling of wood and the hiss of blazing fragments falling in the sea intermingled with the cries and groans of the wounded and the shouts of the living who fought in the horrible midst.

We fought all the more desperately because we saw no hope of life or rescue when the strife was o'er; despairingly struggling as men who have resolved to sell their lives dearly if they must die, and reck not how nor whom they slay in the fever of their last moments. So continued the battle, till the sun—looming a dull, deep crimson through the dense pall that enveloped us—sloped slowly to the west, telling that it was past the hour of noon.

By then, so mercilessly had we plied our weapons, I had not a score of able followers left, and Listra had but twice as many. Yet neither band thought of yielding or asking for a truce, though the flames had seized upon the hold, and one of the hatches was a fountain spouting fire, though we could scarcely bear our feet upon the charring timbers, though some of the women shrieked aloud in their fear, and one leapt overboard in the madness of her terror.

At last, seeing her chance, the Princess commanded one half her men to fall upon us more furiously, so that we could not stir from our vantage place near the mainmast, ordering the others meanwhile to dash past us and secure our women.

Owing to their superior numbers they did this with ease, and though we gnashed our teeth with rage and strove like maddened beasts to get to their assistance, we saw our nine precious ones brought before our implacable foe.

"Bind them and throw them overboard;" said the

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Princess, in tones that sounded strangely soft and low, "all but the trembling Queen. Bind her to the helm, here—so—and now to your work again."

The horrible command was executed with due dispatch, and soon we were fighting as before. Now Atris fell, slaying two foes as he went down; and Penares also sank in death with a broken blade in him. Save Valdo, who still laboured dauntlessly at my side, I was left with only five brave men. Said my grim-visaged follower, his keen eyes glittering with somewhat of their old-time brightness:

"It seemeth, King, that thou and I have yet a deed to do before we reach the Shadows!"

"Thou speakest truth, old friend," I answered, smiting down a foeman as I spoke, "and it seemeth fitting also that we should. The deed shall be the saving of my Briseis and the ending of this evil leman's ill career."

"As thou sayest," the veteran replied, unceremoniously digging an opponent in the ribs to the latter's great discomfort.

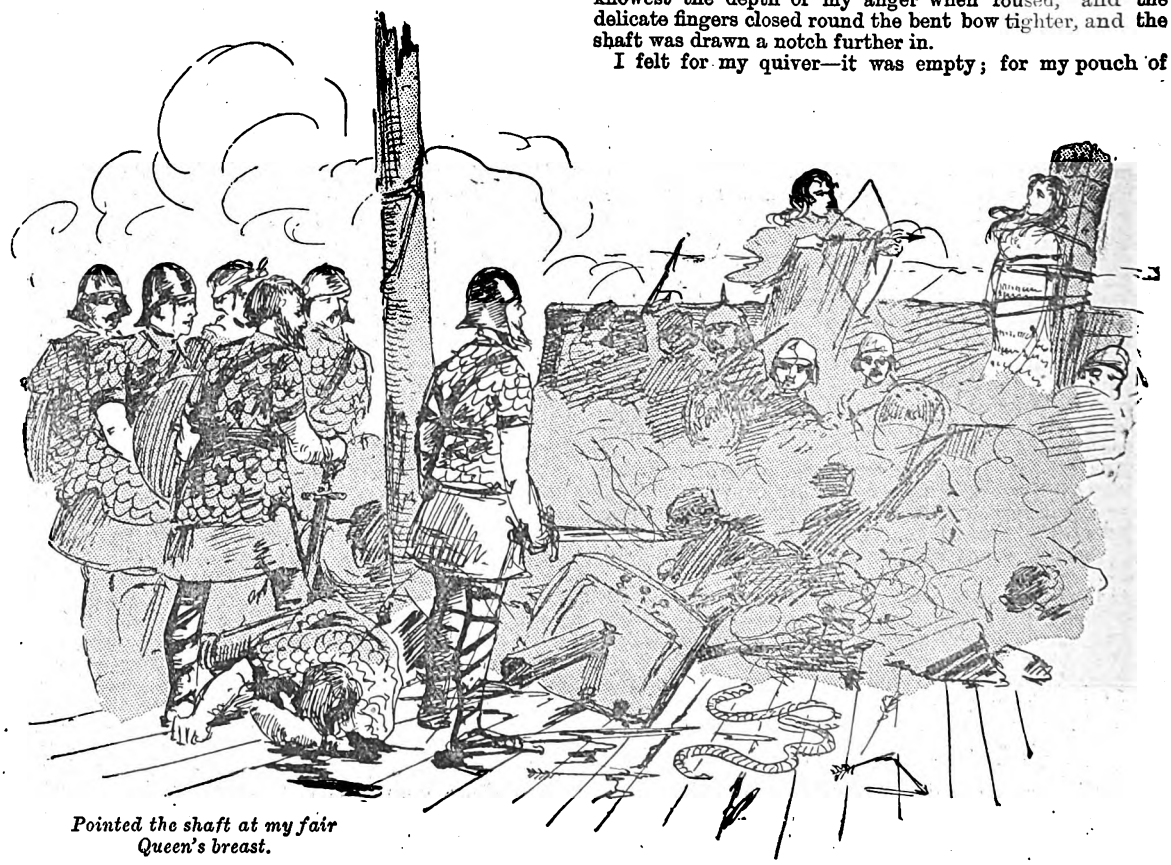
But Listra heard our talk above the din of strife and fire; for all were crowded in the stern, where was comparative safety; and suddenly bade her dozen men lower their weapons while keeping on guard between her and ourselves. Instinctively we stayed our hands also, waiting in surprise for what might next befall.

I feared the very worst as soon as I heard the silvery tones of her hateful voice and saw her cast a swift, malignant glance at Briseis; and when she drew that fateful graven arrow from her dainty quiver and fitted it to her bow with deliberate carefulness and pointed the shaft at my fair Queen's breast, I knew that the greatest sorrow that the world now held for me was hanging over me as a heavy sword suspended by a spider thread.

My heart seemed to leap within its socket, my teeth gritted, and I bit my tongue till the blood ran from my mouth. Then Listra spoke, still holding the arrow pointed straight at her victim's breast.

"Arnon the King," she said, sweet and humble now, "art weary of this strife? Thou answerest not. So be it. I am weary of it and tired of staying here, e'en though naught but a watery grave await us otherwhere. Say, Macis—or Arnon, if that name pleases thee better—wilt throw thy sword away, and leave this meekling to herself and be my love from now, whether death come soon or late? An thou wilt, her life shall be spared; an thou wilt not—thou knowest the depth of my anger when roused," and the delicate fingers closed round the bent bow tighter, and the shaft was drawn a notch further in.

I felt for my quiver—it was empty; for my pouch of sling-bullets—it was empty, and I knew that the life of my Queen was in the hands of her bitterest foe, and that I was powerless to reach her before the treacherous hands could do their work.



Pointed the shaft at my fair Queen's breast.

Before I could reply, Briseis called to me, her eyes flashing defiance and her voice composed and scornful:

"Listen not to her pleading, my Arnon, even to save my life. I would sooner die knowing thee true, than live by thy falseness, e'en though it be dissembled on my behalf. See, I have no fear now that I am face to face with the end, for I know that thou wilt not be long in seeking me wherever I go. Only I would like to be laid to rest with the Passport Piece in my hand, that we may both gain the Garden of Pleasure."

"Again I ask thee, Macis—who was once my true beloved—again I ask thee if thou wilt come with me at the last, and so save this creature's life?" said Listra, mocking the Queen. "Make thy choice, and that swiftly, or my

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hand may be tempted to do the work I like not, for thy dear sake."

"Let me think!" I cried, distraught at the fearful peril, and paralysed by my utter helplessness, "let me think!"

"Heed her not, my husband," pleaded Briseis, "her promises are lies, and her endearments but temptations to separate us from each other in that greater life beyond the tomb. Nor hath she any goodness or beauty which a true man should desire. Heed her not, my dear one, to whom I say farewell."

Whether she spoke thus tantalisingly and derisively of the Princess in order to force her hand to do the deed, or whether she spoke out of the bitterness of her heart unthinkingly, I know not, but scarcely had her lips closed when Listra broke into a mocking laugh, slackening the bow slightly.

Then back she stretched it to the full again, her fierce face all awork with the evil passion in it, and with a wild cry of "Vengeance!" let the cursed arrow fly. On it sang in the heated air, well-aimed and passion-urged, piercing my beloved's heart and transfixing her to the helm. So swift was its passage from the nearness of the aim, that the smile of courage on my dear one's face never changed, but was fixed in death, and so remained when the red blood rushed forth, and, flowing down, incarnadined the whiteness of her robes.

"Ye Gods! How did I live through that fearful moment? How did I keep my reason, or hold my hand from slaying myself in that first, swift spasm of misery? I stood as one stunned and blinded, knowing not whither to turn or what to do. But not for long. With that cry of "Vengeance!" still ringing in my ears, I woke to action, and repeating it in a clarion voice, I rushed forward.

The hot blood of youth surged through my throbbing veins anew, and all the lusty vigour of my earlier years welled in my nerves and sinews, as, sword in hand, I broke through the line of foes, scattering them to right and left. They were more than a match for our men even then, and soon Valdo and I strove together, two against seven enemies, all well-armed and desperate.

But, wielded in my wrath, "Sunderer" was not to be denied, and the good sword's matchless edge tore riotously through shields and armour, helms and blades, bone and sinew, sparing not, resting not, drinking carnage with a quenchless thirst, and flaming above the victims heads like a circle of light, here, there, everywhere, as though the air was full of sharpened blades, till of the seven only one remained alive, fleeing for shelter behind the mast. I turned a moment to look for Valdo then, to see him stretched upon the deck, dying, his eyes glazing fast. A red gash across the temples told where the last blow had fallen. I knelt over him a second, inclining my head to hear his last words.

"Farewell, King and comrade," said he, "it has been a worthy fight. Fare——" and the lips closed as the speech died away in a faint whisper.

I sprang up, still with sword in hand, and turned away—for I could not weep—and seeking out the one remaining foe, drove the blade through the wretch, splitting him in half against the crackling mast. Then, smoke-grimed, bloodstained, mad with revenge, I strode heavily to where Listra crouched fearfully in the stern, and leaning on "Sunderer's" ruddy length, prodded her with my foot.

"Princess," I said with mock humility, "it grieveth me to rouse you, the more so as I am in such sorry plight to come before a lady. Natheless I make bold to think that the gravity of my message will excuse the grimness of my face. *We are alone, Princess,* in the midst of three burning ships, and unless we make hasto to bestir ourselves are likely to be burnt with them, for all but this end of the deck has fallen in."

"Spare me! spare me!" cried Listra, suddenly springing to me, and clasping my knees in supplication, all her fiery passion gone now as a snowball melted in the sun, "have pity on me, Macis, for I have done what I have done for love of thee!"

"Love!" I said scornfully, pointing to the pale form with the arrow in her breast, "call you that an instance of your love? I would rather have the hate of the foulest hag who ever walked the streets of Thinæ than the love of such as thee! Go to!" I cried, roughly shaking off her embrace, "make ready to leave this doomed vessel."

"Wilt go with me, Macis?" she pleaded, "and forget the past? The boat here I had provisioned for a cruise in case of defeat. Wilt be my own sweet Macis once again?"

"Thine, murderous leman?" I said, scathingly, raising the great blade high above her head. "Thy love, when the blood of Briseis calls for vengeance? Not if thou wert immortal, and had beauty everlasting. No, an you leave this ship as I desire it will be in the spirit, and not in the flesh—so," and I nerved my arm to strike.

"Oh, Macis!" she entreated, clinging to me all the more when I repulsed her, "slay me not for the sake of the love I bear thee!"

But I had no mercy. Black rage consumed my soul, the iron had entered into my vitals, I was mad with grief at the loss of all I held dear, and those lips which would have pleaded for pity even in that last hour were cold in death.

So I swung the great sword thrice round my head with a mighty whirl, its angry hiss drowned in the shrieks of the kneeling woman, and then, swift as a flash of light, "Sunderer" fell, passing down the quivering body, and severing it in twain!

That was my famous sword's last stroke, and, smiling a grim, sardonic smile, I turned away from the prostrate form to where the body of Briseis hung, reverently cut the thongs and the shaft that held it, placed it in the boat, and let the latter down into the sea, scrambling down the stern-chains after it.

Desperately I pulled away from the ship, nor had I gone far when the deck whereon the last tragedy had been enacted fell in with a crash, and a volume of smoke and sparks shot up from the place, telling how nearly I had been lost.

On—on—I rowed, the excitement still keeping my strength up, till I was clear of the red-glowing rocks; on—on—towards the solitary watch-tower looming up out of the solitary sea.

I reached up, clasping the nearest stone casement in my numbed hands, and resting there a moment, looked back upon my track.

The sky was of cloudless blue, deep almost to darkness, not a wave ruffled the wilderness of waters, and the edge of the sun glowed in the west like the curve of a golden shield. All was still, and the oneness of the whole was unbroken by sight or sound, save where, on the far-off rim of sea and sky, rose a curl of smoke and a tongue of flame.

(To be concluded.)

On the Conclusion of this Story,

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A Dialogue of the Line.

SCENE: A first-class railway carriage. Julia Northcote, a young lady of attractive appearance, discovered alone in a corner of the compartment. Papers, travelling-rug, dressing-bag, etc.

Julia (yawning): "I wish this train would start. It's five minutes after the time already! My foot-warmer is getting cold."

(The guard whistles, train starts.)

(Porter heard speaking outside.)

"Here you are, sir."

(The door is opened, and a man springs in, falling over Julia's feet.)

Stranger: "A thousand pardons! I hope I did not hurt you."

(Their eyes meet.)

Julia: "*Mr. Emerson!* No, it can't be!"

Emerson: "Why not? Have I altered in two years? Am I past recognition?"

Julia: "Two years! Is it really two years?"

Emerson (seating himself opposite her): "No—one year and nine months."

Julia (blushing): "Since——"

Emerson (sighing): "Since——"

(Silence.)

Julia (presently): "I thought you had quite forgotten me."

Emerson (aside): "Thought right for once."

Julia: "And it is never pleasant—to be forgotten."

Emerson: "How cruel you have grown!"

Julia: "Yet I had reason to form that conclusion. You remember our visit to the Hobson's, and the ball?"

Emerson (looking uncomfortable): "I do!"

Julia: "Why did you leave early the next morning, without saying good-bye?"

Emerson: "Business. I was called away by telegram."

Julia: "And you never wrote. You—you said at the ball you would write!"

Emerson: "Did I?"

Julia: "Have you forgotten that too? Really your memory——"

Emerson (speaking quickly): "It was so long ago, and things alter. Why, in these past months I've been to the other side of the world. I only returned to England last week. What have you been doing in the meanwhile? Getting married?"

Julia (a mischievous twinkle in her eyes): "Yes!"

Emerson (relieved): "Really! I congratulate you—I mean—I congratulate him. He—he's an awful lucky fellow. May I ask his name?"

Julia (hesitating): "Dickson—Nugent Dickson."

Emerson (expanding): "'Pon my word, some people have good fortune, notably the successful Mr. Dickson. It makes us poor bachelors horribly envious."

Julia: "Why not go and do likewise?"

Emerson: "You are cruel, you know the reason perfectly well."

Julia: "I know the reason?"

Emerson: "Yes, you said just now that I had forgotten! It was an unkind cut, Miss Northcote—I mean Mrs. Dickson—but I did not deserve it, though I confess my conduct may have appeared—strange, inexplicable—at the time. I feel I owe you an explanation——"

Julia: "Go on."

Emerson: "You alluded just now to a ball. How vividly I remember every detail of that pleasant evening. Our talk under the trees in the garden—the dances we had together."

Julia: "Eight waltzes, and two sets of lancers."

Emerson: "And then the drive home, do you remember that drive?"

(He leans forward and touches her hand.)

Julia: "It was very wrong."

Emerson: "Was it? I did not think so at the time."

Julia: "Aunt Lena went to sleep in the corner of the carriage."

Emerson: "I always liked your Aunt, she was such a tactful woman."

Julia: "But your explanation——"

Emerson: "Is simply this. I fell madly—desperately in love with you. I felt irresistibly drawn to you, but my better nature told me you were too good for a penniless fellow like myself, I could never have made you happy."

Julia: "Penniless! you had a thousand a year, an assured income!"

Emerson: "Bah! What is a paltry thousand a year nowadays! A woman with your tastes—your beauty—would have been miserable on such a pittance! So I sacrificed my feelings, and with lacerated heart tore myself away."

Julia: "How noble of you!"

Emerson (aside): "She swallows it!"

Julia: "I thought it was for another reason—I fancied you did not care—I cruelly misjudged you!"

Emerson: "I hoped on my return to find you still free. I had luck in those distant lands, and should now have been in a position to ask your hand. But Fate has been against me from the first. I can but bow my head and except the inevitable. Dear Mrs. Dickson, you will think kindly of me sometimes."

Julia (looking up under her eyelashes): "Very kindly."

Emerson (much affected): "And may—I—see you occasionally?"

Julia: "But do you really——"

Emerson (holding her fingers): "Yes, I do."

Julia: "And if it were possible—if it were not for Nugent—you would——"

Emerson: "I would marry you to-morrow."

(Miss Northcote draws the glove from her left hand, and reveals its ringless state.)

Emerson (staring stupidly): "Oh! I say!"

Julia: "You may well look surprised, I was only joking after all, and you must forgive, because——"

Emerson: "Because?"

Julia: "I have learnt your secret. I know now that

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I am loved, that all my hard thoughts of you were base and unfounded. I am ready to forgive. But how pale you look, Mr. Emerson! I am afraid my happy news was too much for you, I—I was hardly considerate, I did not realise the strength of your love, the depth of your devotion."

Emerson (looking wildly round for a chance of escape): "This—er—this is—er—my station. I—I will write."

Julia (as the train slows): "Oh! what a pity, and just as our talk was getting interesting. You won't forget to write this time, will you?"

Emerson (springing out): "Indeed I shall not."

Julia (leaning through the window): "What a wretched little place!"

Emerson: "Let me put up the window, it is so cold for you."

Julia: "But now we can't talk. There is such a thing as being too considerate."

Emerson: "Good-bye, Miss Northcote."

Julia (as the train starts): "I wonder he did not call me Julia! Some men are so reticent."

Emerson (to porter): "How soon can I get a train on to Longly?"

Porter (grinning): "Why it's just gone! Didn't you get out of it? There ain't another for a three hour, and that's sure to be late. Oh, they do travel on our line!"

WINIFRED GRAHAM.

RESULT OF JUMBLED STORY COMPETITION.—No. 26.

THE first prize of £5 goes to Miss Mannion, 16, St. George's Road, Ladbroke Grove, London.

The following receive £1 each: Miss Grant, 4, Morrab Terrace, Penzance, Cornwall; F. C. Piper, Kenersley House, Cliftonville, Margate; H. P. Wright, 72, Evelina Road, Nunhead, S.E.; Miss E. Crane, 143, Cannon Street, London; Mrs. E. A. Hallam, 46, Clifton Road, Peckham.

(*See page* 121.)

Twelve copies of "FOOTLIGHT FAVOURITES" will be given to the twelve persons who make up the cleverest composite picture of all or any of the illustrations appearing in the Christmas Double Number of *Short Stories*.

HIS CONCEPTION OF TRILBY

This is a reproduction of one of the attempts sent in for the Christmas Number Competition (No. 3) in *Short Stories*, the result of which appears on page 126.

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VENUS.

"AN' so your dad ain't going a-whalin' any more," exclaimed Miss Elizabeth Shoreham semi-interrogatively, as her eyes wandered from the walrus tusk which adorned one of the walls to the black eyes of the only occupant of the room besides herself.

"No," replied Venus. "He says as he ain't been for ten years; the whales have forgot him an' he don't see a use of scrapin' acquaintance with 'em again."

"Drat that snag!" interpolated Miss Elizabeth, as she came upon a snarl in the wool which, under her guidance, was gradually forming itself into an article of wearing apparel. "Seems to me I never run against nothin' but snags all my life. If 'tain't been in the wool, it's been in my relations, an' if 'tain't been in my relations it's been in——"

"I didn't know you *had* any relations, Miss Shoreham."

"Well, I haven't had for years back, but their memories is all the time a-croppin' up an' a-pesterin'," exclaimed Miss Elizabeth, as the almost-forgotten death of the last one recalled vividly her own advancing age.

"Do you mean ghosts?" asked Venus, dropping a stitch in her sewing.

"Ghosts? Never!" snapped Miss Elizabeth. "I don't believe in no such animals. It's just snags—plain, every-day snags. Ghosts only bother you night times; snags bother days as well as nights, an' for one that's alone, with no friends, an' no one that cares more'n twopence for you——"

"I hope you don't call dad an' me snags, Miss Shoreham."

"N-no, *you're* no snag!" admitted Miss Shoreham, "but your dad—he is just the worst I ever see, an' I wish I knew what way he's going to jump next."

"Why do you want to know that?" ventured Venus.

Miss Elizabeth hesitated. *Could* she summon sufficient courage to confide in the daughter of the man to whom, with her fading charms, she clung as the only possible escape from a state of single blessedness, now that all other means of escape were married, dead, or in other ways rendered unavailable? She decided to risk it.

"Venus Hardy, I think you're mighty honest, an' that's why I'm a-goin' to make you one o' them confidence women like they had in days of old. Has your dad never said anything against me?"

"Why, no, Miss Shoreham! He—er—*likes* you very much."

Venus's eyes twinkled mischievously.

"I thought *that* much," commented Miss Elizabeth, laying aside her knitting, "but he has never mentioned nothin' stronger? Does he never say anything?"

She saw the laughter hidden away in the girl's eyes, and changed both her tone and subject abruptly.

"Now, Venus Hardy, you're a-laughin' at me inside—I can see the front o' your dress shake—I might 'a' known it."

Miss Elizabeth . . . delivered her ultimatum.

"I didn't mean to," apologised Venus.

"I'm not so sure," snapped Miss Elizabeth. "How'd he ever come to call you Venus, anyway?"

"I don't know. I never asked him."

"It's a mighty embarrassin' sort of a name," went on Miss Elizabeth. "If I was called Venus, seems to me I'd feel as if I wa'n't dressed proper."

Venus flared up.

"I've been called it all my life, an' no one can say I haven't been dressed proper."

"H'm. I don't know," observed Miss Shoreham, still inclined to be irritable, "who sews 'em for you?"

"I sew 'em myself."

"Yourself? Who fits 'em?" continued the lady.

"Dad!"

"Your dad! *That* accounts for the look of 'em," exclaimed Miss Shoreham, greatly relieved. The solution to that riddle had bothered her for a long time. "Jim Peter's wife swears you go out on the beach nights, an' picks up clothes what comes ashore from wrecks."

Venus turned indignantly.

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"Jim Peter's wife needn't measure me by herself," she said.

"I gave her a well-baked piece o' mind about it, too," went on Miss Elizabeth, studying the effect of her words from over the tops of her spectacles, "for I know Jim took a cradle what drifted ashore the night afore she had that clearin'-up shower of twins, an' it come mighty handy, for, if it hadn't been for that, some o' them other young ones would 'a' had to 'a' slept in the fire-place. But if your dad is a-lookin' after the fit o' your clothes as well as your eatin' an' drinkin', seems to me his hands is as full as Jim Peters', and someone ought to be a-helpin' him carry his load. No wonder the man ain't no time to go a-whalin'. Does he never suggest that you'd better be a-havin' a mother? You ain't had one as far back as I can think."

Venus shook her head but did not look up, for there were tears in her eyes.

"How old are you?" continued the inquisitor.

"I don't know. Dad's never told me."

"Just as I thought." Miss Elizabeth rose and, placing a hand on each hip, delivered her ultimatum. "Venus Hardy, listen while I tell you somethin'. Your dad is a-goin' to be looked after proper if I have to do it myself, or, the first thing he knows, he'll be beached high an' dry same as any other fellow."

Venus looked up. Her eyes were bright now and her cheeks were flushed. Womanlike, she longed for a confidant of her own sex and had reached the point where further restraint was an utter impossibility. She *must* tell someone—*anyone*.

"Miss Shoreham," faltered the girl, "somebody's asked me to help make a home already."

"Already—*who?*"

"I'm a-keepin' that in the family yet."

"Does your dad know?"

"N-no!"

"Well, as he's the only family you've got, seems to me 'tain't *in* the family yet. You'd better think me the family for a minute."

"No, for you ain't!" said Venus decidedly.

"Venus Hardy, you may not mean disrespect, but you sound mighty near it, an', if I should be a-comin' into the family, you want to keep on my sweet side."

"*Now* I know what is the matter with you," cried Venus, the truth suddenly breaking upon her, "you're makin' up to dad—oh, Miss Shoreham!" and Venus levelled her index finger at her visitor and laughed.

The visitor was capable of retaliating, however, and did so without delay.

"If you wasn't stone-blind about your own love affairs, Venus Hardy, you could see that your fore an' aft's turned 'round, for it's your dad as is a-makin' up to me."

"Then I *am* glad—really I am," cried the girl, as all doubts and fears fell away from her heart, "for then I don't *have* to feel very bad about leavin' dad, do I, seein' as he can get you to provide for him? I've *tried* to feel bad about goin', but I can't, for Jack is—oh, he's just like dad, only he's younger, an' smarter, handsomer, an'—an'—*everything!*"

"Is it Jack Nobles?"

Venus blushed.

"How'd you guess?"

"Ask me no questions, an' I'll answer no lies."

"You won't tell dad?"

"That hangs on what your dad tells me."

"Then it's all arranged," exclaimed the girl, "you make dad push me towards Jack, an' I'll push dad at you."

Miss Elizabeth tossed her head, and, indicating a closed door beneath the walrus tusk, said: "Tell me what's in there afore I compromise myself."

"I don't know what's in it," replied Venus.

"You mean you don't want to tell. As often as I've been in this place, I never see in that room yet, an' the shutters are shut on the outside, too—I've noticed that."

"Well I've never seen in it, either, for the door's always locked, but that ain't why I haven't been in, for dad often told me to wait till he takes me himself. Sometimes he takes in bundles, too, but he says he's goin' to show 'em to me as soon as I am old enough to understand."

"Bundles? H'm. I ought to know what's in there, too, afore I become your mother. Maybe it's your other mother he has in there—what do you s'pose?"

"I don't know."

The clock on the wall struck five. Venus rose hurriedly.

"Goodness, it's late! I must get supper—but you just sit still an' I'll see dad take you home."

"No, no," simpered Miss Elizabeth, "'twould be so conspicuous."

"He'll be home soon," urged Venus, determined to facilitate her own love affair if possible by facilitating that of her father and Miss Elizabeth. "He seemed so jolly this mornin' about somethin' that perhaps he's goin' to ask you to-day, an' he'll be glad to find you without havin' to trot 'round to the neighbours to hunt you up."

"Then I'll help you get supper," exclaimed Miss Elizabeth impulsively, determined to give material evidence of her gratitude.

"There ain't enough work for two. You'd better finish your knittin', for dad may never give you another chance. Just sit still an' I'll keep runnin' in an' see if anything's wanted," and Venus repaired to the kitchen, humming a tune as she went.

Miss Elizabeth sat still as directed for a few moments only. For years that locked door had been to her another unsolved riddle.

"Seems as if I hear someone a-breathin' there," she soliloquised, as she edged nearer to the object of her thoughts, and, at the same time, held her knitting so that she could begin work at once in case of interruption. "He may be a-keepin' one o' them harem-scarems from Africa I've read of," she continued, "an' if he is, it's my duty to find out, for if I can stop that man from a-bein' a Bluebeard by a-marryin' him, it'll be a worthy action that won't throw me back when Gabriel gets 'round to a-tootin' his last trumpet, an' as he ain't tooted his first one, as far as I can remember, goodness knows how long he'll take a-gettin' to his last one, unless he toots it first."

Miss Elizabeth looked out across the sands and the fisher boats to where the waves restlessly tumbled over one another in a mad race to reach the high-water mark. No one was looking her way, and Venus was still singing in the kitchen. The coast seemed clear. She scrutinised the door of the mysterious room closely, and made the agreeable discovery that the key was in the lock. The temptation was irresistible, and, with pulses throbbing wildly, Miss Elizabeth turned the key and threw open the door.

"Can't see a thing. It must be something dreadful!" she observed, quaking inwardly, as she peered into the darkness. Then something large in one corner of the room caught her eye. Miss Elizabeth gazed at it until

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becoming aware of its full proportions, and overwhelmed by the discovery, she unthinkingly stepped into the forbidden apartment.

"A pianner!" she gasped. "A thing I've wanted since the day afore I was born. No wonder he didn't want Venus to see it—'twould 'a' made her feel dreadful to be a-livin' here with it a-knowin' all the time 'twas for me. I bet she's been in here just the same."

The sound of a door shutting caused Miss Elizabeth a guilty start, and, as she stepped back into the sunlit room beyond, her shoulder was grasped by a powerful hand.

"Eliza Shoreham," exclaimed the owner of the hand angrily, "if I ever catch you in that room again, you can count yourself among the dead an' missin'! What'd you do in there?"

"Why, good-evenin',' Cap'n!" gasped the trembling woman in as cheery a voice as her lungs and palpitating heart could produce. Her Bluebeard idea certainly seemed no idle fancy. "I was a-knittin' an' felt a draught, an' I just peeped in to see if the window was open."

The Captain released Miss Elizabeth and pushed forward a chair. She wasn't quite sure as to whether she ought to run or sit down, but another look at the Captain's face convinced her that he really wished her to be seated, so she obeyed his facial command with as little delay as possible and prepared herself for anything from a proposal to a bomb.

"I was countin' on Venus goin' in that room first," said the Captain. His manner was still stern, but his anger was cooling rapidly. He and anger had been estranged for twenty years.

"I dare say she has seen it," ventured Miss Elizabeth, by way of apology for her own indiscretion.

"Seen what?" inquired the Captain suspiciously.

"The pianner, of course."

"You saw the pianner?" thundered the Captain in such a terrible voice that Miss Elizabeth felt that the enormity of her crime was beyond all earthly computation, and she breathed with greater difficulty than ever. "Eliza Shoreham, sit where you are. As long as you've seen that much, I'm goin' to tell you somethin' mighty important, but if you ever lets it out to anything havin' breath, I'll chase you over the earth till you're so flabbergasted you'll jump off it."

"I'll never—no, never!" faltered Miss Elizabeth contritely. "Here—I'll give you a hand," for the Captain had gone to a cupboard while speaking and was returning with some cups and saucers to place upon the table.

"No, you won't!" he said curtly. "You stay where you are. You'll need your strength to listen with."

And Miss Elizabeth stayed where she was.

"How does Venus strike you nowadays, Eliza?" asked the Captain, as he went towards the cupboard a second time.

"Seems to me she's a lovable kind of child," replied Miss Elizabeth with soulful emphasis; then, resolving to dare all, she added: "Seems to me I wouldn't mind a-havin' her for a daughter myself."

"Now wouldn't you, Eliza? Well, there's only one way that could happen, but I don't see no signs of it."

The Captain laughed aloud. He was returning to his usual good nature, but Miss Elizabeth was not altogether cheered by his words.

"Why, I've just been offered command of another whaler, but I'm goin' to refuse it on account of her, although there's been a deal of money offered. I wouldn't leave that girl for all the whales in the sea an' there's more'n a few of 'em."

"Cap'n," broke in Miss Elizabeth nervously, "before you go on, I want to ask you—I most forgot—where's Venus's mother?"

"Venus's *mother?*"

"Yes—your other wife?"

"My other *wife?*"

The Captain laughed again and brought his clenched fist down upon the table with great force.

"Eliza, true as you're settin' there, I never had a wife in my life."

Miss Elizabeth rose to her feet while the blood rose to her cheeks.

"An' you ask me to stay here an' talk to you, Cap'n Hardy, with that woman a-hangin' over your head? Where is she?"

"I don't know."

"How old's Venus?"

"You've got me again, Eliza."

"You mean to tell me you don't know the age of your own flesh and blood?" fairly shrieked Miss Elizabeth.

"She ain't no flesh and blood o' mine!"

"Not? Who named her?"

"I did."

"Where've *you* been to hear that name?"

The Captain gazed at his questioner in astonishment.

"Why ain't you never heard of Venus? She was the most beautiful lady on earth, Eliza, an' she was throwed up by the sea."

"Do you mean to say that girl's a—a—mermaid?"

"You've guessed it pretty near, Eliza!"

"Go on, Cap'n—I'm a-tryin' to swallow it."

"Then you'd better chew it well, Liz, or it'll choke you. Do you remember twenty years ago to-day?"

Miss Elizabeth shook her head emphatically.

"Well, you ought to, for you were no kitten-fish even then; but I guess that was the year you was off in your head about Jim Peters elopin' with Sal. That's another time you missed it, Eliza. Anyway, it'll just be twenty years to-night since there was the biggest storm out there I ever saw, an' there was a wreck—but it was too far out for anybody to help—an' the ship went down an' no one's ever heard of it or anyone on it. I was on the beach all night, an' towards mornin' there was a spar tossed by the waves, an' it came right to my feet. There was somethin' tied on it."

"Venus?"

"'Twas a bundle, an' when I looked close, 'twas a kid, sure enough. I thought 'twas dead, but I give it a chance, an' took it to my cabin, an' put it by the fire, and blessed if the kid didn't come to life, an' fidget so, an' holler, that I knew 'twas a woman, an' I guessed right, for she's in the kitchen there a-singin'. That's why I called her Venus, 'cause she was throwed up by the sea."

"Seems to me you might 'a' named her Seaweed. Why didn't you bring her to me?"

"You, Liz. Just look back that far an' remember yourself. You was set on havin' Jim Peters then, an' you'd have sent me to kingdom come mighty quick. My, but you was stiff those times. The kid hollered loud, too, an' I didn't know whether to throw it back into the water or to take it to the asylum, but when I thought o' givin' it away, the loneliest kind of a feelin' came over me, an' I resolutioned I'd just keep that kid, an' find out myself what this married life is that folks talks so much about—for I had a young one there already without the expense an' bother of a wife throwed

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in. Then, thinks I, if married life gets too much for me, I'll put the kid in the asylum, an' married life can be blowed. You see, Eliza, 'twas a sight better'n adoptin' a wife, too, for, if the experience was not successful, it might 'a' been a job to put *her* in the asylum with the kid. I kept the young one in a basket for a whole month, an' fed it on a bottle, but it did nothin' but holler, grin, an' sleep, and never spoke. Then I went off on a whaler, an' took it with me—I took it on board in a basket. I didn't come back to this place till ten years or so after, an' then Venus come with me as my daughter, for most on 'em had forgot me an' asked no questions. I tell you, Eliza, married life has agreed with me as far as its gone, but now I'm gettin' old, seems as if sometimes I most wish I had a wife instead."

Miss Elizabeth grew even more interested.

"Have you found the woman, Cap'n?"

The Captain brought his hand down upon the table again.

"That I have, Liz, an', whenever I've seen what she'd like or has wished for, I've got it an' put it in that room which you sneaked into. There's a Chinese wash-basin in there that she wished for five years back, an' it's been in that room ever since the day she wished for it—an' a work-basket—an' a sailor's hat—a bathin' suit—a pianner——"

"A pianner is such a *grand* ornament," interpolated Miss Elizabeth ecstatically. "I know a man that plays the accordion mighty sweet, an' I'll ask him over. I'm sure he'll play beautiful on it."

"You'll have to see Venus about that party."

A plate dropped from the Captain's hand.

"What's *she* got to do with it?"

"Why—she's the one!"

The Captain's face beamed with joy, and Miss Elizabeth's heart stopped beating for five awful seconds.

"Venus, your *daughter?*"

"She ain't my daughter."

"She's just the same."

The truth dawned upon Miss Elizabeth and she sobbed hysterically:

"Oh, you *wicked* man! What do you mean by a-leading me on like this and then a dropping me down as if I was a poisoned snake?"

"An' you thought I was after you? Oh, Lord, what a joke!" and the Captain laughed so boisterously and so heartily that Venus in the kitchen felt confident that Miss Shoreham was soon to be a mother to her.

"Two can play at jokes, Bill Harding," exclaimed Miss Elizabeth in her wrath, "you just go on an' laugh an' when you've done I'll take a turn an' I'll catch a sight bigger whale than you ever thought of catching, too!"

"All right, Liz, go on an' catch your whale, but seems to me you'd better give up that notion—or you may get swamped."

Miss Elizabeth tossed her head defiantly and prepared to throw her bomb.

"How do yer know Venus'll have you?"

"How d'ye know? How d'ye know the sun rose this morning?"

"Well, when it sets to-night, you want to look out it don't set on you. Does she know you are not her dad?"

"No, but I'll soon 'range that."

"Then you'd better 'range it afore Jack Nobles 'ranges it for you."

"Jack?"

The Captain stopped suddenly in his ninth trip from the cupboard to the table.

"Do you s'pose she'll have you when she can get him?"

A plate dropped from the Captain's hands. He stooped to pick up the pieces and forced himself to laugh, but the laugh was hollow and lacked heartiness.

"Marry him? Pshaw! That's a pretty good-sized whale, after all—but I can see through it. You want to get quits with me for vexing you."

"All right, Bill Harding—I can't stay to supper for private reasons, but sometime when you find out that Venus don't want you no more than she does the measles, maybe you'll think of a woman you might 'a' had——"

The Captain gazed blankly at Miss Elizabeth. He saw her gather up her things and go towards the door.

"*You*, Elizabeth?" he inquired incredulously.

Miss Elizabeth turned a flushed, angry face upon him from the doorway.

"Me? Not much! I was only askin' for a friend. She wrote an' told me if I knew of any old man what wanted someone to make a home for him, to let her know. I'll write an' tell her I don't—that the only old men I know about here what ain't dead is fools."

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And Miss Elizabeth, believing that she had given the proper vent upon her wounded feelings, turned and walked down the beach, confronted all the way by the fact that her matrimonial chances possessed the blackest possible outlook. She had certainly done her best, but there seemed no use in trying to thwart fate any longer, and, once in her cottage, she gazed upon the five cardboard mottoes worked in many-hued worsteds that adorned one of her walls.

For many years they had been her sole sentimental props, and, as she slowly read them aloud to herself for the last time, her eyes filled with tears. They could be of no further use to her, and, mounting a chair, she removed them from the wall one by one. "Watch and Pray," "The Lord Will Provide," "While there's Life there's Hope," and "Where there's a Will there's a Way," she burnt in the kitchen fire; but when she came to "What's Home without a Mother," her heart failed her. She could not burn that one, and, wrapping it up carefully, she put it away to send to Venus as one last desperate hint to the Captain.

She removed them from the wall one by one.

"If you don't bring him round," she said to the motto, "nothin' will."

For some time after Miss Elizabeth had gone, the Captain stood motionless in the centre of the room, gazing far out over the sand and sea. He was trying to believe that Miss Elizabeth had only spoken in jest, but something in his heart told him that she had not.

"I saw his arm round Venus the other night, but I never suspected," he murmured. Then, going to the door of the mysterious room, he opened it and entered. It was some time before he had opened the windows and shutters, but the sun shone at length upon the accumulated dust and cobwebs and the strange collection of modern and antique furniture. Then he heard Venus coming and went to meet her.

Venus was still singing, as she came from the kitchen with a steaming teapot in her hand, for she wanted to give Miss Elizabeth fair warning of her approach.

"You are my little true lover,
You are my little boy blue,
But I'm your old auntie, darling.
And I cannot marry you."

So sang Venus, with a curtsey to the Captain when she had finished. The Captain turned his head away and clumsily brushed a tear from his cheek.

"What's this I hear about you an' Jack?" he asked, without looking at her.

Venus set the teapot upon the table, and turned to him confused. Then she noticed that he was alone.

"Where's Miss Shoreham?" she cried. "Don't you think she's nice, dad? You like her better 'an me, don't you?"

The Captain gazed longingly into the girl's eyes. She went to him and he put his arms about her.

"You're ahead of 'em all with me, lassie," he said.

"I'm so sorry—you look sad, dad. What did she do to you?"

"I'm sad at thinkin' I'm goin' to lose the lassie I've loved so long. Do you love Jack?"

Venus hid her face on the Captain's shoulder and her reply was inaudible, but the Captain thought he understood.

"All right, lassie," he said with as much cheerfulness as he could muster. "It's all right, but why didn't you tell your old dad about it an' not keep it back. It struck me so sudden, I can't see it clear yet, an' you know I wouldn't hurt a hair in your head, an' if you wanted all the Jacks in the world, I'd never 'a' took 'em from you; an' now, lassie, I want to ask you something,—for I ain't been married, an' don't know what love's like—would it make you give up your dad for—for—now sposin' Jack an' me was going' away on a long voyage—don't stir, I only said *sposin'*—an' sposin' you could only go with one of us—what one would you choose, lassie."

Venus started back from the Captain, and, in a voice trembling with superstitious awe, said: "Dad, I've dreamt the same dream the last three nights, but it didn't seem as if I was sleeping. Every night it seemed as if I was awake an' listenin' to the waves break on the beach till I couldn't stand the noise: an' I got up and went out to stop 'em from singing—an' every time Jack an' you was there in different boats going away for ever and ever—an' every time, as soon as I came down to where the waves wash my feet, Jack an' you stretched out your hands to me an' I had to choose what one I'd sail with."

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The Captain gazed lovingly into the girl's eyes.

"An' did you always choose the same one, lassie?"

The Captain's wealth of love for the girl shone in his eyes. Venus nodded her head.

"An' who was it?"

The Captain grew faint and looked away from the girl for there was no response and no sound save the breaking of the waves upon the beach.

"Was it me?"

Still there was no answer. Venus was gazing at him half in fear, and half in adoration. Their eyes met and she slowly shook her head.

The Captain spoke hurriedly so that the girl might not notice the tremour in his voice.

"Venus, I was goin' to speak to you about somethin' similar to-day, an' I'm mighty glad now that Jack's going to provide for you, for you dreamt part right—I'm going away on a long voyage."

"No, dad, no! You said you wouldn't."

"But I've had a fine offer, lassie, an' I can't refuse, for I haven't been on the sea for years, an' I'm pinin' for it."

"Don't go!"

Venus threw her arms about his neck.

"I must, lassie, an' there's no time to lose. It'll bring back the old times, too—the times when you was small, an' we used to sail together an' you said you'd marry me when you got as big as me, an' now you're goin' back on your word—but there, it's all right lassie, for Jack'll make two o' me, any day. Where are you goin' to live?"

"Jack's saved money, an' he's waitin' to hear what you'd say first."

"Then tell him I say you've lived in this house for ten years, an' you can't leave it—that it's your house—that I give it to you—an' if he wants you bad enough to come here to live, he can move in just as soon as he can find a parson."

Venus wept for very joy.

"Oh, dad, can we?"

"I've suspicioned you'd be wantin' to be married before long, an' I've been preparin' for it. Look in there!"

Venus had not noticed the open door, and now, as she looked through it into the mysterious room beyond, her joy knew no limit.

"Oh, dad, there's a pianner!"

The Captain was as much excited as she was.

"Yes, an' you an' Jack must bang on it every day—an' do you see the Chinese wash-basin?"

Yes, Venus saw that and many other things of which she had envied others the possession.

"An' when you wash your pretty face in it, you'll think of your old dad?"

"Yes," promised Venus happily, "an' I'll only use it Sundays, so's it'll keep."

"An' now look out through the window, lassie—the first time you ever looked through it, who did you see comin' up the beach?"

"Jack!"

The Captain closed the door.

"I can't show you more now, lassie, for I've a deal to do afore I go. No, I can't stay till Jack comes—some other time'll do just as well—you tell him—tell him it's all right an' that I'm goin' away an' you an' him must keep house for me till I come back, for I may come back with a large family."

"Then you are going to marry Miss Shoreham, dad?"

"Never you mind who I'll be marrying—an' now, lassie, stand here in the doorway an' smile at him—show him the room I've been savin' for you—stop lookin' at me like that—look out at him—beckon to him, lassie. Yes, that's right! Don't you care if the whole earth does see you—he's yours, an' you're goin' to get him. There! He sees you an' he's comin'. Who wouldn't come to you when they see your pretty face? There, lassie, kiss me once more afore Jack knows he can have you. Good luck to you an' good luck to Jack—an'—God bless you both!"

He could say no more but crept noiselessly out into the kitchen. And the girl stood in the doorway and beckoned to her lover as he came up over the sands, and their hearts were as light as the foam of the sea for they never guessed that their happiness had driven an old man forth on a voyage from which he would never return.

JOHN HALFORD.

Key to Jumble Story.—No. 26.

A HEROINE OF SOCIETY. (See page 115.)

88	40	11	33	5	100	30	106	48
10	26	22	2	74	92	3	91	87
69	41	35	17	62	96	50	98	
70	27	12	4	86	113	57	105	
34	14	13	44	54	114	24	109	
36	28	83	47	6	60	1	95	
29	20	53	19	89	51	59	101	
39	32	37	49	90	84	65	93	
76	15	81	80	111	21	73	94	
72	7	61	75	102	23	79	110	
31	8	16	43	99	52	67	97	
71	25	46	56	112	77	68	107	
45	18	58	78	103	85	64	66	
9	38	42	63	104	55	108	82	

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THE QUEEN AGAINST OWEN

BY
Allen Upward

Author of "Secrets of the Courts of Europe," "The Prince of Calkistan." etc., etc.

SUMMARY.

ELEANOR MARGARET OWEN is charged with the murder of her benefactress, Ann Lewis. Charles Prescott is in love with Eleanor, and holds the brief for the prosecution, while his friend, George Tressamer, is also in love with Eleanor, and holds the brief for her defence. The prosecution is vigorously pressed by John Lewis, deceased's nephew. The case comes on at the Mynyddshire Assizes. The result of the cross-examination of Lewis by Tressamer is that public suspicion, which, for a time, rested on Lewis, is completely removed. The examination of witnesses continues, and the court adjourns. On re-opening, Tressamer commences his speech for the defence.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEFENCE.

"MAY it please your lordship. Before I go into the case for the prisoner, I have to submit that the Crown has not produced sufficient evidence to warrant a conviction.

"It has been laid down by the authority of Lord Hale, which your lordship will find quoted on page 276 of *Archbold*, that no man should ever be convicted of murder or manslaughter on circumstantial evidence alone, unless the body has been found; and in a comparatively recent case—*Regina v. Hopkins*——"

"Yes, I know that is the law, Mr. Tressamer," said the judge, interrupting him; "but how do you say the body has not been found? The prosecution have identified the hand."

"I submit that is not sufficient, my lord."

"The coroner's inquest was held upon it," called out the counsel for the prosecution, who was decidedly taken by surprise at this unusual objection. Tressamer treated the interruption with contempt.

"The coroner is hardly an authority to quote to this court. Your lordship sees my point is this. Of course the finding of the hand is some evidence of some crime. But it is nowise decisive. The deceased, or, rather, the person said to be deceased, might have cut off her own hand. We have no *conclusive* evidence that she is really dead."

"But what do you want? Do you mean that in every case the entire body should be found?"

"Oh, no, my lord. If some vital part were discovered, and sufficiently identified, I should say that was enough to go upon. But what Lord Hale means, I take it, is this: that where you are going upon circumstantial evidence—as in this case—where no one saw the crime committed at all, then you must have conclusive evidence from some other source, namely, the dead body."

"But that is not conclusive. That might be the result of suicide."

"Still, it affords a very strong presumption. In any case, there is the rule, laid down by Lord Hale, and acted upon ever since."

"I know, Mr. Tressamer; I am not disputing the law. The only question in my mind is whether this case is not taken out of it by the production of what is part of the body. Of course, I will leave it to the jury to say whether they are satisfied that this is the deceased's hand, if that is any use to you."

"No, my lord, I don't know that I can hope to contest that. But this is a case of life and death, and I certainly would strongly urge your lordship to consider my point."

The judge got up.

"I will just go and ask my brother Wiseman what he thinks," he said. "Personally, I am afraid I cannot go with you."

He went out, and Tressamer sat down in a state of intense agitation. He dare not look round at the dock; but others did, and saw, to their surprise, that the prisoner seemed indifferent to what had just passed.

Eleanor did not want to get off on a law point. Without

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a real, full acquittal her life, as she had told Tressamer, would be too wretched to be worth preserving. And even an acquittal would not be enough while the mystery of her friend's death was left unexplained. Only the full clearing up of the whole story, only the exposure of the real criminal, could bring peace back into her life.

She showed no disappointment, therefore, when the judge returned, with a grave face, and took his seat, saying:

"The trial must proceed. My brother Wiseman inclines to your view, but I am dead against it. I will, of course, reserve the point for the Court for Crown Cases, if you desire."

"If your lordship pleases," said Tressamer.

This was exactly what he had wanted. He now had the chance of getting an acquittal from the jury before him, and, if that failed, of succeeding on the point reserved in the court above.

He rose and said:

"I have one witness to call as to the state of the prisoner's health. I shall, therefore, say nothing now, but call my witness, and address the jury after. Alfred Benjamin James."

A respectably-dressed man stepped into the witness-box.

"You are a chemist, carrying on business at Porthstone. And you have known the prisoner some time?"

"All her life, sir."

"Now, have you advised her recently as to the state of her health?"

"I have."

"Will you just tell us briefly what she has spoken to you about?"

"For some time before the day of the murder she had been unwell. She came to me and asked me to give her something to make her sleep at night. I persuaded her to do without anything, and to take a walk before going to bed instead."

"Yes, and what else?"

"The last night but one before the murder she came to me complaining of nervous headache. I gave her something for it and advised her to go for long walks, two or three miles or more, so as to tire herself out before going to bed. She said she had mislaid her latchkey lately, but would ask Miss Lewis to let her have another, as she thought Miss Lewis had a spare one."

"She came to me complaining of a nervous headache."

This statement caused the jury to prick up their ears. Even they had realised by this time that something in the case turned upon a latchkey.

No further questions were put to the witness by Tressamer, and Pollard saw no opening for cross-examination. The former, therefore, at once began his speech.

"May it please your lordship: Gentlemen of the jury——"

The counsel paused a moment, shook his robe out of the way, clenched his fists upon the table in front of him, and bent forward towards the jury with stern and solemn brow.

"I shall not weary you with the platitudes usual on occasions like this. I shall say nothing to you about banishing from your minds all you may have heard or read in the newspapers about this case, for I am sure it is unnecessary.

"Nor shall I say anything about the weight of responsibility which rests upon my shoulders, because, after all, what is my responsibility to yours? If I make any mistake, if I fail after doing my best, I shall have the consolation of knowing that I am in no way to blame, I have not to answer for the result.

"But you have! In your hands are life and death! The hangman is your instrument; the judge upon the bench is but your assistant. Seek not to shirk your liability; do not trust to others to shield you. On the way in which you discharge your duty to-day depends the most solemn and awful of all considerations—a human life. If you by any prejudice, by any weakness, by any deference to superstition or authority, give an innocent fellow-creature to the tomb, it had been better for you that you had never been born!"

The twelve men in the box shifted themselves uneasily under this indignant apostrophe. They had expected to be cajoled. They found themselves threatened. The rest of those present looked on amazed, and held their breath to listen. The speaker seemed perfectly indifferent to the impression he was creating around him. He glanced at neither the judge nor the prisoner, but fixed his searching eye upon the dozen men he was addressing.

"You know your duty as well as I do. You know you must not give a verdict upon suspicion, no, not though that

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suspicion were as dark as Erebus, as heavy as lead. You must have proof. You must have certainty. You must know how this crime was done, and why and wherefore, or you must acquit the prisoner."

It is only under great provocation that a judge will interrupt the counsel for the defence in a case of life and death, but Sir Daniel Buller frowned and fidgeted as he listened to this extreme view of a jury's duties. However, he reflected that he would have the last word. He could afford to wait until the summing up. Meanwhile he took up his pen and made a note.

"Now, gentlemen, let me say this to you, and let me enforce it with all the earnestness I can command—the fact that a murder has been committed is no evidence whatever against the prisoner at the bar.

"No one denies that the crime has been committed. To do so were absurd. Elderly ladies do not disappear mysteriously in the night like this unless somebody has an interest in making them disappear. The whole question for you is this: Had the prisoner any such interest?

"Something has been said in this case about jewels. A question—a shamefully leading and improper question—was put by the counsel for the prosecution—the junior counsel, who seems to have brought to his work a bitterness and an amount of prejudice against the unhappy prisoner which is fortunately rarely met with in a case of this kind; a demeanour which presents a contrast, indeed, to the moderate and judicious tone adopted by my learned friend, Mr. Prescott, whom I was sorry to see summoned elsewhere—a question, as I was saying, was put to the prosecutor, Lewis, who was only too ready to take a sinister hint, with a view of making him swear that the prisoner knew something about those jewels, about which so much prejudice has been imported into this case. Gentlemen, you know nothing about jewels. No evidence has been put before you to-day as to anything of the sort. So far as you or I can tell, the prisoner was never aware of the existence of such things. We are bound to assume—you are bound by your oaths to assume—that there was no such motive to operate upon the prisoner's mind. What motive was there then?

"Gentlemen, from the beginning to the end of this case not one motive has been suggested, not one syllable has been uttered from first to last, to account for the theory which you are asked to accept, that a young, beautiful, well-cared-for, and well-brought-up girl has suddenly, without the smallest provocation, developed the instincts of a cannibal, and committed a shocking and ferocious murder under circumstances which would revolt the most bloodthirsty of savages."

Every word was emphasised by look and gesture. Every word went home to those who heard it. The crowded Bar stared in astonishment. They had not believed their colleague to possess such force. But he went on with hardly a pause.

"You have been told that this is a prosecution on behalf of the Crown. I deny it. Technically it is so, of course. But who is the real prosecutor? Who has been the moving spirit all along—if not the prosecutor, then the persecutor? Who has lost, or professes to have lost, his wretched jewels? Who, the moment he heard that the crime was discovered, turned round and hurled his brutal accusation at this helpless girl? Who rushed off to lodge his information, so as to be beforehand in case any information were to be lodged against him? Who instructed the solicitors at the inquest? Who gave evidence there and at the police court? Who has been hand in glove with the prosecuting solicitors all along? Who is sitting by their side at this moment, without a particle of decent shame?"

This furious burst of invective seemed to fairly overwhelm the subject of it. He made a movement to go away, but the solicitor restrained him by a whisper in his ear.

"Gentlemen, I am here to defend the prisoner. I am not here to attack anyone else. I do not wish to do so. Would to God that I could shut my eyes to the fact that a terrible murder has been done! But I cannot, and you cannot. Someone did that deed. Someone who had a motive for his act treacherously murdered, and brutally mangled that old, feeble, defenceless woman. I ask you to say it was not the prisoner. I ask no more.

"In the old days it would have been different. It was once the law that when a prisoner was accused of murder by a coroner's inquest, then the jury in this court were not entitled to bring in a verdict of acquittal unless they at the same time, and by the same verdict, indicated the person who was really guilty. If that were still the law—and I am glad it is not—but if it were, I should not hesitate for one moment in pointing out to you at least one person who is more likely to have been guilty of this crime than Eleanor Owen.

"I should ask you, in the famous Ciceronian phrase, *Cui bono?* For whose profit was this murder? You have been told by a spiteful servant-girl, whom you may believe for aught I care, that Miss Lewis once promised to remember the prisoner in her will. But did she? In the will which has been proved—and if there was any other will it has been destroyed by the same criminal hands that dyed themselves in blood—in a will dated two years ago, there is not one stiver, not one half-farthing, left to Eleanor Owen; but the whole of the testatrix's property, amounting, I believe, to between twenty and forty thousand pounds, is given unconditionally to her beloved nephew, John Lewis!"

What a depth of sarcasm on the word "beloved" as the barrister brought it out! The object of this terrible attack fairly writhed in his seat.

"Mind," resumed the speaker, "I am not responsible for the suggestion that this crime was committed for the sake of profiting under this poor woman's will. That suggestion came from the other side, prompted, I dare say, by the man Lewis himself. What applies to the prisoner applies to him. As far as motive is concerned—and I am now dealing solely with the question of motive—everything is against the prosecutor, and everything is in favour of his victim.

"And now to examine more closely the evidence, such as it is, of the way in which this crime was brought about. It must have been done after ten that night. So far I agree with the prosecution. Now, where is the evidence as to the prisoner's doings that night?

"We know—we have it from the witnesses for the Crown, and from the respectable chemist, James—that she had been unwell, and had been in the habit of taking midnight walks for some time previously. She took one on this particular night. I do not deny it; I admit it. I demand of you to believe it. She went out at twelve, or rather before, let us say, just as the spiteful servant-girl told you. She went out, leaving the door latched, but not bolted, and she walked in an easterly direction along the shore, where the fisherman met her.

"And I want you to note here for a moment how the evidence for the prosecution has been coloured even in small things. As you have heard, the body, or rather the hand, was found next day at the entrance of Newton Bay. Now, as most of you know, Newton Bay lies to the east of Porthstone, some two miles further along the coast. When the fisherman, Evan Thomas, met the prisoner, she was nowhere near Newton Bay, and she had not the smallest intention, so far as we know, of going there. She was simply strolling up and down the Porthstone Esplanade, and her face happened to be turned towards the east when she was met by him. Yet, how is his evidence put before you? 'I met her. She was going in the direction of Newton Bay.' Gentlemen, I say that is a poisoned answer. It is a poisonous suggestion to your minds that the

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prisoner was actually going to Newton Bay—was making for it at the time. Why didn't they say that she was going towards the tennis-ground, or the Grand Hotel, or the bathing-place. All these lay in the same direction, and there is not a tittle of evidence to show, there is not the smallest reason to suppose, that she ever went a yard beyond those places.

"That is how the prosecution has been conducted throughout. That wicked servant, who practically admitted that she nursed a dislike to her young mistress, got into that box, I put it to you, for the deliberate purpose of making the case against her as black as she could. In reality her evidence was strongly in the prisoner's favour, as I shall point out to you. But she, too, was instructed, or was taught by her own evil nature, to so distort the facts as to make them bear an appearance against the unhappy girl who is on trial for her life.

"First, we have the incident of the groan. On that subject I ask you to accept her first story, that it was a mere troubled exclamation in sleep, if it was really heard at all, which I may be permitted to doubt. For when a witness exhibits such recklessness and malice and wilful perversion of the truth in a case of this solemn character, I cannot willingly believe that any jury of Englishmen will consent to take away a human life on such testimony.

"Then we come to the incident of the prisoner's going out. Good heavens! what colouring is put into a simple incident like that! The prisoner, as we now know, and as this wretched woman doubtless knew perfectly well, often went out at night. She suffered from some nervous attack, accompanied by insomnia, and the chemist, Mr. James, whom the counsel on the other side, with all his bitterness, dared not cross-examine—Mr. James told you that he had himself advised her to take these walks at night. Do you believe him? Do you think a respectable tradesman—I may almost call him a professional man—would come into the box and perjure himself on such a subject? Hardly. It would be too much to expect. I do not think that even my learned friend will ask you to say that Mr. James has committed perjury, though I have no doubt at all that Lewis would like to have it suggested."

There was an intense bitterness in the way in which he brought out Lewis's name. Unconsciously the jury began to be influenced by it, and to look at Lewis each time he was referred to with undisguised aversion.

"Yet how this simple incident is magnified and invested with importance and mystery by the other side—by Lewis and his friends! They tell you how the servant awoke at midnight—you know it is an absurd trifle, but the word "midnight" sounds so much more solemn and dreadful than the words "twelve o'clock p m."—how she woke at midnight and heard a door open—as if people didn't always open doors when they wanted to go out! How she got up quietly—perhaps you may be inclined to say treacherously—and stole downstairs. How she recognised the footsteps as those of Miss Owen. How she heard the front door go, and finally found it unfastened, except for the latch. And all as if something very dreadful had taken place, instead of the ordinary incident of a young lady going out for an hour to walk off a headache!

"And, after all, what does it come too? Why, it sounds ridiculous, but the whole end and result of all this is to prove the very thing which I am most anxious to have proved on behalf of the prisoner—namely, that she was out of the house when this murder was committed. They have tried to incriminate the prisoner, and they have ended in proving an unimpeachable alibi!"

He stopped to let his words sink into the minds of the jury, and everyone in court took advantage of the break to change their positions and breathe more freely. Whispers were exchanged, and the feeling began to prevail that a good point had been made, and the prisoner might very likely get off.

"With what happened after that the prisoner has nothing to do. Mr. Lewis and his friends do not seem to realise, what I hope you will realise, that the fact of footsteps being heard a few minutes after is the strongest point in the prisoner's favour. Why, if no one else had been heard to enter the house on that night it would have looked bad for her. But that is just what the prosecution, in their blind mismanagement, have proved. They have shown out of the mouth of their own witness that someone did come in; someone who had been waiting outside ready to come in, and who took advantage of Miss Owen's exit to slip in by means of a latchkey which he had found, or stolen, or borrowed from the deceased.

"Now you have the clue. This girl, who stated that ten minutes had elapsed, when it must have been only three, to judge by her notions of time in other matters, this same girl wanted to insinuate that the footsteps she heard the second time were the prisoner's. Gentlemen, I ask you frankly not to believe it. I ask you to discount her evidence by the evident ill-feeling she manifested. I ask you to believe that the last footsteps were those of the murderer, and they were heavier because they were a man's.

"What else is there against the prisoner? I ask, what else? She came down late the next morning, forsooth! That is the reason why you are asked to send her in her youth and beauty to a felon's doom. Incredible! Monstrous! As if we all did not constantly get up late, for some reason or another. As if a person who had been out late the night before would not naturally oversleep herself. Why, if she had committed a crime she would have taken particular care to be down early. She would have tried to throw off suspicion by acting in her ordinary way. I am ashamed of answering such arguments.

"The latchkey incident is dead in her favour."

Here the jury, who had shown signs of weariness after their long sitting, brightened up again. They had made up their minds that this was the real point in the case, and were honestly anxious for light upon it.

"Two things are clear—first, that the person who last came into the house and did up the fastenings was the prisoner; second, that the prisoner had a latchkey, whether her own one found again or one which she borrowed from Miss Lewis. Now, if the prisoner had committed this murder, let us see what she would naturally have done in trying to throw suspicion off herself.

"In the first place, I say she would not have fastened up the front door. To do so was practically saying that the crime was not the work of an outsider. No, she would have left the door wide open, as if the criminal were some common robber who had carried off his booty and run away. In the second place, she would have thrown away her latchkey, so as to make it appear that she had not been outside. These points are so important that, with your permission, I will repeat them again."

Anyone who has had experience of juries knows how difficult it is to get into their minds a process of logical reasoning. To a trained lawyer such a thing is not so hard, but even to him it is far easier to master reasoning from a book than by word of mouth. Oral teaching has its advantages, doubtless, but few things are harder than to convey ideas of any subtlety by means of speech to an audience.

Tressamer patiently set to work, and for twenty minutes he repeated and explained all that he had been saying. When he thought that the jury really understood him he returned to where he had started from, and re-directed their suspicions on Lewis.

"Before I sit down I think I ought to suggest to you how this crime really was done. You have heard the story of the prosecution. Now let me put to you my story on behalf of the prisoner.

"The deceased woman was wealthy. About her jewels we know nothing, and I do not refer to them, but she had other property to a large extent. The whole of this was to go at her death to a nephew. For two years she lived alone in this house, alone night after night with the prisoner, and

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nothing happened. At last the nephew who was to inherit her wealth suddenly returned from the other end of the world. That night she met her death.

"At twelve o'clock her companion, who suffered from sleeplessness, went out for a long walk. Hardly had she closed the door behind her than the murderer stole up to it and made his way in. Probably he had a latchkey. We know that Miss Owen had mislaid hers. It may have been that. We also know that Miss Lewis had a spare one, and that her nephew was to take up his residence in the house on the very next morning. So that, mark this, if the murder had been deferred for one more day he would have fallen under the same suspicion as Miss Owen.

"The murderer entered, as I said, by means of his latch-key. But it was the first time he had used it. He did not know the peculiarity of the latch. He raised it too high, and it stuck.

"Not staying to notice this, in his wickedness, he passed into the house and upstairs. He tried the door of his aunt's --I mean the deceased's—room. It was, of course, locked,

"Then he carried off the body."

as it was found the following morning. He went into the next, Miss Owen's, which he knew to be empty, having seen her leave the house. Through this he passed into the adjoining chamber. Beneath the bed, in all probability, lay a chest of valuables. Charity would fain suggest that his first intention was merely to steal these, and that the blacker crime was, in a sense, forced upon him by the awakening of the sleeper.

"The next step was to remove the body. For what reason it matters not. It is an impulse with all murderers to conceal the traces of their guilt. They dig holes in the earth and bury it, they carry it into the wilderness and hide it, they sink it in the depths of the sea. But the earth will not contain it, the wilderness betrays the ghastly secret, the waves cast up the horror."

His voice rang through the crowded court like that of one possessed, and every man trembled.

"He lowered it through the window, where the traces were found next day. Then, clutching up his booty, and forgetting, it may be, that all would be his ere long, or possibly not feeling sufficiently sure of his heirship, he hurried down, with agitated tread, so that even the half-sleeping girl in the room above could discern a something strange about his walk. "Then he carried off the body, mutilated for some mysterious and terrible reason which may never be revealed—possibly to lighten his mysterious load; but let me spare you these shocking considerations. All this, remember, Lewis asks you to think was done by a young girl not twenty years of age."

The speaker's voice vibrated with the fury which he threw into this denunciation. The jury trembled under his eye as he rolled it fiercely from face to face. As for the object of these fearful invectives, he turned red and white by turns, and would have interrupted over and over again if he had not been almost forcibly restrained by the solicitor for the prosecution. Tressamer went on, after a moment's pause to recover from his exhaustion:

"And Eleanor Owen, what of her? What was she doing meanwhile? Pacing the shore and trying to soothe her throbbing head with the medicine of the sea breezes. At last she returns, tired and abstracted. She puts her key into the latch, the door yields before her. She notices nothing, but comes in, closes and fastens the door behind her, and retires to rest.

"The next morning she awakes. Just as she is dressed the servants rush up; the whole horror bursts upon her. She is stunned. She does not realise what has happened, or how it concerns her. She finds herself seized and dragged away by this devoted nephew and his creatures. And thus, gentlemen, in that state of darkness and bewilderment, has she rested ever since, and must rest till your just verdict sends her forth once more into the light of day, and the verdict of another jury, not less courageous and righteous than yourselves, sends the real author of this hidden tragedy to the doom he has now doubly deserved."

He sat down. But there was no applause in court, as happens so often at the end of a speech on the prisoner's behalf. All present felt that they had listened not so much to a plea for Eleanor Owen as to an accusation against John Lewis. The barrister had put it too plainly for any man to be deceived. It was not a mere question of guilt or innocence. The issue now before the jury was—which of these two is guilty?

(To be continued.)

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6ft. by 9ft.		9/6	10½ft. by 12ft.		20/6
8ft. by 9ft.		11/6	12ft. by 12ft.		22/6
6ft. by 12ft.		12/6	9ft. by 15ft.		21/6
9ft. by 9ft.		13/6	12ft. by 13½ft.		25/6
9ft. by 10½ft.		15/6	12ft. by 15ft.		28/6
9ft. by 12ft.		17/6	12ft. by 18ft.		33/6
9ft. by 13½ft.		19/6	12ft. by 21ft.		38/6

A Queen Royal Hearthrug, 6ft. by 3ft., to match, 2/- extra.

SPECIAL OFFER.—Three for 5s. 9d., Six for 11s. 3d., Twelve for 22s.

COLOSSAL SALE OF RICH VELVET PILE

REAL BRUSSELS CARPETS

Extraordinarily Heavy, very Best Quality, Newest and Choicest Designs. In Old Gold, Sultan, Terra Cotta, Crimson, Sky, Navy, and the latest colours. With handsome border to correspond. Guaranteed to wear for years and give every satisfaction. The sizes and prices as follows (all ready for putting down):

REDUCED SALE PRICE LIST.

4½ft. by 7ft.	11/-	VELVET	9ft. by 12ft.	38/-
6ft. by 9ft.	18/-	PILE	11ft. by 12ft.	47/-
7½ft. by 9ft.	23/-	BRUSSELS	12ft. by 13½ft.	59/-
9ft. by 9ft.	28/-	CARPET	12ft. by 16ft.	69/-
9ft. by 10½ft.	33/-	SQUARES.	12ft. by 18ft.	77/-

When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any colour preferred.

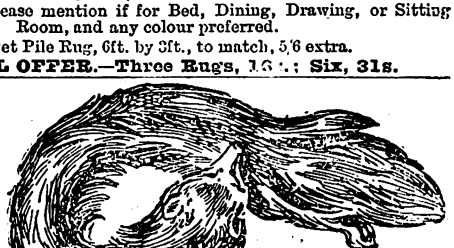
A Velvet Pile Rug, 6ft. by 3ft., to match, 5/6 extra.

SPECIAL OFFER.—Three Rugs, 16/6; Six, 31s.

AH! AH! THE MILDNESS OF THE SEASON HAS DONE THIS.

100,000 Ladies' Luxuriously Handsome, Rich Dark Brown

OPOSSUM FUR NECKLETS



With Life Imitation, Natural Head combined; a most elegant and soft fur, quite equalling in style anything offered at 15/6 each, and for durability not to be surpassed. Similar to illustration.

"SHORT STORIES" SPECIAL NECKLET COUPON. 23/1/97.

On receipt of this Coupon and P.O.O. or Stamps for amount, we guarantee to send goods as above (post free this week only) to your address in any part of the United Kingdom. Cash returned in full if not satisfied. (Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.

POST FREE **4/6** WORTH TREBLE.

Cheques and P.O.'s payable to—
F. HODGSON & SON, Manufacturers, Importers, and Merchants,
Woodsley Road, Leeds. Telegraphic Address: "ECLIPSE, LEEDS." Telephone No. 948.

OUR NEW VENTURE.—Yes, Two different Pattern Hearthrugs or Carpets for the Price of One! *(Copyright.)*

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE (CHANCERY DIVISION), HODGSON v. WEBB BROTHERS.—On the 18th day of July, 1890, his lordship, Mr. Justice Chitty, granted an interim injunction, restraining Messrs. Webb Brothers, of Hackney Wick, from infringing Mr. Fredk. Hodgson's Trade Mark, "Eclipse," No. 93,774 (Leeds).

EXTRAORDINARY REDUCTIONS.

100,000 "ECLIPSE" CARPETS (Regd.)

GUARANTEED GENUINE BARGAINS.

This Gigantic Offer is a Special Contract, made with readers of *Short Stories* only. We will forward direct from the looms to any address on receipt of amount, A GENUINE WOVEN, SEAMLESS, REVERSIBLE CARPET, in our New (Reg.) Waterlily and Persian designs, the largest ever sold at the price, suitable for Sitting-room or Bedroom, Bordered and Woven in Art Colours, large enough to cover any ordinary-sized room, as an advertisement for our goods, thus saving any Middle Profits. Remember these are Woven, and are made of a material almost equal to Wool. Thousands of these Carpets and Rugs have already been sold at almost double above prices. An "Eclipse" Rug sent with Carpet 1/- extra.

Sale Price **3/6** Each.

SPECIAL OFFER.

Two Carpets and Two Rugs 8/-, or Four Carpets and Four Rugs 15/6.

P.S.—When this Design (registered) is wanted in Carpets or Hearthrugs, as above, kindly quote No. 268,493.

We Rely upon Spontaneous Repeat Orders from our Clients for the Maintenance of our Trade. Established nearly a Quarter of a Century. All orders dispatched same day in rotation as they arrive by post. Cheques and P.O.'s payable to

"SHORT STORIES" CARPET COUPON. 23/1/97.

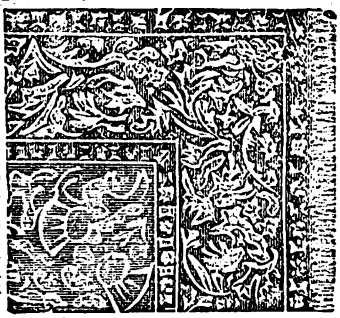
On receipt of this Coupon and P.O. or Stamps for amount, we guarantee to send any goods as above to your address in any part of the United Kingdom. (Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.
Cash returned in full if not satisfied.

PRODIGIOUS SALE OF THE "PRUDENTIAL"

REVERSIBLE CARPETS

(Registered).

Reversible, woven throughout with handsome border to correspond; richly blended in several colours to suit any furniture. Made in 12 sizes only. These carpets are the production of much care, labour, and forethought, and are made in handsome and elaborate patterns (which are protected by registration). They combine on one side the rich blended colours of the Turkish and Persian, and on the reverse the elegant designs of the Wilton. These goods cannot be distinguished from real Brussels when laid down, and cannot be excelled in durability.



REDUCED SALE PRICE.

Size.	Each.		Size.	Each.
6ft. by 9ft.	4/9	REDUCED SALE PRICE.	9ft. by 15ft.	12/6
7½ft. by 9ft.	5/11		12ft. by 12ft.	12/9
9ft. by 9ft.	7/6		12ft. by 13½ft.	14/6
9ft. by 10½ft.	8/6		12ft. by 15ft.	15/9
9ft. by 12ft.	9/6		12ft. by 18ft.	19/6
10½ft. by 12ft.	11/6		12ft. by 21ft.	22/6

When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

A Reversible "Prudential" Hearthrug (Regd.), to match above Carpets, sent for 1/6 extra, size 2yd. long and 1yd. wide. Special Offer. Three Hearthrugs for 4/3, or Six for 8s., or Twelve for 15/6. sterling value.

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F. HODGSON & SON, WOODSLEY RD., LEEDS.

Manufacturers, Importers and Merchants.

Telegraphic Address: "ECLIPSE, LEEDS," National Telephone No. 948.
N.B.—Foreign Orders executed and packed free, and shipped at lowest rates.

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RESULT OF PRIZE COMPETITIONS ANNOUNCED IN THE CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER.

A VERY large number of persons entered for these competitions, which were altogether a great success. The scrap-books especially were most prettily arranged, and reflected great credit upon all the boys and girls who entered; it was, in fact, a most delicate task to decide upon the best twelve.

On page 115 will be found a reproduction of one of the best attempts in the Composite Picture and the Elephant Straight Line Competitions. Four competitors correctly named the idea which Farmer Hayseed forgot, and the prize of £10 was forwarded to the sender of the first to hand.

A large number of competitors succeeded in solving the two arithmetical problems, and the prizes have gone to those whose attempts first arrived at this office.

COMPETITION No. 1.

FARMER HAYSEED'S IDEA.

THE £10 winner:
HARRY F. FRASER,
Londesborough Arms,
Seamer, near Scarborough.

* * * * * *

COMPETITION No. 2.

ELEPHANT.

F. Gillott, 32, Regina Road, London, N.
James Smith, 19, Montrose Street, Glasgow.
C. W. Ayers, Kent House, Snodland, Kent.
Charles V. Walker, 12, Bridport Street, St. Ebbes, Oxford.
G. F. Saunders, 31, Clifton Place, Stapleton Road, Bristol.
Charles Cale, Colchester.
Miss D. Mann, 29, Mowbray Street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne.
Miss E. M. Westhorp, 12, Park Village East, Regent's Park.
G. H. Dodd, 37, Plymouth Street. C.-on-M., Manchester.
John C. Scott, 155, Comely Park Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
Miss B. Lindsay, 1, Mackenzie Street, Slough, Bucks.
Miss Ethel Simmonds, Sussex View, Tunbridge Wells.

* * * * * *

COMPETITION No. 3.

COMPOSITE PICTURE.

Lindsay Harman, 75, High Street, Bromley, Kent.
C. Puttock, 13, Elgin Terrace, Maida Vale, W.
John E. Scott, 153, Comely Park Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow.
J. Rawland Atkinson, Finkle Street, Kendal.
William McBeath, 45, W. Preston Street, Edinburgh.
Harry Nobbs, 67, Frobisher Road, Hornsey, N.
Edwin Bottomly, Bryn Berllan, Llandudno Junction, near Conway.
John McGarth, 51, Sultan Street, Belfast.
J. M. Child, 4, Cromwall Street, Mount Pleasant, Swansea.
Fred Solo, Theatre Royal, Bradford, Yorks.
George McIntyre, 40, Nithodale Road, Strathbungo, Glasgow.
G. T. Harwood, 137, Harrington Road, Workington.

* * * * * *

COMPETITION No. 4.

COIN.

John Hamer, 3, St. David's Road, Carnarvon, N. Wales.
F. W. Flower, Sibsey, Boston, Lincolnshire.
G. A. Porter, 4, Oak Avenue, Urmston, near Manchester.
A. Keniston, Hinton St. Mary, Blandford, Dorset.
H. W. Spice, 21, Lavender Street, Brighton.
L. C. Knighton, 167, Choumert Road, Peckham.
J. H. Osborne, 19, Sunnyside Road, Ealing.
S. L. Hayton, Star Inn, Newlyn West, Penzance, Cornwall.
J. Pan, Constitution Hill, Aberystwith, Wales.
W. Brown, 132, Kent Road, Glasgow.
J. J. Smith, 379, High Street, Cheltenham.
T. H. Fisher, 162, Waller Road, New Cross, S.E.

* * * * * *

COMPETITION No. 5.

Answer—1800 SOLDIERS.

Mrs. F. Davies, 3, Brunel Terrace, Woodford Bridge, Essex.
Mrs. E. Easton, Flower Lodge, Marble Hill, Cork.
Miss E. Handley, 36, St. John Street, Hanley, Staffs.
Mrs. A. F. Gadsdon, Belle Vue, Westwood Park, Forest Hill.
Emily E. Battle, 116, Alexandra Road, Ford, Devonport.
Miss Warman, The Gardens, Eastnor Castle, Ledbury.
S. A. Pilkington, 22, Lincroft Street, Moss Side, Manchester.
Miss E. Smith, Litfield House, Portishead, near Bristol.
Miss C. E. Wright, 65, Woodgrange Road, Forest Gate, Essex.
Miss Motterhead, 17, Norfolk Street, Hyde, Cheshire.
Miss S. Sides, Union Street, Bridgtown, Staffs.
Miss J. Duncombe, Keymer, Hassocks, Sussex.

COMPETITION No. 6.

SCRAP-BOOK.

Hilda D. Clewlow, Tunley Street, Stone, Staffs.
Kate Williams, 42, Alwyn Street, Aigburth Road, Liverpool.
Ethel Chappell, 19, Murray Place, Stirling, N.B.
Gertrude Page, Victoria Coffee House, Victoria Road, Romford, Essex.
K. L. Davies, 12, Pembridge Crescent, W.
E. Strong, 6, Hunter Street, Carnforth.
W. A. Slade Gosling, 4, Pretoria Avenue, Walthamstow.
A. Webb, 2, Oak Place, Malvern Link.
C. Agnes Cowell, 11, North Street, Fleetwood.
Rhoda Gilbert, 16, Tallow Hill, Worcester.
Hilda F. Gross, 69, Mill Hill Road, Norwich.
Dolly Lewis, 62, Mount Road, Hastings.

* * * * * *

COMPETITION No. 7.

ANAGRAM—"GUILTY GOLD," BY HEADON HILL.

D. Elder, 7, St. Vincent Street, Edinburgh.
Miss R. Napthin, 3, Ditton Walk, Cambridge.
J. A. Walbank, Usworth, Washington, R.S.O., co. Durham.
W. Millard, The Schools, Ascot, Berks.
Mrs. Lywood, Redlynch, Salisbury.
H. Winslow, 8, Firhill Road, Glasgow.
James Galbraith, 1, Park Terrace, Paisley, N.B.
C. A. Elliott, Galley Hill, Greenhithe, Kent.
Mrs. Stanley, 30, Garturk Street, Govanhill, Glasgow.
George W. Blake, 4, St. Martin's Terrace, Salisbury.
F. J. Etherington, 74, Hythe Road, Swindon.
Mrs. Joseph Holmes, Westbury Street, Brood Lane, Laisleredyke, Bradford, Yorks.

* * * * * *

COMPETITION No. 8.

ANAGRAM—"VALDAR THE OFT-BORN," BY GEORGE GRIFFITH.

Alex. Reoch, 14, Forest Park Road, Dundee.
W. Gyde, army schoolmaster, Warley, Essex.
Mrs. J. Read, Forest Lodge, Alnwick, Northumberland.
Horace H. Dunmore, 22, Albion Place, Northampton.
Miss Jeannie Graham, 32, Epworth Street, Belfast.
C. A. Elliott, Galley Hill, Greenhithe, Kent.
Mrs. A. Beck, 4, Victoria Villas, Herne Street, near Canterbury, Kent.
W. P. Armstrong, 12, Arboretum Avenue, Lincoln.
J. Green, 183, Chapel Street, Leigh, Lancashire.
Harry Page, Gordon Place, The Hundred, Romsey, Hants.
F. Goodwin, 1, Rutland Gate, Claremont Park, Blackpool.
John W. Box, 7, Brook Street, Lancaster.

* * * * * *

COMPETITION No. 9.

"THE FINAL WAR."

TOM'S AGE, 14 YEARS. | GEORGE'S AGE, 10 YEARS.

THEY KILLED

63 PARTRIDGES. 45 PHEASANTS.

Job Sides, Union Street, Bridgtown, Staffordshire.
Harold E. Fairdide, 2, Prospect Place, High Road, Upper Clapton.
A. Pelkington, 22, Lincroft Street, Moss Side, Manchester.
D. C. Woods, 14, Guernsey Road, Magdalen Road, Norwich.
G. T. Watson, 31, Salisbury Terrace, Darlington.
C. P. Cox, 63, Stonefield Road, Hastings, Sussex.
Mrs. A. F. Gadsdon, Belle Vue, Westwood Park, Forest Hill.
Miss A. Kidd, 416, Woolwich Road, New Charlton, Kent, S.E.
F. F. Feltham, 73, Hawthorn Street, Totterdown, Bristol.
Mr. E. Simm, New Chapel House, Balderstone, near Blackburn.
R. N. Pudney, c.o. Herring and Son, Chertsey, Surrey.
Howard Lewis, Newsagent, Builth Wells, South Wales.

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1/2 A MILLION 7/6 FULL DRESS LENGTHS TO BE CLEARED AT 6S

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Patterns of the above, also SALE PRICE LIST, Post Free.

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REMNANT BUNDLES (containing 12 yards), in long lengths—Dress Serge 12/-, Calico 3/6, Flannelette 4/6, Union Shirting 7/9, Flannel 8/9.

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CURED INSTANTLY BY

BUNTER'S Prevents Decay. Saves Extraction. Sleepless Nights Prevented.

Neuralgic Headache and all Nerve Pains Removed by BUNTER'S NERVINE. All Chemists, 1s. 1½d. NERVINE

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HAIR DESTROYED.

On receipt of stamped addressed envelope a lady will send to those afflicted with Superfluous Hairs, free particulars of a simple remedy which *permanently* removed a large growth from her sister's face without injuring the skin. Address, in confidence, Miss E. R. DALE, 26, Belvedere Rd., Lambeth, London.

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On receipt of stamped envelope, a lady who cured herself of Deafness and Noises in the Head, after fifteen years of suffering, will send to all afflicted free particulars of the Remedy, which is simple, safe, sure and inexpensive. Address — Mrs. C. E. AUSTIN, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London, S.E.

THE

GREAT COUGH REMEDY, BRONCHONIA.

A Marvellous Remedy for Coughs, whether arising from Consumption, Bronchitis, or Asthma. Its efficacy is testified to by Eminent Physicians. Of all Chemists, 2s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 11s. per bottle. Post free, 2s. 9d., 4s. 9d., and 11s. 6d.—J. HOWARD & Co., 20 and 21, Queenhithe, LONDON, E.C. One Trial will prove its Efficacy.

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Permanently cured. A Pamphlet giving sound practical advice and particulars of a successful treatment for a rapid, simple, and inexpensive home cure, forwarded free to all upon receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—Prof. B. L. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

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ALL FAT PEOPLE

Readily **Reduce Weight** and **Cure Corpulency Permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are very agreeable, harmless, and never fail to PRESERVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of diet. **Reduction begins immediately.**

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FRAMES LAID AND REPAIRED.

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THE END OF

which is so near. Will the earth continue to turn on its axis and roll us into the twentieth century? Some prophet has said "No!" But sensible people will only smile at such wild, improbable theories, and inquire to what extent the prophet would like to back his opinions. The closing Century has been an era of invention and scientific and chemical research; Steam, Electricity, and the Healing arts affording the most notable examples of man's progress, and marking the nineteenth as the grandest and most wonderful century in the history of

THE WORLD

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Beecham's Pills remain at the close of this century as great a public boon, and as fine a discovery in medical art, as they were more than fifty years ago, and have fully justified the public verdict that they are WORTH A GUINEA A BOX.

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EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

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Delicious Coffee at *One Farthing* per cup, prepared in two seconds. In 6d., 1/-, 2/-, 3/6, or 5/- Bottles. 6d. Bottle, Nine Stamps, Post Free.

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Gives to all metals a beautiful, soft, brilliant polish. In 1d., 3d., 6d. & 1/- Bottles.

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FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,

SUCH AS

Sick Headache, Constipation, Weak Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver & Female Ailments.

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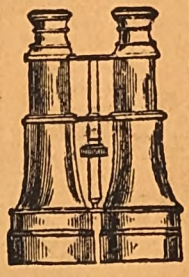

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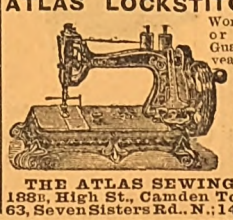

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A FEAST OF FICTION

No. 422.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending January 30th, 1897.

THE MURDERS AT LITTLE BELTON.

I.

THE actual facts of the Little Belton tragedy were simplicity itself. Bessie Fothergill, the organist of the parish church, was found dead in the organ-loft.

At seven o'clock in the evening there had been the usual choir practice, after which Miss Fothergill had stayed behind for her own private practice. As she did not arrive home by ten o'clock, her brother, Edgar, went in search of her, and, to his horror, found her huddled up on the pedal-board, quite dead.

The body was at once conveyed to the "Queen's Head," and a doctor sent for. There were no external marks of violence, and only when the body was undressed was a small puncture discovered in her back about three inches from the nape of the neck. The village doctor probed this wound, and in a few minutes extracted a hollow steel dagger one tenth of an inch in diameter at its thickest part. The blade had broken off, leaving five inches of steel in the wound, and thus any flow of blood was prevented.

These were the sole particulars communicated to Inspector Dawson on his arrival from the Bradlington Police Office.

If ever there were mysteries on the face of the earth, this was one of them, and the strangest part of the affair was the apparent absence of all motive. The murdered girl had led a quiet, uneventful village life. Music she had learnt principally from her mother, once a celebrated pianist until rheumatism destroyed the *technique* of her touch. The girl had been apprenticed to the late organist, and on his death succeeded to his post and pupils. Lovers she had none, although a

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fairly pretty girl, simply because her thoughts were too much taken up with her profession to admit of a man coming between her and her beloved art.

She had no enemies, because, being poor, she had few friends. No one benefited by her death; on the contrary, she was a loss to the village in many ways, and to her own family in particular. Her father had died in her infancy, her only brother Edgar was an agricultural instructor, and brought but little grist to the family mill. The mother's income was very limited, consequently the deceased girl's earnings were no little help to the household.

On the evening of the murder the door of the church was left wide open by the choir when they left after the practice. The staircase leading to the organ-loft commenced at the porch, and the door at the foot could not be opened from the outside without a key.

There was but one key, and this Miss Fothergill always kept herself, as she was personally responsible to the churchwardens for the good condition of the organ. The schoolmaster, who had been the last to descend the loft steps, affirmed on oath at the inquest that he had shut the door and pushed it to make sure that it was properly closed. "I have daughters of my own," he added, "and I never liked to know that the girl was alone and altogether unprotected in the church."

The Inspector made the customary examinations with stereotyped assumptions of mystery and importance. He went through every possible motive for which the crime could have been committed. But all to no purpose. As well might he have tried to discover what song the sirens sang or what name Achilles assumed when he put on the garb of woman.

The village population was commonplace and prosaic. The majority of the people were farmers or workers in the brickfields and tanneries with which the surrounding country abounded. There were about twenty moneyed families in the place, more or less endowed with this world's goods, and half-a-dozen professional men, but not the slightest suspicion of spicy adventure clung to any single one of them. Humdrum respectability was the dominant note of the place.

When all outward investigation was over, Dawson frankly admitted that the only clue was the broken dagger. It was most new, and of foreign manufacture, the name "Blanchi, Cia., Milano," being embossed round the circular blade. He wired to the police of Milan, inquiring about this firm, but was told in return that no such firm had ever existed in that city. Thus even this solitary link was broken, for, without a doubt, the assassin had taken the precaution of making away with the detached hilt.

In a week Dawson returned to Bradlington, and in less than a month Little Belton itself had ceased to be interested in the tragedy.

II.

SOME months after the death of Bessie Fothergill, Dawson's term of service expired. He had worked long enough in harness and had formed plans of starting life afresh as a private detective. If he could but unravel the Belton mystery, his future was assured. Impelled, then, by no motive of justice or duty, but simply by the wish to advertise himself, he determined to devote all his energy, skill and experience to the discovery of the murderer.

As luck would have it, circumstances so arranged themselves as to give him a facile opportunity of prosecuting his investigation. The post of organist had not yet been permanently filled up, and as Dawson was a fair musician, he offered himself for the vacant post. The salary he asked was merely nominal and his credentials were undeniable, so the churchwardens closed with his offer at once.

Accordingly, six months after the tragedy he was installed as organist and choirmaster of Little Belton church.

His disguise was complete. The long beard was done away with, and his moustache waxed and twirled; this, together with his long, lanky hair gave him the appearance of a veritable virtuoso.

He gave out that he had long lived abroad, studying music and art in the schools of Munich and Dresden. These harmless fictions, coupled with his decidedly foreign appearance, and accentuated, it must be confessed, by his diabolical grimaces and contortions at every discord, more than sufficed to procure him pupils by the dozen; in point of fact, Little Belton soon learnt to pride itself in having a real *mæstre* in its bosom.

It occurs to me, by the way, that I, Dudley Bertram, have hitherto omitted to state that I was the village lawyer, estate agent, and, though but thirty-eight years of age, was the general wiseacre to the village. In the course of my practice I had been to Bradlington times without number, and therefore knew Dawson quite well. Accordingly, at our second meeting I charged him with his identity, and he laughingly acknowledged it, confessing his motives for the masquerade. Naturally I, as a man of law, volunteered him every assistance in my power.

Many a talk we had over the crime. Sometimes he fancied he was on the scent of the murderer, and then was as gay as a schoolboy; but as each succeeding fancied clue turned out to be a mare's nest, depression seemed slowly to master him.

As legal adviser to the whole community, I was intimately acquainted with the history of every family in the place, which information I confided to Dawson. We turned over in our minds every single person, and not a soul escaped our careful exhaustive analysis. But nothing came of it.

One afternoon I was sitting in my private office, lazily looking over the *Law Times*, when my clerk announced Mr. Wortley, for by this name was Dawson known in Little Bolton.

"Mr. Dudley," he said excitedly, "I have a clue at last. Look what I have found."

So saying, he held up delightedly a piece of torn paper, nearly two inches square. It was apparently the top left corner of an ordinary sheet of note-paper, and these letters were plainly decipherable: "This is t . . . condemne . . . may pre . . . as noth . . ."

Dawson, with his excited imagination, easily filled up the rest of the missive, which, he confidently asserted, was a warning to the girl from someone who knew that her death was resolved upon. I agreed that his suggestion was plausible, and wished him every success.

"What do you intend doing now?" I asked, as he tenderly placed the scrap of paper in his pocket-book.

"My next move is at once to get leave of absence from the churchwardens for a week or two. Meanwhile, I will have the writing examined by an expert, and compared with the caligraphy of every adult in the place. It is my firm opinion that the writing, although angular and feminine, is that of a man. Look," he added, "the pen has been almost pushed through the paper. Some exertion has been required to write that

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letter, and in all probability the hand is disguised, for no man ploughs up paper in that fashion in his natural handwriting."

So saying, he left me for the church, for the day was Friday and he was almost due for the choir practice.

Poor Dawson! His to-morrow never came. That night he was found dead at the organ. A coil of copper wire was twisted round his neck and the poor wretch had been literally garotted.

On hearing the news I rushed at once to see the body. He had been already searched, his book was there, but the scrap of paper was gone!

III.

A MONTH after the panic caused by Dawson's tragic end, things went on pretty much as before in Little Belton. The little town had acquired a somewhat unenviable notoriety, but this was good for business and no one grumbled.

The Press throughout the land had affected the customary indignation and surprise. The police were blamed for remissness, the church authorities for negligence, and a stigma of possible criminality rested upon every able-bodied creature in the town.

A public meeting was held at the schools, resolutions were passed and—the matter ended there!

Certainly no sane man in Little Belton, with the awful fate of Dawson before his eyes, would care to interfere in things that did not personally concern him.

The pseudo-organist's late lodgings were soon occupied by strangers. A man and his wife, both evidently about thirty-five years of age, had taken the rooms.

In little more than a week this worthy couple had earned for themselves the execration of every right-minded inhabitant. The wife, Mrs. Harcourt, was a flashy, noisy little woman, while Harcourt himself was unmistakably "horsey"—an unpardonable sin in our latitudes. Despite the real or supposed vigilance of post-office officials it soon eked out that he was a betting man. Dozens of racing wires were delivered at 47, High Street in a week; consequently everybody treated the Harcourts with the silent contempt they were supposed to merit.

Harcourt called on me several times on business matters, generally requesting me to apply for money won over betting transactions. As we met purely on a professional footing there was nothing singular in my avoiding him as much as possible outside my office.

From the very beginning I could not bear the man. There was something in his looks which made me suspect that he had profounder thoughts than betting necessitated. More than once I caught him observing me closely from behind his paper in the station waiting-room. Was it possible, I asked myself, that he knew anything of the conversation that took place between Dawson and myself concerning that mysterious scrap of a letter?

My suspicions were fated to be speedily verified. One morning I received a wire summoning me to Bradlington to see an old client who was in trouble. He kept a large public house just outside the town, and was now summoned for allowing his premises to be used for betting purposes. I went up by the first available train. It would not be true to say that I was taken aback on entering the private bar to see Harcourt there quietly sipping a glass of bitter. On the contrary, the house was exactly the sort of place where he was most likely to be found. The moment he saw me he came forward, and, laying a heavy hand upon my shoulder, quietly said: "Dudley Bertram, I arrest you for the murder of Elizabeth Fothergill and George Dawson."

What I said or did, I know not. It matters little. I am to be hanged to-morrow—the sooner the better. All the world knows now that I am the murderer. At my trial I neither denied nor admitted my guilt, and consequently until the present moment I have carefully concealed the motives which urged me to the commission of these dreadful crimes. Dying, I burn a grain of incense to popular curiosity and give my story to the world.

Years ago, when a student at the Roman University, I joined a powerful secret society called the Giurati. On my return to England, bitterly did I repent my folly in so doing. Many a piece of dirty work have I been forced to perform for that gang of fiends. It is now nearly two years since I received the order to assassinate Bessie Fothergill. Against the poor girl the society had no grudge, but against her mother the villains had vowed implacable revenge. The father, it seems, had been a high official of the League, and in his dying delirium had revealed deadly secrets anent the plans of his associates. The mother, a shrewd, grasping woman, seized the situation at once, and made capital out of her information by selling these secrets to the Court of Austria. Her revelations brought nine men to the scaffold. Revenge at the hands of the Giurati is certain, if not always swift. They are too wise in their generation to resort at once to the assassination of their victim, for they know that death is, alas! too often no punishment at all. They determined to wait until Bessie was the main support of the home, and the joy of her mother's life. The murder of the daughter was to be the punishment of the mother. As is well known, Mrs. Fothergill became hopelessly insane on the night of the murder.

I murdered the girl, broke off the dagger, and in my terrified haste dropped the hilt into the pedal-board of the organ. There it was found by Dawson, and forwarded to headquarters.

After the discovery of my letter of warning, I knew that sooner or later I should be tracked down, and the murder of Dawson was planned at once. Slowly and gently dragging myself up the loft stairs I rushed upon him as he sat dreamily fingering the key-board, and twisting the wire around his neck rocked his body backward and forward until he breathed no more. I then searched for the scrap of paper—but it was gone!

Harcourt and his wife were private detectives who had been in the village since the murder, and I never knew it. The man palmed himself off as a traveller for various novelty companies, and so visited every house in the place, whilst his wife was at first disguised as a barmaid at the "Queen's Arms." Dawson knew them well, and they worked in conjunction. Before going to the church on the evening of his death he had given the fragment of letter into Harcourt's keeping. It was the handwriting expert's testimony that sealed my fate. From that day forward I was watched night and day, and Harcourt only deferred my arrest in the hope of discovering my motives for the crime. At my trial I maintained a stoic silence, solely in the vain hope of escaping the gallows on a plea of insanity.

And now I hear the procession being formed in the courtyard outside my cell. By straining my neck at the window I can see the cross-bar.

Ah! they are coming for me.

H. F. RUSSELL.

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BUTTERCUP.

THERE was once a young Doctor, who, in spite of his youth, was so wise and learned, that the seven wise men of Greece, had they entered into a disputation with him during a visit to the upper world, would have stood before him like school boys.

This Doctor had gone out one morning early in spring into the open air, in order to hear the grass grow, for he also understood this, and as he wandered amid the light green of May and saw the many coloured marvels of the air, the butterflies flying about the star flowers, and heard how the crickets in the grass, the birds in the branches, and the frogs in the meadow brook sang their wedding songs, then he thought of his native village that he had left years ago in order to attend the university, and thought also of the small, black-eyed girl, who had given him a heart of ginger-bread as a farewell present and at the same time shed bitter tears, and he felt curious about it.

On the following day the Doctor packed his bundle, took his knotted stick in his hand, and walked out through the door, bearing joy and pleasure in his heart.

After three days he beheld behind the blooming fruit trees the blue slate roof of his native church tower, and the wind bore to him the mellow pealing of bells.

"The question is whether she will know me," said he to himself. "Scarcely, and I also will have trouble to find again the small Greta in an eighteen-year-old girl.

"But her eyes, her great coal-black eyes, they will betray her to me, and if I see her sitting before her door, on the stone bench, then will I step close up to her—and the rest will come of itself."

The Doctor threw his hat into the air and gave so loud a shout that he was frightened at his own voice. He looked anxiously round to see if anyone had witnessed his outburst, but—besides a field mouse, which fled hastily to its hole, nothing living was near.

With high beating heart, the scholar entered the village. The pealing of the bells was stilled, but instead could be heard the merrier fiddle and sound of flutes. A bridal procession moved through the narrow village streets.

The bridegroom, a young, portly peasant, appeared happy and proud; the bride, adorned with a glittering bridal crown, had cast her eyes modestly to the ground. But once she raised the lids, and the eyes, the great coal-black eyes, betrayed to the Doctor the girl who stepped beneath the bridal crown. And he, the unfortunate, turned and went back unrecognised upon the way he had come.

It was noon. Golden green gleamed the field, and where water flowed there had the sun strewn over it thousands and thousands of glistening rays. Light is pleasant, but that day it caused the Doctor pain, and, therefore, he shaded his eyes with his hand. So he stepped forward, and it pleased the traveller, who had already gone a long distance, when he looked upon a dust cloud moving towards him.

"Good friend," said the stranger, addressing the Doctor, "the sunlight blinds you. Is it not so?"

The Doctor assented to this.

"See," said the other, "there is no better remedy than grey spectacles, like the ones I wear. Try them," and with these words he took his spectacles from his nose and handed them over to the Doctor, who yielded to the man and put on the dark-coloured glasses. They really benefited his eyes. The sun lost its bright glare, the meadow with its red and yellow blooms, the trees, bushes and canopy of the heavens, all were grey, and the Doctor was pleased at this.

"Are the spectacles for sale?" asked he of the strange traveller.

"They are in good hands," returned he, "and I always carry several such spectacles with me. Take them as a keepsake, Herr Doctor."

"Ah! so you know me? And may I ask——"

"Who I am," interrupted the stranger. "My name is Growler. Farewell." With these words he struck into the field path and soon disappeared. But the Doctor pressed the grey spectacles fast upon his nose, and moved along.

Since this occurrence years had passed. The Doctor had become a crusty old bachelor and had forgotten to enjoy the world. He still went out into the open air, but the green of the trees and the magnificent colour of the flowers were no more in existence for him. He pulled up the plants and dried them. Then he laid the flower mummies between grey blotting paper, wrote beneath them a Latin name, and that was his greatest pleasure, if it could be called a pleasure.

Once in his excursions the Doctor came upon an out-of-the-way valley, in which flowed a brook that turned a mill. And as he was thirsty, he asked an old woman, who sunned herself before the door, if he could by chance have a drink. The old woman assented to this, bade the guest be seated, and went into the house. Not long after, a young maiden brought milk and bread, and placed both before the guest on the stone table.

Then it occurred to the Doctor that the maiden was not ugly, but on account of his grey spectacles he could not be positive, and he did not like to take them off, for he knew the sunlight caused his eyes to pain. Silently he partook of what was offered him, and then, as the miller's daughter would not take payment, he pressed her hand and left. But she looked after the melancholy man until he disappeared behind the thicket.

The meadow valley, in which the mill was situated, no doubt must have harboured many kinds of rare plants, for the learned Doctor returned again three days after his first visit and also called again at the mill. And he came yet more frequently, and was soon a welcome guest.

To the old grandmother he brought sugar, coffee and other practical gifts, and he entertained the miller with instructive conversation. To the blonde little daughter he directed never a word, but contented himself by once in a while looking at the fair one through the

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grey glasses, then the grandmother would gently nudge the miller and nod her head knowingly.

One day, after the Doctor had left the mill and gone along the ridge of the valley, he noticed a mole fastened in a mole-trap, which endeavoured by struggling to escape death from strangulation. The kind-hearted man approached, loosed the prisoner, and set him on the earth, after which the Doctor and the mole each went his way.

On the evening of the same day, as the scholar sat in his study, it so happened that a bat came flying in through the open window. It seemed very wonderful, for on the bat rode a little man not taller than a finger, and the little man dismounted and bowed low before the Doctor.

"What seekest thou here?" said he to the little one, not very affably. "Go to the fable writer and disturb not sensible people in their work."

But the little man would not be dismissed; he came nearer, sat down upon the sand-box and spoke:

"Am I not known to thee? I intend thee good, for to-day thou hast released me from a trying situation. I am the mole that thou released from the trap."

"Indeed! And who art thou really?" asked the scholar, and surveyed the little man through his spectacles. He was of small, dainty stature, and had the glasses not been grey, the Doctor would have noticed that the little one wore a green coat and a golden yellow cap.

"I am the meadow sprite, Buttercup," said the dwarf. "My servants attend the grass and herbs. One washes them with dew, another combs them with the sun's rays, and again another furnishes nourishment to the roots. The last named I was watching this morning, and in order not to be recognised, I took on the form of a mole. While in this form I fell into the trap from which thy hand freed, and now I am here to thank thee, and to offer thee a service in return."

"Well, let me hear it," said the Doctor.

"Thou art a learned man," continued the Buttercup. "Thou art acquainted with flowers and plants that grow in valleys and upon the mountains, in the forest and fields; but one flower thou knowest not."

"What one?" asked the learned man, interested.

"That is the flower they call heart's joy."

"No, this one I know not."

"But I do," said Buttercup, "and I will tell thee where thou mayest find it. If thou wilt go up to the source of the mill brook, which thou knowest, until thou comest to a rock, there thou wilt find a cave, which the people call the goblin's cavern. Before the entrance blooms the flower, heart's joy, but only on Trinity Sunday, at the hour of sunrise, and who then is at the place can pluck the flower. Hast thou understood all?"

"Perfectly."

"Then, farewell," said the little man, and then bestrode his flying steed, and flew out through the open window.

The Doctor, astonished, rubbed his forehead and shook his head. Then he buried himself in a volume which was bound in pigskin.

A couple of days after this event the beautiful miller's daughter sat at evening before the meadow mill, and near by her the grandmother. The spinning wheels whirred and the old woman told of Frau Berchta, the White Lady, who gave industrious spinners knots of flax, which afterwards changed into yellow gold, and of many more marvellous things. Also she told of the sleeping man who sat in the goblin's cave. Once in a hundred years he became visible, and if a maiden kissed the sleeping man three times, then was he released, and in reward became the maiden's own sweetheart. So the old woman related and the beautiful maiden listened and spun out the tale like the thread of flax which her white fingers twisted.

In heaven the stars appeared, and as it was the time when the elder blossoms droop, the eyes of the maiden were overcome with sweet weariness. She sought her chamber and went to rest.

In the night there appeared to her a little man who wore a green robe and yellow cap; and the little one seemed very friendly and said to the maiden:

"Thou lucky child: To thee and to no other is the sweetheart in the goblin's cavern allotted. This morning the sleeping man becomes visible; at sunrise he sits slumbering at the entrance of the cave, and if thou art not afraid to kiss him heartily three times upon the mouth, then hast thou broken the spell and won a sweetheart. But take great heed during the work of deliverance to speak no word nor make a sound, for otherwise the sleeping man will sink three thousand fathoms into the earth and must wait again a hundred years for his deliverance."

So spoke the wight and disappeared. But the maiden awoke from her sleep and rubbed her eyes. A sweet scent as of new-mown hay filled the chamber, and through a crack in the window shutter the grey morning appeared. Then the courageous maiden arose and dressed. She softly left the chamber and walked with tucked-up gown through the dewy grass towards the goblin's cavern.

In the branches the forest birds already stirred, and, half asleep, tuned their throats. The white mist sank to the earth and lay in streaks over the meadow, and the tops of the pines were coloured yellow. Then the beautiful miller's daughter stood at the entrance of the cavern, and there sat on a moss-covered stone a sleeping man, just as the little dwarf had previously predicted. The maiden came near and almost gave a loud cry when she saw the sleeping man so closely resembled the Doctor, for he even wore grey spectacles.

But the maiden fortunately remembered the warning of the dwarf and silently, but with heart beating high, drew near the sleeper in order to perform the pious and innocent work of deliverance; and it seemed to her not to be so distasteful as she had previously thought.

Softly she bent over the sleeping one and kissed him on the mouth. The man made a motion as if he would awaken.

The maiden kissed him the second time. Then the man opened his tired eyelids and looked at the maiden, who appeared ghost-like through the grey glasses.

But she remained steadfast and pressed the third kiss on his lips. This caused the awakened one to start up in such haste that the spectacles slid off his nose and broke into splinters on the stony ground. And he saw again, after a long period, the sunny verdure of spring, gay-coloured flowers and the blue heavens, and in the midst of all the splendour, a maiden beautiful as a May rose and slender as a lily. And he embraced her and gave her back the three kisses.

On a golden butterfly sat the meadow sprite, Buttercup, and kicked his little legs for joy. Then down he jumped, so that the flower shook violently, and went about his important occupation.

He had kept his word; the Doctor had found his heart's joy and the beautiful miller's daughter her sweetheart.

JANET STOYLE.

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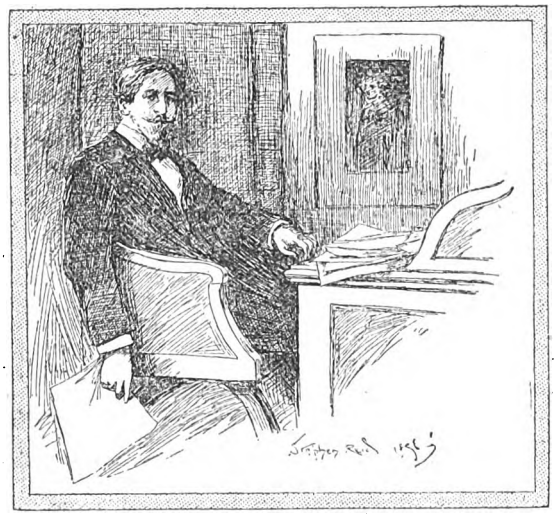
I.

"WILL monsieur the *sous-directeur* see Madame Blouet?" the clerk asked, opening the door of his chief's office. The *sous-directeur's* room was a large and lofty apartment, official in its furniture and appointments. Its two windows were draped with heavy, green damask curtains, the wall-paper and upholstery were of the same colour; the highly-polished floor reflected the severely simple furniture, and there was a black marble clock flanked by bronzes on the mantel-shelf. With his back to the fire, the *sous-directeur*, Hubert Boinville, was working at a mahogany desk covered with papers and official-looking documents. He raised his grave, melancholy-looking face, with its dark eyes and beard streaked here and there with grey, and looked at the card which the clerk held out to him. "The Widow Blouet" was written there in an old and feeble hand. The name conveyed nothing to him; he tossed the card aside.



Working at a mahogany desk.

"Show her in," he said resignedly. The clerk disappeared, and returned in a moment, introducing the visitor, who paused in the doorway to drop an old-fashioned curtesy.

Hubert Boinville half-rose from his seat and with a cold, polite gesture pointed an armchair to the stranger. She sat down, bowing her thanks.

She was a little, frail old woman, clad in neat but shabby black. The merino gown had been turned more than once; greenish shadows lay in its folds. A veil of rusty crêpe which had clearly done duty in more than one period of mourning hung limply from a bonnet of ancient shape and framed a round, plump face, ruddy, and wrinkled, like a winter apple. Her eyes were black and bright; her compressed lips showed the absence of many teeth.

"Sir," she began, a little breathlessly, "I am the daughter, widow and sister of Government officials who were good and loyal servants to the State, and I have addressed a petition for assistance to the Director of this department—I should like to know whether I may venture to hope that it will be granted."

The *sous-directeur* listened to these preliminaries impassively, he had heard so many of these appeals.

"Have you been helped before?" he asked phlegmatically.

"No, sir, up to the present I have managed to live without assistance—I have a small pension and——"

"Ah!" he interrupted drily. "In that case I fear we can do nothing for you. We have to help so many persons who have not the resource of even a small pension."

"Listen a moment, sir," she said desperately. "I have not told you all—I had three sons; they are dead. The last gave lessons in mathematics. Last winter, in going from the Pantheon to the Chaptal College in the pouring rain he caught a cold which turned to congestion of the lungs and carried him off in a fortnight. His lessons had enabled us to live, his daughter and me. The expenses of his illness and of his funeral drained my resources—I have been compelled to raise money upon my pension in order to meet the most pressing debts, and I am left with my grand-daughter to face starvation—at eighty-two. It is a great age, sir——"

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Her eyes, beneath their wrinkled lids, had filled with tears.

The *directeur* had listened attentively to her story. The sing-song intonation and, here and there, a provincialism had struck his ears like once familiar music. The homely idioms had a flavour which he seemed to recognise and which gave him a singular sensation. He rang and asked for the papers in the case, and, when the clerk had placed them before him, he examined them with evident interest.

"You are a native of Lorraine?" he asked, less coldly.

"Yes, sir, from Argonne—you recognised my accent? I thought I had lost it after living so long in other parts of the country."

The *directeur* looked with growing pity at the old woman whom some rude wind had torn from her native soil, and finally thrown, after many wanderings up and down the arid paths of official life, into the great, heartless city. Little by little his reserve gave way; he almost smiled as he said:

"I also am a native of Lorraine, and I lived for a long time at Clermont, near your village. Take courage, madame; I trust that we shall be able to obtain the help you ask for. You have given your address?"

"Yes, sir; 12, Rue de la Santé, near the Convent of the Capucines. Very many thanks. Your kindness is a great comfort to me, and I am glad, too, to have found a compatriot," and the woman retired with many bows and humble reverences.

Boinville rose and went to one of the windows looking upon the garden which lay behind the office. It was not the great, leafless chestnuts, however, that he gazed at so intently; his eyes were fixed on things much more distant. Far away there to the east, beyond the chalky hills and plains of Champagne, he saw a valley bordering a great forest. A modest little river flowed through it, bathing with its yellow waters the walls of an old town.

It was there that he had lived as a child; thither he had returned for his holidays. There his father, registrar of the local court, had led the narrow life of the official who has only his salary to live upon. Strictly brought up, accustomed from his earliest years to a stern conception of duty and to hard work, he had left his native place when he was twenty, and had only once returned—to his father's funeral. Gifted with ability and an indomitable will, with a giant's capacity for work, he had rapidly climbed the official ladder, until, at the age of thirty-eight, he was *sous-directeur* of his department of the ministry—a very young man, his fellow-officials thought, for such an important post.

Austere and punctual, a martinet in matters of official routine, he reached his office each morning at ten, and remained until six, often taking work home with him. Naturally reserved—the instinctive self-defence of a sensitive temperament, he was looked upon as the type of the coldly correct *bureaucrat*. He went little into society, and his life had always been so busy that he had never had time to think even of marriage. His heart had, however, spoken once, when he was a youth of twenty, but as he was then in a very subordinate position, and without fortune, the girl he loved had repelled his advances, and had married someone else. This early disappointment had left a trace of melancholy which the success of his career had never quite effaced, and that evening the widow's story of her distress, told in the accent and dialect of his birthplace—that accent which one never forgets—brought home to him the loneliness of his life more vividly than he had ever realised it before.

Leaning against the window he turned over, as one stirs a heap of dead leaves, the recollections of his childhood, and the perfume of those happy years so long passed seemed to fill his whole being.

He returned to his desk and, taking the widow's papers, endorsed upon the margin:

"A worthy case. Petition granted"—then he rang and sent the packet to the chief clerk.

II.

ON the day that the grant received the sanction of the Minister, Hubert Boinville left the office rather earlier than usual. It had occurred to him that he would himself carry the news to Madame Blouet.

He found himself in a large garden.

Three hundred francs was a mere drop in the bucket of the ministerial budget, but in the widow's home it would become a fertilising shower. Although it was the beginning of December the weather was mild, and Boinville traversed the distance between his office and the Rue de la Santé on foot. It was growing dark when he reached his destination. By the aid of a gas-lamp he deciphered the number 12 over a door sunk in a long wall of rough masonry, and, pushing the door open, he found himself in a large garden. Two or three lights were shining through the trees, and he made his way towards them, meeting the gardener, who guided him to the widow's little house.

He knocked at the door, which was soon opened by a young girl of apparently some twenty years of age, who looked at the visitor with wide-open eyes.

She wore a black dress, and the lamp she held showed the golden lights of her waving brown hair, her rosy, dimpled cheeks, and clear blue eyes.

"Have I made a mistake?" Boinville murmured; "does Madame Blouet live here?"

"Yes, sir, please come in. Grandmother, a gentleman wishes to see you."

"I am coming," a shrill voice in an adjacent room cried—and a moment later the old dame appeared, untying her blue linen apron as she came.

"*Sainte Mère!*" she exclaimed, "is it you, sir? Pray excuse me—I did not expect the honour of a visit from

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you—Claudette, offer the arm-chair to monsieur—she is my grand-daughter, all I have left, sir."

Boinville sat down in an old, carved chair, covered with faded velvet, and, with a rapid glance, examined his surroundings. The room seemed to serve as parlour and dining-room combined. The furniture was meagre; a small stove in white *faïence* on a slab of red marble; on one side a large oaken cupboard; in the centre a round table, rush-bottomed chairs, and on the walls two or three engravings; the whole was singularly neat in its old-fashioned rusticity. He explained shortly the object of his visit.

"Ah! many, many thanks! my monsieur," the widow cried. "They may well say that 'it never rains but it pours.' Just think! the little one has passed the examination for a situation in the telegraphs, and while she is waiting for an appointment she has been doing some illuminating. To-day she has been paid for a large order she has executed, and we are going to celebrate the Feast of St. Nicholas, just as in the good old days. You remember the St. Nicholas, sir?"

"But, grandmother," the girl interrupted laughingly, "monsieur does not know what the St. Nicholas means. They take no notice of it in Paris."

"He knows very well, all the same. He comes from our own province, from Clermont."

"The St. Nicholas? Of course, I remember," the *sous-directeur* said, his sad face breaking into a smile; "to-day is the sixth of December."

The Saint's name had kindled a host of memories

"No, grandmother," the girl murmured, "it would be an impertinence."

which were flashing through his mind. He saw the great stone fireplace in the home of his childhood, decorated for the festival; he heard the seductive music of the fiddlers as they marched through the streets of the town gathering the lads and lasses together for the annual ball; he remembered how, in the early dawn, he would creep out of bed and run downstairs to the hearth to seize the *sabots* full of the toys the Saint had brought when he came down the great chimney riding on his white ass.

"So this evening," the old woman continued, "we are going to have all the old-fashioned dishes for supper. The gardener has given us cabbages and potatoes for a good *potée*; I have bought a Lorraine sausage, and when you came I was making preparations for the *tôt-fait*."

"Ah! the *tôt-fait!*" Boinville cried; "it is nearly twenty years since I heard it mentioned, the cake of eggs and milk and flour; how good it used to taste!".

As he sat, smiling at his recollections of the old-fashioned country dishes, the old woman drew her grand-daughter aside and seemed to be discussing some grave project.

"No, grandmother," the girl murmured; "it would be an impertinence."

"Why? I am sure it would please him," and as Boinville looked at them inquiringly she turned and said:

"You have already been very kind to us, monsieur; but I have one more favour to ask. It is growing late and you have a long way to go before you can dine—we should be much honoured if you would stay and taste our *tôt-fait*—should we not, Claudette?"

"Yes, grandmother, but monsieur would dine but poorly, and besides he is probably expected at home."

"No, no one expects me," Boinville replied, thinking of the restaurant where he generally ate his solitary meal; "I have no engagement, but——"

He hesitated, looking into Claudette's laughing eyes, then, with a cordiality he seldom displayed, he added:

"I accept, without ceremony, and with much pleasure."

"Ah! that is right!" the widow exclaimed gaily. "What did I tell you, Claudette? Lay the cloth and fetch the wine, while I see to the kitchen."

The girl had already opened the great carved press, bringing out a chequered table cloth and napkins. In a few moments the table was spread, and, taking a *carafe*, she left the room.

"She is a great comfort to me," Madame Blouet said; "she is so bright and cheerful. It will be but a poor meal for you, monsieur, but it is offered freely, and then it will remind you of old times, will it not?"

When the meal had come to an end, Claudette cleared the table, and her grandmother took up her knitting and sat near the stove. Soon, however, soothed by the warmth of the room, she dozed over her work. Hubert and the young girl thus found themselves practically alone, and Claudette bore the main burden of the conversation.

She, too, had passed her childhood at Argonne, living with an aunt; and she recalled many local stories and traditions with an exactness which almost made Boinville believe himself at home once more. The room was very warm, and Claudette had half-opened one of the windows, through which the breeze brought the scent of the garden below where the splash of a small fountain made itself heard as its waters lapped the sides of their stone basin. The convent-bell slowly tolled the *Angelus*

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Hubert Boinville lost himself in a waking dream. He seemed to be twenty years younger, to be transported to some rustic cottage near his early home.

His youth, so long buried beneath huge masses of official documents, revived once more, and Claudette's blue eyes seemed to open a whole world of delicious, undreamt-of possibilities to his weary soul.

The old dame woke with a start, murmuring an apology for having "just closed her eyes for a moment."

Boinville rose, it was time to take his leave. Warmly thanking Madame Blouet, who exacted a promise that he would return, he took Claudette's hand. Their eyes met for a moment ere hers were lowered in confusion. She conducted him to the door, and on the threshold he pressed her hand once more, without, however, finding anything to say.

Nevertheless his heart was full, and when he was in the deserted street the air seemed filled with the music of the violins he had so often heard as a child on St. Nicholas' Eve.

The *sous-directeur* entered with renewed vigour into his official duties. Sittings of the council, interviews, reports, left him no time to pay another visit to the Rue de la Santé. The recollection of that eve of St. Nicholas, however, often recurred to him in the midst of his work, and more than once he had found his attention distracted by the remembrance of Claudette's blue eyes.

They seemed to flit like delicate butterflies over his documents, to shine in laughing mockery from the glowing embers in the grate, to bear him company in his gloomy bachelor's quarters. Sometimes he looked at his beard, already turning grey, and thought of his loveless life, and of his years, and wondered, like the old fellow in La Fontaine's fable, "whether he had passed the age of Love."

One day—it was a gloomy afternoon towards the end of December—his clerk opened the door of his office.

"Madame Blouet!" he announced. Boinville rose eagerly to receive his visitor. When she was seated, he asked after her grand-daughter, flushing as he spoke.

"She is quite well, thank you, your visit brought us good luck, monsieur. She has been waiting for a long time for a vacant appointment in the telegraph service, and yesterday it came. I did not wish to leave Paris without taking leave of you, and assuring you once more of our gratitude."

Boinville's heart beat fast.

"You are leaving Paris?" he asked; "the situation is in the provinces?"

"Yes, in the Vosges, and I, of course, go with Claudette. I am eighty-two, my dear sir, and cannot have much more time to spend with her, and we do not wish to be separated."

"And you are leaving soon?"

"The first week in January. Adieu, monsieur; you have been very, very good to us—Claudette asked me to thank you for her, too."

The *directeur* seemed absorbed; he hardly answered save in monosyllables. When the old dame had gone, he sat for a long time, his elbows on his desk, his face covered with his hands. He slept badly that night, and the next day his clerks found him exacting and hard to please. At three o'clock he left the Ministry and half-an-hour later he rang Madame Blouet's bell. Claudette came to the door. She started and blushed when she saw him, but there was a glad smile in her eyes.

"Grandmother has gone out," she said, "but she will not be long, and will be very pleased to see you."

"It is not Madame Blouet but you whom I wish to see, mademoiselle."

"I?" she murmured, confused.

"Yes, you," he said brusquely. His throat was parched, he could not find the words he wished to speak. "You still intend to leave next month?"

She answered by a nod.

"Are you not sorry to be leaving Paris?"

"Yes, very; but we must go. It is such a fortunate

"Do you find me too old?"

opening for us, and grandmother will be able to spend her last years in peace and comfort."

"And if I were to offer you a means of staying here and still making Madame Blouet happy?"

"Oh! monsieur!" she exclaimed.

"It is a heroic step," he added. "And perhaps you would find the task too great."

"I am brave—but tell me."

He paused a moment to take breath, and then quickly, roughly almost, he blurted out:

"Will you marry me?"

Her face expressed only surprise, not fear. Her lips remained half-opened, but a tender light came into her eyes.

Boinville dared not look at her lest he should read refusal in her glance. At length, alarmed at her silence, he asked:

"Do you find me too old that you seem so startled?"

"Startled?" she asked frankly. "No, but agitated, and—and—content! I dare not believe it yet!"

"Dear child!" he cried, taking her hands, "try to believe it, and believe, too, that it is I who am content, because I love you!"

She said nothing, but her eyes spoke so elegantly that he could not mistake their meaning. They told him that she also was happy, and he drew her closer to him. She suffered him to do so, and growing bolder, he raised her hands to his lips.

"Holy mother!" Madame Blouet exclaimed, as she came up the steps, and caught sight of the lovers.

They turned toward her, he a little confused, she blushingly radiant.

"Madame Blouet," Hubert said gaily, after a momentary pause. "That night I dined with you Saint Nicholas came down the chimney and brought me a present, just as he used to do when I was a child—a wife! This is her—your grand-daughter!"

ANDRÉ THEURIET.

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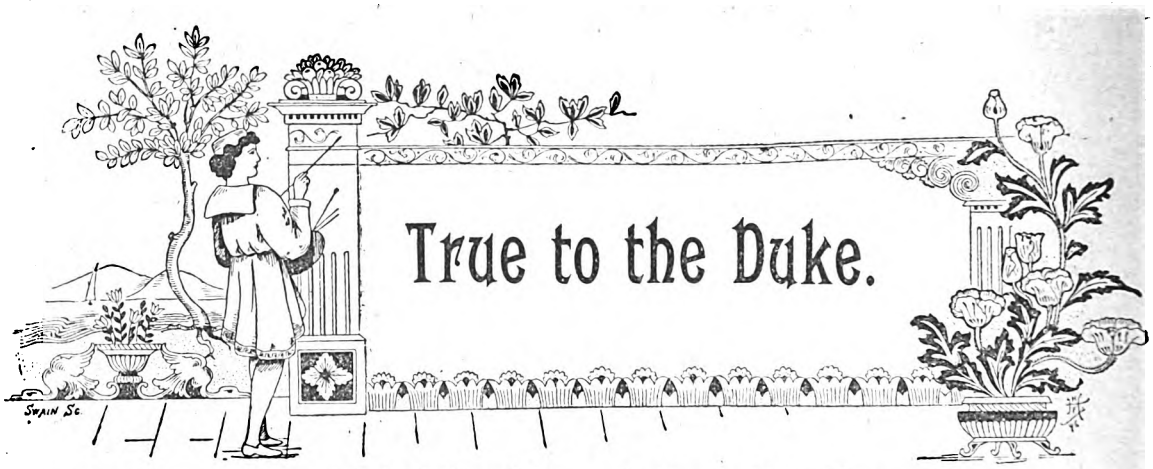

True to the Duke.

THE warm summer sunlight that sifted through the leaves of the sturdy English oaks in Somerset Wood one day fell upon a boy lying at full length on the mossy ground.

He was a stout, good-looking lad, with fair features and chestnut-coloured locks, inclined to curl. Beside him lay a cross-bow with a feathered shaft in the groove, and the boy's hand could have picked up the weapon at a moment's notice.

For some time he had been watching the gambols of two squirrels just beyond bowshot, and in hopes that they might come a trifle nearer and give him a chance to bring one down.

The spot occupied by the young marksman, whose name was Perry Preston, was the summit of a gentle rise which commanded a fair view of the surrounding forest.

While Master Preston lay there he thought of the great battle fought a few days previous at Sedgemoor between King James' men and the rebellious Duke of Monmouth, then a fugitive, with a kingly price upon his head.

The boy had heard of the battle; indeed his uncle, a Mendip miner, had fought there for the lost cause, and at that very moment was hiding somewhere out of reach of the king's hunters.

No one seemed to know where Monmouth was, and the king's soldiers were scouring the countryside for him.

In a short time it would be night, and the gleams of sunlight, which lit up the forest, would give way to shadows.

Presently the boy put out his hand and picked up the cross-bow; but all the time he kept looking at the squirrels.

One of the little animals had frisked to within bowshot, and Master Preston did not want the game to escape.

The boy quietly raised himself upon one knee and took deliberate aim at the squirrel, then liberated the bow-string and watched the arrow in its flight.

The shaft went true to its mark, for the squirrel tumbled from the log, upon which it had perched itself, and Master Preston, with an exclamation of triumph, ran forward.

The further side of the log was well banked up with leaves and into these the game had fallen.

When the little marksman reached the log he looked over and then drew back.

To his astonishment he was looking at a man half buried in the leaves, a man dressed in peasant costume but with a kingly-looking eye and a handsome face.

Perry stood dumfounded, and could only gaze at the man, speechless and full of fear.

"Do you want your squirrel, lad?" said the stranger, taking from the leaves the dead game, which he held up before Master Preston.

"I'll take it, if you please," and the boy took the squirrel, but did not stir.

By this time the man in the leaves had risen to his knees and was looking at the boy.

"I'm a peasant who might be wanted by those men who are after the soldiers of the unfortunate Monmouth," he said; but Perry laid one hand on his dirty sleeve.

"You'll find me true," he answered. "I know you. You are His Grace, the Duke."

The man started violently and drew back.

"I the Duke?" he cried. "Look at my garments, boy. Surely no duke ever masqueraded in such."

"But you are His Grace," persisted Perry. "I was in Taunton when you entered the city, and I remember quite well how you lifted your hat to the people and how your voice sounded."

"Then I am lost," was the reply. "I have come to this at last—to be betrayed into the hands of my enemies by a Somerset boy."

"Not so. I am not an informer. But you are in danger. They have been hunting along the hedges down yonder, for I saw a lot of rough riders beating the bush this morning."

"Beating it for poor Monmouth. Oh, if I had an army once more at my back——"

He stopped suddenly and looked away while he seemed to tremble.

"They are quite near us," said Master Preston. "There is a chance for you."

"What sort of chance, boy?"

"The old milk-house."

"Yours?"

"Yes. It is an old affair, but it has a false floor put down by its builder long ago. But you cannot go to it while it is light."

"Then back to my bed of leaves I must go," said Monmouth, with a smile. "If I escape, boy, you may some day be a duke yourself."

A few minutes later Master Preston trudged homeward with his squirrel and dressed it in the cramped front yard by the humble home.

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He said nothing to his mother, a widow, about his encounter with the hunted fugitive, and eagerly waited for dusk.

By-and-bye he went to the old milk-house, now rarely used, for the king's men some years before had taken the widow's last cow, and there he prised up a board and disclosed a commodious hiding-place underneath.

"The last place they'll look for the Duke in," said the boy. "He will be safe here."

Away he went to the wood, and, like a keen trailer, found the log and the fugitive behind it.

Without a word the two hurried back to the milk-house by a circuitous path, and Master Perry concealed the great Duke under the old boards.

As Monmouth pressed the boy's hand in parting, he looked up into the youthful face and said:

"May you be a duke some day whether I become king or not," and then Perry put the boards over him and went away.

* * * * *

Hardly had the boy reached home when six men rode up to the house and called the widow out.

They were members of Feversham's army—the general who had defeated Monmouth's forces—and they were looking for the fugitive. Master Preston came out of the house with his mother and looked at the gaudy but dirt-spattered regimentals and the rough faces of the cavaliers.

The moment one of the fellows spied Perry he covered him with his gloved hand.

"That's the boy," cried he. "Come, you little jackanapes. What were you doing in the wood to-day?"

"Hunting, sir," said the widow's son. "I shot a grey squirrel in the forest, as mother here can testify, for we had it for supper and ——"

"Who crept across the lane with you after dark?"

Master Preston did not quail. The crisis had come and the ordeal was before him.

"Some one with me?" he exclaimed. "I went into the forest quite alone and came home in like manner, sir."

"But there are tracks of two parties in the soft mud of the old lane down yonder. Come, boy. You can't deceive the riders of the King, and it is high treason to shelter this rebel, Monmouth."

At mention of the hunted man's name Mrs. Preston clasped her hands and turned pale while she looked at her son.

Perry remembered that the ground in the old lane they had crossed on their way to the milk-house was quite soft and liable to leave there the impress of their shoes; but he did not immediately reply.

"A good many people cross the lane," said he at last, "I don't doubt that there be foot-prints in the ground there."

"And one of the prints shows the elegant foot-track of the rebel whom we broke at Sedgemoor."

"My son is honest," at this juncture exclaimed the widow. "I know him to be civil and kind, and he went to the wood to-day, not to hide Monmouth, but to get a squirrel with his bow."

"Yes, and he brought down more important game," broke in the leader of the detachment. "Here, come up on the saddle, boy," and the man darted at Perry, who before he could get beyond his reach, was seized and jerked off his feet.

In another moment the boy found himself on the saddle before the trooper, who looked him sternly in the face as he continued.

"We want the rebel, boy. Don't deceive us. Where have you hid Monmouth?"

In an instant fire seemed to light up the widow's eyes and she remembered the indignities she had suffered at the hands of the troopers of King James, for she cried out:

"If you've made a promise, Perry, stick to it. Keep your word, boy, even if given to Monmouth!"

The troopers looked daggers at the woman and one thrust out his sword, but she sprang out of the way and laughed at him.

"We'll wring the little chick's neck but what we'll make him tell where the rebel is," said the captain of the detachment. "The King will have no nonsense and, boy or man, the person who refuses to betray the hiding-place of the arch-rebel, Monmouth, shall feel His Majesty's displeasure."

With this the little troop wheeled, and Master Preston, held firmly to the saddle, was carried away.

A few yards from the house the men halted and all crowded round the man who held Perry prisoner.

"Where is he, boy?" they asked.

Perry looked into the rough faces and saw no leniency there; then he glanced at their broad swords, the very weapons that had wrought such ruin at Sedgemoor, and for a moment contemplated the general mien of the six.

"You haven't proved to me that there are footprints in the mud in the old lane," said the boy.

"But we can," was the answer. "You want to be convinced, do you? To the lane you shall be taken."

* * * * *

In a little while the boy was taken to the spot, and when it was reached one of the men dismounted and led his horse toward a certain spot.

A full moon was in the sky, and in some places the ground was plainly visible and the very blades of grass that covered it.

They had entered the lane which Perry and the Duke had crossed on their way to the old milk-house and presently all stood on the bare place.

"Put the lad down here," said the man who had gone forward afoot. "I want to show him what a dainty footprint the hunted fox makes. Here it is, as plain as when we left it, and here beside it is the rougher boot-track of the widow's bairn."

In compliance with the request the captain of the troop put Perry down, at the same time telling the trooper on the ground to take hold of his wrist and escort him to the proof-spot.

Master Preston felt a hand at his wrist and he was led forward in a jiffy.

"There they are, your tracks and those of the arch-rebel's!" exclaimed the cavalier. "You crossed here. Why, everybody in England knows the print of Monmouth's foot, no matter if he wears a shepherd's boots."

At the same time Perry was pushed forward and roughly held over the soft ground.

He saw the tracks he and Monmouth had made; they seemed to accuse him of treason to the King, but he did not quail.

"You see them, boy? Now, sirrah, where is the fox?"

It was the captain of the band who spoke, and Perry straightened in the moonlight.

At the same time the man who held his wrist seemed to give him a little freedom, for the grip relaxed as Master Preston looked at the trooper's horse.

It was a lithe-limbed chestnut, such as he once rode

among the Mendip Hills when on a visit to his uncle, and an idea flashed through the boy's brain.

"I give you a minute, boy. We cannot wait here all night while you know where the rebel is. Stand aside, Goschen. He is safe here."

The trooper who had dismounted stood aside, quite releasing Master Preston; but the next moment an event of startling importance took place.

The Somerset boy sprang toward the horse and caught the rein as he left the ground.

His movement was agile as the leap of a squirrel, and before the astonished cavalrymen could interfere he was on the the horse's back, tearing up the lane like mad.

Through the moonlight, like an arrow from his own cross-bow, went the boy, and in a little while five steeds were tearing after him, amid the clanking of heavy sabres and the shouting of vile epithets.

It was a race in favour of the boy who knew every foot of the road, and at a certain spot he turned aside where some bars were down and galloped across a meadow.

Fatigued and in no good humour the five horsemen came back after a long chase, compelled to admit that a boy had beaten them, while several miles from the spot Master Preston, hidden in a safe retreat, congratulated himself upon his escape.

All that night did the troopers watch the widow's house in hopes that the boy would ride back and fall into their clutches, but he did not oblige them, and at daylight they went away.

All the next day the hunted man remained under the floor of the old milk-house, and at night he was piloted away by his little rescuer, who, upon parting with him, received as a keepsake the Duke's ring.

It was Monmouth's last escape from the snares of his persistent pursuers, for the following day he was taken and carried to London.

During his imprisonment there he did not forget the boy who had saved his life in the Somerset forest, for he was permitted to address Master Preston a letter, and there is little doubt that had Monmouth reached the throne he would have kept his promise and made Master Preston the youngest Duke in England.

T. C. HARBAUGH.

THE BELFRY.

"IT was the end of December," old Père la Chouette said, one day, "just as it is now, excepting that that year was the terrible '70. It was so cold that the very atmosphere seemed frozen, and snow, thick snow, stifling all sound, covered all the roads and paths.

"The Prussians had not reached St. Martin yet, but one could feel that they were coming through the forest; three days ago we had heard two dull reverberations, borne on the still, winter air, which told us that they had blown up the bridges. After that we had no news, communication with Evreux being broken; it was terrible, the silence which walled us in, as it were, from the outer world; and it was the more terrible because we all felt that there was worse behind.

"The company of the 202nd Regiment that was garrisoning the village had no orders upon which to act, and Captain Bougeart said at last—the church clock was striking four and night was already gathering:

"'I cannot stay here; I risk being captured with all my men without the chance of firing a single shot; the village lies in a hollow, it is impossible to defend it. I shall establish myself on the hill-side towards Guirandières and from there try to re-open communications with my brigadier.'

"He drew me apart—he knew me well, and knew, too, that I was an old soldier.

"'They are not sorry to see me leave,' he murmured, pointing to the group of the principal inhabitants of our little village, 'and—well—they are quite right. If I stayed they would only have to meet a heavier levy, and perhaps they would see their property destroyed under their very eyes. But, Père la Choutte, you can do me a service: if the Prussians come, find a means of warning me. One of your village urchins will pass anywhere, through anything, a gun-shot can be heard a long way off in this still, cold air; a bell rung—by accident, of course, would be even better. I shall be on the alert and shall know what it means.'

"I promised what he asked, and shortly afterwards they moved off, retreating through the cold, grey light reflected from the snow. When I saw the last uniform disappear it seemed to me that I was no longer in France.

"I entered my little cottage and was unhooking the iron pot which always hung over the fire in order to pour out my soup when I heard sounds outside: rapid trotting horses' hoofs beating, muffled, on the thick, soft snow.

"I stooped and peeped through a chink in the window shutter and I saw four great brutes of Uhlans dimly outlined against the frosty sky; what little light was reflected from the snow showed me their horses and vague shadowy figures of men, each with his slender lance, a black line upon the night.

"Suddenly they dismounted and crept stealthily through the village, and half-an-hour later we were invaded, silently, without a single cry or a word of command to break the silence of the night, as by an army of shadows.

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"It occurred to me that if Captain Bougeart were not warned he might fall back upon the village the next day and would be killed or taken prisoner with all his men. There must have been a whole division of the enemy, more were arriving every moment. I could hear the heavy wheels of artillery crunching the frost-bitten roads.

"Could I make my way to the Captain? It was not to be thought of for a moment. I had sprained my ankle a fortnight previously and I was no longer young, even in those far off days. I could hardly drag one leg after the other for the shortest distance. A messenger?—where could I find one at that time of the night? He would be caught and shot, to a certainty.

"And then I thought of my post as bell-ringer; it was not for nothing that we had a great bell that could be heard as far as three leagues away. I hastily put on my sheepskin coat and went out. I knew what I was going to do.

"The street was full of troops, horses, and baggage waggons. They had not lighted any bivouac fires, and at each exit from the village guards were posted to prevent anyone from leaving the place. They were evidently meditating some sudden *coup*, and I reflected, sadly, that a body of our troops was in the neighbourhood and would probably fall victims to an ambush if they were not warned.

"I went out with the most unconcerned air I could assume under the circumstances. *They* only saw in me an old man, halt and lame, limping feebly along, and they paid no attention to me. I had the key of the church, and I entered and locked myself in. I was on familiar ground, and, lighting a lantern, I found that all was well. The bell-rope hung down within reach of my hand; I simply had to pull it. But it occurred to me that, at the first stroke, the Prussians would break down the door and compel me to silence, perhaps before our troops had heard the signal.

"So I turned towards the narrow, winding stairs and was soon in the organ-loft: there again, I decided, I was too near the enemy.

"*Ma foi!* I had to climb still higher, in spite of my bad foot. It was not easy, for the staircase only run to the level of the triforium, and then I had to take to a ladder. And no one who did not know the peal of bells and its frame-work as well as I could have ventured there in the dark, for in many places there was nothing but an iron rod or, perhaps, a bolt-head projecting from the face of a beam to serve as foot-hold.

"Courage! By hook or by crook, straining every muscle, every nerve, I gradually pulled myself up—my ankle was terribly painful—I reached the top, the very top, and groped for my bell, my favourite big bell which seemed to thrill to my touch. Without pausing to regain my breath I drew the clapper towards me and great waves of sound filled the belfry and floated out upon the air. Another single stroke and then I rang without stopping the terrifying tocsin. Boom! boom! the great bell pealed, almost stunning me, rousing all the country-side.

"The village far below me began to show signs of life; between the strokes of the bell I heard people running and calling one to another, then someone beat upon the church-door.

"'Will you stop that infernal din?' a voice called out in a gutteral German accent.

"*Boom! boom!*

"Then I heard something whistle through the air and immediately afterwards the sound of a shot. They were firing at me.

"A noise of breaking timber, of iron-studded panels striking the pavement, and then I heard footsteps in the church and on the little winding stair.

"'Will you come down and at once? *Schweinpelz!*' the same voice cried. 'Wait till I can get hold of you!'

"They were climbing!

"Feverishly I swung the great clapper to and fro and. to my great joy, between the waves of sound, I heard the answering peals from the churches of Saint Leu and Morgny—in the far distance I thought I could distinguish the sound of the bells of Azay—they were in the triforium below me now!

"The reverberations of a rifle-shot are terribly deafening when re-echoed from a stone-vaulted roof; bullets struck the beams all round me, sounding like blows from a heavy hammer as they buried themselves in the timber; one struck my bell and cracked it, making it emit a sound as of some wounded living thing. At last a voice called out:

"'*Genug! genug!*'

"I understood that to mean 'enough!' for the firing ceased and a voice gave some word of command in German. I saw a soldier lay down his rifle and glance up at the belfry as though measuring the height, then, slowly but surely, without a pause, he began to climb.

"The snow was falling in soft, thick flakes; they drifted in at the *louvres* of the bell-chamber, covering all the beams and iron rods, and I realised that if I were saved from the fate which seemed so near me I should owe my delivery to the kindly snow. Already I felt as though the Prussian's hand gripped my shoulder.

"He climbed carefully, making sure of each foot-hold as he mounted; from time to time he threw back his head so as to be able to see where I was, and I could make out his face with its blue eyes and good-natured expression.

"How I hated him! It seemed as though there was no escape for me. When he reached the stays he hesitated—the cold iron must have burnt his hands—perhaps his head turned when he saw nothing but a black abyss below him and all around the thick, white snowflakes falling, always falling. I heard the nails of his boot grate on the ironwork and he let go his hold with both hands. I watched him fall and disappear into the chasm below, I heard the dull thud of his body as it rebounded from one beam to another and then the sickening crash on the floor of the church.

"And through it all I heard the distant bells ringing—I felt each stroke beat upon my strained nerves until I could have screamed.

"At length a rent appeared in the sky, and, slowly, a little light began to show me the surrounding country. From my belfry I saw all the familiar features of the landscape emerge one by one, and far away below me lay the village—there were people in the streets. I could see their white, upturned faces as they tried to discern me. At the foot of the tower a squad of Prussians were piling faggots against the walls; they were going to smoke me out as they would have done some fox.

"All at once I heard a volley of rifle-shots and the gay notes of the French bugles—how I love their sound—the Germans ran to arms, surprised and in disorder.

* * * * *

"They had to lower me down by a pully, I was so stiff with cold; and I have never been able to understand what mysterious power enabled me to climb up there in safety that terrible night."

FRANCOIS DE NOIN.

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THE YOUNG MAN FROM TEXAS.

I.

THE Prince was smitten, and he was going home. There was nothing contagious about it: simply a species of homesickness, savouring of remorse: nothing worse. By my reference to this individual as the "Prince," the reader must not assume him to be possessed of that royal blueness of blood so popular a gift amongst princes of regal extraction.

The "Prince" was merely one of those honorary titles bestowed by an approving coterie of acquaintances.

He was princely in his habits and dress, princely in his vices and virtues, and princely in his open-handedness, in fact, princely in everything save birth, and this circumstance may probably account for his alienation from his family.

When quite a beardless youth, he had set off to seek diversion in foreign lands. For years had he dropped all connection with his relatives in the way of correspondence, memories, and so forth. And now, by dint of some spontaneous revolution his heart turned again to the scenes of his boyhood.

His latter day friends wrestled with his new resolve. They opened their yearning hearts; they beseeched, they flattered, they promised, they threatened, all in turn, but to no avail. With an affectionate look he put these all aside; and accordingly, early in the month of February, we find him waiting at New York for the English steamer.

On his way to the quay he had been attracted by the frequent recurrence—so to speak—of a strange young man. This personage had first arrested his attention by the peculiarity of his dress; but afterwards it seemed to the Prince that the young gentleman was dogging him.

As for the twentieth time the Prince met him, he said something my pen refuses to fashion.

Taking his place on the vessel he awaited her departure, drawing a happy breath as she left the mooring and steamed out to sea.

Night fell, and the Prince went on deck for a constitutional, soliloquising beneath the breezy boon of tobacco. He made for the bow, possibly intending to poetise upon the "Prodigal's Return."

Reaching it, he saw what he fancied to be the figure-head swaying. He put out his hand to save it. Strangely, it had a coat-tail, and as he tugged the pale face of the strange young man bent its glance upon him. Instantly the Prince resorted to his unsanctified vocabulary, in response to which the strange young man muttered:

"I beg your pardon?"

"Oh, nothing!" returned the Prince mildly. "You look pale—have some brandy?"

"Thanks! Don't—mind——" Here the strange young man looked yearningly at the ocean and said no more until the liquor forthcame.

With this introduction they remained friendly and reached London in company.

It was late one Saturday night when they parted at the station.

"Going home?" questioned the young man, lingering as he took the Prince's hand.

"Hm—yes! Are you?"

"Not to-night. To-morrow. I'm going to enact the part of a returned prodigal.

"Got any family—much?" asked the Prince.

"Who, the governor, or I?"

"The governor—your father, of course."

"Not large. One stalwart marriageable girl. By-the-way, too, it's her birthday to-morrow. Comes into a few ha'pence. I must see her. Shall we meet again?"

"Yes—pleased, I'm sure. Where?"

"Oh, here. Say one o'clock; before I see the judge."

"Judge? Where—who?"

"Oh, that's my governor."

They parted.

The Prince betook himself to a saloon to freshen his appearance before going home. It was rather late, but being Saturday night he thought his people might possibly be up.

Whilst standing before the mirror brushing his hair he abruptly stopped and started.

"The dickens!" he muttered beneath his breath. "Never noticed this before. H'm, awfully strange!"

He had remained gazing at his reflection some time, when the attendant notified closing time.

With the last glance at the mirror, he realised that were it not for his fragile moustache, he might be the double of his late companion, the strange young man from Texas.

With thoughts still intent upon this remarkable coincidence, he wended his way along the deserted streets towards the house he had left as "home." It hardly occurred to him the changes a few years might have wrought, and his only anxiety was "how would they receive him?"

Reaching the house, he suffered an affectionate tear to trickle down his nose, as for a moment he stood gazing upon it.

"Yes!" he thought. "The same old place, but mightily improved!"

Seeing no light, he hesitated at first about entering that night; but at the last moment of his mental debate, a yellow streak, creeping between the shutters of a lower apartment, caught his hungering eye. So, knocking softly at the door—the servants' entrance—he waited.

Before long the door opened a few inches, and a voice from behind the lubricating elements of a wax candle, whispered: "Who's there?"

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"The son and heir of this household!" answered the Prince jocosely.

He was admitted and confronted by a saucy-looking servant girl, who expressed surprise at his unexpected return.

"Do you want any supper, sir?" she asked.

"No, thanks. I'll go to bed."

"All right, sir. You can have this candle; I'll show the way."

Too tired to think more, he undressed, blew out the light, and slipped into bed. In a very few minutes, the velvet hand of sleep touched his drooping eyes and took him to perfect repose.

II.

ON the following morn he sprang from bed—rubbed his eyes—yawned with an air of expectant happiness, and commenced his toilette.

His relatives, so long bereft, should not see the prodigal return in proverbial rags and disorder.

His choicest princely instinct was clear, and he dressed with all the fastidiousness of a soon-to-be bride.

Then with rife expectation, and pleasant anticipation, he betook himself to the breakfast-room.

The people waiting there heard his springy footstep on the stairs, and before he had time to realise anything, a lovely girl rushed out, threw her arms about his neck, and rained a perfect hurricane of tears and kisses in the neighbourhood of his nether lip.

He was dazed, literally astounded. What did it mean?

He had no sisters or such like, and here was this strange, stupefying beauty rhapsodising over him, as though he had just escaped the jaws of death.

The maiden drew back, surveying him at arm's length.

"Yes!" she cried delightedly. "It is indeed Sammy, and see, mamma, he has grown such a lovely moustache. Oh, however *did* you do it?"

Here she kissed him again, and hugged him into the room. To attempt a characterisation of the Prince's feelings would be a wicked waste of time and paper.

No sooner had he passed the door, than a massive, judicial-looking man came forward.

"Samuel!" he said profoundly—and the spoons chattered with the chinaware—"Samuel, my boy, we have no words upon our lips adequate to such an occasion as this, and the language of our heart must appear weak if examined. Let us then dispense with words and ceremony—silence being the most eloquent and, and—begin breakfast!"

But for the blushing Prince the worst part of the ordeal had been in reserve, for at this juncture a stately old lady with corkscrew curls came forward, drew his head down to her level, and kissed him once on the forehead, once on each cheek, finally concluding with an amalgamated array of six upon the lips.

"Welcome, Samuel!" said she. "Welcome, thrice welcome, on this happy day!"

He looked about in poorly disguised amazement. As in his sleeping apartment, *this* room was altered. It was certainly the same chamber he recalled as "breakfast-room," but yet how different; and how superbly furnished. Then again that pompous-censorial old fogey was not the father he had known, nor the stately old lady his mother.

For the second time he pondered the question—what did it mean? In a trice the answer occurred to him.

His people had gone—removed—were dead, or something of the sort. Certainly.

It was years ago that he left home, and these present tenants had mistaken him for some well-remembered friend, returning after a long sojourn.

But it was his *duty* to speak. He *must*, he *would* speak, and was about to do so in spite of all, when his curiosity prompted him to delay a little longer.

Breakfast being over, the host suggested a walk before luncheon, and the young people delightedly acquiesced. However, before they had gone far, an old fogey occupant of a passing carriage beckoned to the guardian. Excusing himself, as he said, on business, adding, with a smile, his suspicions that they would be happier alone, he seated himself beside his friend and drove off.

They were in a lovely, half rural road, and he could no longer endure the weight of his deceit.

Bracing his nerves, he was about to declare himself, when his lovely companion interrupted him. She had been scrutinising his face askance. The indication she looked for came, and so she spoke:

"Don't speak!" she began. "I know what you are going to say. I am very glad you determined to tell me at once, for it makes me think well of you!"

The Prince looked thunderstruck. Well he might; but his amazement was followed by a look of sorrow.

"This," he said with conscious pain, "should come from me. I was just——"

"Yes, I know you were, but I anticipated you. Don't blame yourself. You could not have spoken earlier, since I interrupted you at breakfast. I hold you quite blameless, and so will papa. I saw my mistake at once; but how *could* I retract just then?" Here a barely perceptible flush mantled her lovely face, and the Prince imagined her to be what she almost was—divine in body as in soul.

"Now, look here," she continued, "I have been thinking about this, and I want to keep it up. You see how well pleased dear mamma and papa both are; let them remain so. I am willing to take all the blame of the deception. Will you do it for me, please?"

"Oh, I cannot allow that!" he said quickly. "It is too selfish of me. Besides, how vexed must they inevitably be when they learn the truth."

"Ah, but it won't be so bad, really, and—and——" (here her voice trembled almost pleadingly) "perhaps you have—no home!"

For just a moment she broke down, and her head turned gently aside. From that instant for ever after the Prince would willingly have died for her.

"To please me!" she said at length, smiling upon him with glistening eyes.

"To please you," he answered in a low tone, broken by tender emotion. Although quite manly in thoughts and deeds, he had to exercise superhuman restraint to avoid kneeling to her with streaming eyes.

"Will you tell me your name, please?" she asked him next.

"You know it, since you have used it already," he rejoined.

"Ah, that was a peculiar coincidence. I mean your second name, though."

"Marnham. Samuel Marnham!"

She stood suddenly still, regarding him curiously.

"Samuel Marnham," she repeated softly. Then, after a pause: "Mine is Worseley!"

"Agnes!"

That was all, but each fully understood; mutually recalling one thrilling scene enacted long years ago in company. From the breast pocket of his coat the Prince drew a little parcel. Unswathing a ridiculous amount

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of cotton wool and paper, he produced a Humane Society's medal, with his own name and that of Agnes Worseley graven upon it.

She took it carefully from him as though it were some cherished token of a departed friend.

"Oh, let me keep it!" she beseeched. For, after all, the Prince was no stranger—only a rescued friend from the ruins of bygone days.

"But however did you mistake me, and who for?" questioned he as they turned homewards.

"I thought you were my brother, who went away a long, long while ago, and hasn't since returned. You are very like him. You see papa is mistaken as well."

And so in this strain they continued to talk until their arrival home.

The Prince never once thought of his experience the day before, or of his appointment for the present day, so great was his absorption in the lovely peace and happiness about him.

III.

AT luncheon time the house was crowded. Stately guests of both sexes flocked to the grand reception. There were lords and ladies, plain Mr.'s and Mrs.'s, noble and ignoble men, right reverend and wrong reverend gentlemen of all denominations, sizes, and shapes, but all more or less human.

The Prince studiously made himself general property, so that none had cause for conceit. He cleverly avoided making himself cheap, and, consequently, was always in request. Possessing that ineffable genius of artistic social restraint, he found that his harvest was literally a golden one.

"You are acting your part splendidly!" Agnes whispered, and for the first time a flash of excitement darted through his princely eyes, but was drowned in the heightening colour of his cheek, and instantly he became outwardly calm again.

At the conclusion of the grand dinner the Prince's success was complete. His table-talk and manners were absolutely faultless; and every maiden face plainly proclaimed its possessor had found a realisation of her ideal. Then he began to tell a story.

No one was more intent upon every gesture and word than Agnes Worseley. She seemed with her eyes to lift each utterance off the Prince's lips. Suddenly she started as she realised the story was characterising some half-fashioned anticipation she held in common with the narrative. She nudged him, but so abandoned was his eloquence that her touch evoked no response. He was nearing the climax. The audience hung upon his lips, spell-bound and open-mouthed; and with one puff he could have literally blown them to eternity.

Two minutes more and the iron hand of Fate would thunder downwards.

The listeners strained in their postures to catch each word and glance.

The Prince, pinned by every eye, writhed his burning tongue swiftly towards the crucial point. Apopletic veins seemed like to burst from every neck. A quick pulsation showed on every cheek, and bosoms were trembling and quivering beneath superhuman restraint, when the door of the room flew open, and upon the threshold stood "The Young Man from Texas!"

IV.

IN the space of a thought the gases flashed up, disclosing the company in a state of speechless consternation.

For the second time a flash of excitement gleamed in the eyes of the Prince, and he looked round for Agnes.

She was close beside him.

The strange young man came directly up, and grasping him warmly by the hand, gave utterance to the shocking but ambiguous phrase:

"You're a fraud! Why didn't you keep your appointment?"

Then the Prince, quite perplexed and half indignant, said: "But, sir—this language? You shouldn't have sought me here. I would have explained later."

"Oh, and why not seek you here?" questioned the young man. Then turning to the astounded host and hostess, said: "Judge! Father—mother!"

A momentary pause ensued, and then the judge, with a frown on his forehead and a twinkle in his eye, rushed forward and heartily embraced that strange young man from Texas.

Then the strange young man, turning with a fraternal smile to Agnes, kissed her, afterwards deliberately beaming upon the company and saying:

"Permit me to introduce my friend—a—a—Mr.—— What's your name?"

"Marnham—Samuel Marnham," responded the Prince, now fairly recovered.

"The dickens it is, though," ejaculated the strange young man in genuine surprise and unaffected warmth. And shaking the Prince's hand more heartily than ever, continued: "I'm deucedly glad of that though, upon my soul," and inwardly the judge echoed the same sentiment. With humourous profundity in one eye, and terrible censure in the other, he approached the Prince, exclaiming:

"Explain, sir. What is the meaning of this freak?" But before the other could reply, Agnes stepped forward, holding high the medal.

"Papa, papa, see this! My name and his coupled here together! You *must* remember, papa. He is the son of your old friend, Sir David. You *must* remember him! He saved——"

"*I* know all about *that!*" roared the Judge, trying to grow red in the face.

"Well, papa," said Agnes, hardly able to suppress her laughter, "aren't you going to forgive us? Besides, it was all my fault—really, truly."

As the door closed upon the last of his guests, the Judge, giving way, laughed consumedly, and the whole family was made to sit up into the small hours of the morrow to pacify and quell his boisterous mirth.

When at length the family party arose, the Judge's eyes were suspiciously moist. Taking the Prince's hand, he said with true affection: "You will stay with us—long——!"

That was all he could manage, but it was said in that peculiar manner admitting of no alternative reply.

As requested, the Prince remained the Judge's guest for the next day, and the next week, and the next month, and so on for a long while; and so generously devoted did the pair become that the Judge, upon request, granted the Prince the freehold of two valuable properties, to wit, the beautiful Agnes and the house next door.

The self-same guests who attended the Judge's feast were at the wedding also; upon which occasion the indigo-dye millionaire confidentially declared to several marriageable young ladies, that neither the Prince nor the large-hearted Judge were so much to blame for the general deprivation, as the strange young man from Texas.

DUNSTAN DENN.

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A LEGEND OF THE FLOWERY KINGDOM.

WHO is there, since the earliest dawn of intelligent perception, that has not wondered at the peculiar picture on the old and familiar willow-pattern china? Who has not studied the odd figures and tried to guess at their meaning? And yet I dare say there are few of us who have ever heard the story, which is as familiar to the natives of the Flowery Kingdom as Robinson Crusoe or Rip Van Winkle is to us.

The tale was related to me by a lady who has travelled extensively in China, and who, prompted one day by mere woman's curiosity, determined to learn what the picture meant.

In the first place, the name, "willow-ware," is taken from the tree which occupies the lower left centre of the plate, and which is supposed to represent a willow in spring unfolding its blossoms before its leaves appear.

On the right hand of the plate is seen a Chinese house supposed to be of unusual size and magnificence, the wealth and resources of the owner being indicated by its being two storeys high, and also by the large and rare trees which surround the building. This residence belonged to a wealthy and powerful mandarin, named Woo Tsang, a close friend of the Emperor and generally acknowledged as possessing great influence. In his household dwelt with him his wife and daughter and his private secretary, Mok Chang, who attended to the details of the mandarin's duties and was allowed to reside with the family.

After the death of the mandarin's wife, that official importuned the Emperor to release him from his duties and permit him to retire to private life. This, of course necessitated the discharge of the secretary, Chang, who, it seems, had fallen deeply in love with the mandarin's daughter, Koong-see, and not in vain, for his love was returned.

Every evening after sunset, Koong-see was observed to linger on the steps which led to the banquet-hall, and when twilight came on, she would steal down the garden path with her faithful maid to a remote part of the grounds and meet her lover. And there also did the lovers meet on the eve of Chang's dismissal and exchange vows of mutual love and constancy. But many evenings afterwards, when the discharged secretary was supposed to be miles and miles away, lovers' whispers might have been heard among the orange trees, and as darkness came on, the large peonies which grew against the wall had their gorgeous petals destroyed by Chang as he climbed through the brilliant blossoms.

By the assistance of Koong-see's maid, these interviews were kept secret from the mandarin, for the lovers well knew the hard customs of the country where social rank was unequal.

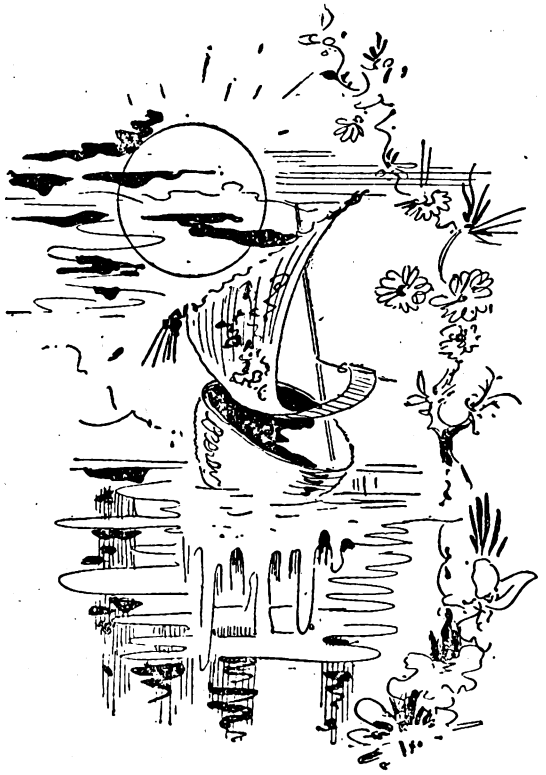
Chang's merit, however, was admitted everywhere, and the young people pictured a time when all obstacles would be removed by Chang's success in diplomacy and trade. But, by some manner or other, a rumour reached the ears of the old mandarin of what was going on, and he forbade Koong-see to go beyond the walls of the house, and as for Chang, he was threatened with prompt death if he continued his visits. Furthermore, the mandarin had a high fence built across the pathway from the walls of his home to the water's edge. This is the zig-zag fence which appears at the lower end of the picture.

Finally, after all these precautions, Koong-see's maid was discharged, and her place was supplied by an elderly woman, whose heart was as shrivelled as her face. To further provide for his daughter's imprisonment, and at the same time to give her needed exercise and fresh air, the mandarin had a suite of rooms built adjoining his own banquet-hall, and projecting out over the water and surrounded by a terrace upon which Koong-see could walk in safety. These rooms will be seen to the left of the mandarin's house in the picture.

When all this was completed the old mandarin rested, convinced that there would no longer be any more clandestine meetings between his daughter and the discharged Chang. However, to still further satisfy himself, the mandarin engaged Koong-see to a wealthy friend of his, Ta-jin, a noble of very high degree, and in every way the equal of the girl except in age, he being probably about sixty years old. The wedding was decided upon without any consultation whatever with Koong-see, and it was to take place at the "fortunate age of the moon, when the peach tree should blossom, in the spring." The willow tree was then already in blossom, but the peach tree had scarcely begun to bud.

Poor Koong-see shuddered at her doom, and trembled as she watched the buds of the peach tree as they slowly blossomed forth. But one day she was cheered by a happy omen; a bird came and built its nest in the corner above her window. One afternoon, as she sat watching the little architect carrying bits of straws and feathers to its future home, her attention was attracted

to a cocoanut shell which floated gently at her feet, and which was fitted up with a miniature sail. She picked it up and in it found a small pearl she had once given her



lover, and a piece of rice paper on which was written in the handwriting of Chang, these verses:

The nest yon winged artists build
Some robber-bird shall tear away;
So yields her hopes the affianced bride,
The wealthy lord's reluctant prey.

The fluttering bird prepares a home
In which the spoiler soon shall dwell;
Forth goes the weeping bride, constrained;
A hundred cars the triumph swell.

Mourn for the tiny architect;
A stronger bird has ta'en its nest.
Mourn for the hopeless, stolen bride;
How vain the hopes to soothe her breast.

On the other side of the paper was written these words: "As this boat sails to you, so all my thoughts tend to the same centre; but when the willow blossoms drop from the bough, and the peach tree unfolds its buds, your faithful Chang will sink with the lotus blooms beneath the deep waters. There will he see the circles on the smooth river when the willow blossoms fall upon it from the bough—broken away, like his love, from the parent stem."

Then as a sort of postscript was added: "Cast thy thoughts upon the waters as I have done, and I shall hear thy words."

When Koong-see finished reading, she burst into tears. "He has not forgotton me," she cried, "he still loves me." Then she hid the little boat and the message in the folds of her loose flowing dress.

Koong-see well understood what her lover meant, and trembled as she thought of his threat of self-destruction. Then she took out her little ivory tablets, and with her embroidery needle wrote: "Do not wise husbandmen gather the fruit they fear will be stolen? The sunshine lengthens, and the vineyard is threatened by the hands of strangers. The fruit you most prize will be gathered when the willow blossoms droop and fall to the earth."

Much doubting, she placed this message in the miniature cocoanut-shell boat, and, after the manner of her countrywomen, put therein a piece of frankincense and launched the shell upon the water and watched it as the current of the stream gently drew it away, and she could no longer see it in the distance.

Days and weeks passed on, but no answering message appeared; all intercourse between the lovers seemed at an end, and poor Koong-see became more and more disheartened and discouraged. The blossoms on the willow tree were nearly ready to wither and drop, and additional alarm was aroused in her heart by a visit from her father, who seemed to be in the best of spirits. In his arms he bore a huge box, filled with the rarest of jewels—a present from old Ta-jin.

The mandarin then said that the happy suitor was coming that day to enter into the preliminaries of marriage, such as taking wine and food at the house of the bride's father. Like a bird in a snare, poor Koong-see felt that the toils were being drawn closer and closer, and her heart gave way in despair as she looked about her and saw no way of escape.

Ta-jin came, his servants preceding him, beating gongs and shouting his achievements in war. The number of his titles was very extensive, and the lanterns on which they were all inscribed were magnificent. Owing to his high rank, he was borne on an elaborate sedan with eight bearers, thus showing his position to be that of a viceroy.

While all this revelry, drinking, and feasting was going on, a poor stranger presented himself at the door of the banquet-hall and asked for alms. No attention was paid him, however, and finally becoming apparently weary of begging, he took from the porch an outer garment that had been carelessly left there, and throwing it about his shoulders he quietly drew a screen across the banquet-hall doorway, and passing behind it he slipped into Koong-see's apartments. In another moment he had made himself known—it was Chang, and the meeting of the lovers was touching in the extreme. Quickly then did Chang beseech his sweetheart to fly with him. "For," said he, "the willow blossoms already droop upon the bough, and the wise husbandman has come to gather in his fruit."

Koong-see was delighted at the sudden turn of affairs, and at once consented to her lover's wishes. She gave to him the box of jewels Ta-jin had presented to her that day, and, watching a favourable opportunity, the lovers stole from the house. They had reached the bridge at the foot of the willow tree, shown in the picture, when the mandarin became aware of his daughter's flight, as he happened to catch a glimpse of her through the door, and, raising a fearful cry, he himself rushed in pursuit of the fleeing couple.

This part of the story is represented by the three figures on the bridge. The first is Koong-see, following her is Chang, and in the rear is the old mandarin. As the Chinese artist knows nothing of perspective, he could not place the enraged father in any other position than in the peculiar proximity in which he is represented. The sketch simply illustrates the flight and pursuit, and is sufficiently graphic for that purpose.

The old mandarin, intoxicated as he had become during the feast, had some difficulty in keeping up the

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chase, and Chang and Koong-see eluded him without great effort. The few servants who were sober enough to have successfully pursued the couple were detained to wait upon Ta-jin, he having worked himself into a monstrous rage when he learnt what had occurred, and so great was his fury that he frothed and foamed at the mouth—and it was thought that he had fallen into a fit, and thus the lovers made good their escape.

Every plan possible was adopted during the following days to discover where the undutiful daughter and her lover had fled; but when the servants returned night after night and brought no intelligence which afforded any hope of finding them, the mandarin gave himself up to despair and became a prey to low spirits and ill-humour.

Ta-jin, however, continued active and persevering, and employed spies in every village for miles round; he made a solemn vow of vengeance against Chang, and congratulated himself that by his power as a magistrate of the district he could exercise his authority, and when Chang should be discovered he would instantly suffer an awful death. Koong-see, too, should die, he said, unless she fulfilled the wishes of her father—not for his own satisfaction, but for the sake of public justice.

Meantime, the lovers were in hiding at no great distance from the mandarin's home, having sought refuge in the humble cottage of the mandarin's gardener, which is shown in the picture on the opposite side, and to the left of the bridge. Here also Koong-see found her former maid, who, it seems, was the wife of the gardener. Through these faithful people the lovers learnt of the steps taken by their pursuers, and thus they were successful in eluding them for a long time.

At last the mandarin issued a proclamation, stating that he would forgive Chang and his daughter on condition that they would return to his home, whereupon the innocent gardener evinced such joy at his master's relenting that he brought suspicion on himself, and his house was ordered to be watched. But far more knowing was Chang than the gardener, and he knew full well that the proclamation which the mandarin had issued was only a ruse, and he quickly decided to escape from the gardener's home with Koong-see at the first opportunity. A week passed by and still the lovers remained in hiding in the cottage of the gardener.

One evening at the end of the week, however, a soldier knocked at the door and was admitted by the gardener's wife. He entered and read the proclamation of the mandarin, and then pointed out the many advantages to be gained by all the parties concerned who should assist in restoring to the arms of the mandarin his daughter, and how she could then become the wife of Chang. The attachment of the gardener's wife for her former mistress was enough to enable her to keep her presence of mind, and after appearing exceedingly curious as to what reward she would obtain if she were successful in discovering the missing couple, she led the soldier to believe that she thought they were in hiding at a place not far distant, and if he would first obtain a distinct promise of reward in the handwriting of the mandarin, she would do all in her power to lead them to Chang and Koong-see. To this the soldier agreed, but he declared that he must leave a guard round the house. Of course, the poor woman dared not object to this, but she remonstrated loudly and severely concerning the impropriety of a lot of rough soldiers being left without the restraint of a commander, and thus she afforded the trembling lovers an opportunity to overhear what was passing, and of the dangerous position they were all in.

As soon as the soldier had taken his leave a brief conference was held between the lovers and their protectors. Only a few minutes, an hour at the most, was all they could call their own. In front of the house was the suspicious guard, ordered to allow no one to enter or leave the place, and in the rear was the broad river and no boat at hand. Something must be done, as Chang well knew that to remain where they were would mean separation, and for himself a terrible death. He saw plainly through the mandarin's scheme of issuing the proclamation, whereby he pretended to forgive the eloping lovers, as simply a bait to tempt them to return. Their only hope was in escape. But how? The river was the one chance.

"It is the only means of escape left us," said Chang, "and I must swim across the river and secure a boat on the opposite side."

"You will be seen and murdered in the water. No, no; do not attempt it," pleaded poor Koong-see.

"It is our only chance," cried Chang, as he slipped off his "poqua," or loose outer garment, which is worn by the higher classes, or those seeking literary honours.

Koong-see clung to her lover, but his resolution was firm, and bidding her to be of good cheer, since he would return soon, he sprang from the window into the stream below. Long before her lover had reached the other side of the river Koong-see fainted. Her faithful maid laid her on a couch, and after reviving her they both stationed themselves at the window and anxiously watched for Chang's return. While they watched a sudden knock was heard on the outer door. The gardener's wife could scarcely bring herself to leave

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Koong-see, but no other course was left her; she must leave her mistress alone.

Going from the room she securely closed the door behind her and drew a screen across to conceal it. When she opened the outer door she found the soldier had returned, bearing with him a document from the mandarin in which was offered large sums of money for the discovery of Chang and Koong-see, and another promise that no harm should come to them if they would return. The gardener's wife made a pretence that she could not read the writing, and giving the soldier some spirits made of rice, she further managed to divert his attention until he finally became impatient, and roughly demanded that if she knew anything of the whereabouts of the couple she should give the information at once or else suffer punishment. Thus almost an hour had been whiled away when the soldier was called out by one of the guardsmen, who told him that the mandarin had sent a messenger inquiring why Chang and his daughter had not yet been brought before him, and requiring an immediate answer from the commanding officer in person.

This gave the gardener's wife time to see what had happened in the inner room. As she entered it cautiously she saw at once that Koong-see was no longer there, and going over to the window she was just in time to see a boat rapidly drifting away in the darkness and carrying as its passengers the two lovers. Then she closed the window and awaited the return of the officer.

He came soon enough, stimulated by a severe reproof from both the mandarin and Ta-jin for his delay, and at once commanded his men to search the house. But too late; the lovers had fled and were by that time far away down the river. Then the soldiers began to suspect that the gardener's wife had played them a trick, but she looked quite innocent, and persuaded the officer that she had been imposed upon and was sorry she had given him so much trouble.

The boat as seen in the picture, floated down the river all that night, requiring no extra exertion from Chang, who sat at the prow watching over Koong-see. When morning came the boat entered the main river, the Yanktse-kiang, and their passage became more dangerous. Before the sun was well up they had joined other boats, navigated by people who lived entirely upon the river. To one of these boatmen Chang sold a jewel, which he took from the box that had been presented to Koong-see by the viceroy, and with the coin bought from another some food.

Thus the lovers floated on for several days until they reached a little island, where they decided to settle down for the remainder of their days. The jewels were all sold in neighbouring towns in such a manner as not to excite suspicion, and with the money thus procured Chang was enabled to purchase the island, and secure all such necessities as were needed for its cultivation and their future success. Here Chang and Koong-see were married, and by applying themselves to hard labour they soon had the land under prosperous cultivation.

On referring to the picture again, the reader will find the island significantly recorded in the upper left-hand corner by the simple artist. The ground is broken up into lumps, indicating recent cultivation, and the trees are small in size, signifying their youth. The home can be seen, and also the diligence of Chang is evinced by the manner in which every scrap of land is reclaimed from the water, and to further illustrate this, narrow reefs of land jut out into the river. Chang, after achieving a competence by his cultivation of the land, returned to his literary pursuits, and wrote a book on agriculture, which brought him both fame and fortune.

But with the fortune which the book brought him it also revealed his hiding-place to his greatest enemy, the viceroy, whose passion for revenge was unabated.

Having waited upon the military mandarins of the river, and having sworn, by beheading a live rooster, that Chang was the person who stole his jewels and fled with his affianced bride, Ta-jin secured an escort of soldiers and attacked the island, first giving instructions to seize Koong-see and kill Chang without mercy.

When the onslaught was finally made, the few inhabitants of the island were wholly unprepared for it, and Chang was run through the body with a sword and instantly killed, although he and his men fought bravely against the overwhelming numbers. Koong-see, on witnessing her husband's death, rushed to their home, which she set on fire, perishing in the flames.

The gods—so the legend runs—cursed the wicked Ta-jin for his cruelty with a terrible disease, and he died unpitied and alone.

As for Chang and Koong-see, they were transformed into two immortal doves, emblems of constancy, which had rendered them faithful in life, and in death undivided.

And that is the legend of the Flowery Kingdom—the tale of the willow-ware china.

MAX STEINLE.

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A HAUNTED RAILWAY CARRIAGE.

"YES," said Wingrave thoughtfully, as he removed his pipe from his mouth, "there *are* some queer ghost stories going about, I admit."

"Of course there are," said the Artist, "most unaccountable stories too, except upon the hypothesis that there are ghosts also. Why, once when I was staying at Penzance——"

"Oh, be quiet," growled the Doctor, "we've all heard that story before, and you needn't go on to tell us that you're a member of the Psychical Research Society. We've heard *that* about fifty times. For my part I don't believe in ghosts. Do *you*, Wingrave?"

"I don't know. Never made up my mind on the subject."

We were sitting round the fire, a party of four, in the Doctor's sanctum, and the conversation had turned upon the subject of ghosts. The Artist, we all knew, believed in them thoroughly, but the Doctor was a sceptic, and so, for the matter of that, was I too. We had been trying to "draw" Wingrave on the subject, but as yet had not succeeded in getting an opinion out of him. The Artist had related an awful and blood-curdling yarn about a headless spectre, which the Doctor had pooh-poohed, while I had been narrating the somewhat strange experiences of a friend of mine in a reputed haunted house, drawing, perhaps, a little on my imagination for the "facts." But all this, apparently, had no effect on Wingrave. Presently, however, he said:

"I always think myself that one of the strangest things is that so-called haunted carriage on the Brighton line."

"What haunted carriage?" we all asked.

"Why, don't you know? Haven't you ever travelled by the last train from Brighton to London, leaving Brighton at 10.35?"

The Doctor said he had once, but he didn't remember anything peculiar about it.

"Did you try to get in the second-class compartment nearest the engine?" asked Wingrave.

"No, I was travelling third. But why do you ask?"

"Well, you *couldn't* have got in if you'd tried!"

"Why couldn't he?" said the Artist.

"Because it's always kept locked as far as Hassocks. It's a well-known fact on the line: any official at Brighton will tell you so."

"But *why* is it kept locked?" I asked.

"Do you mean to say you *really* don't know?" asked Wingrave in reply.

"No," we replied, "let's have the story."

"Oh, I thought everyone knew it. But here it is. The thing itself happened in '89 or '90, I forget which now. There was an old gentleman named Buxton who had a jeweller's shop in the King's Parade, Brighton, and another somewhere in the Strand. These shops were managed by his two sons, one of whom lived on the premises of each, while he himself had a house at Norwood. He was in the habit of travelling between London and Brighton with a second-class season ticket, and on Thursday nights invariably carried a large stock of valuable stones and other jewellery in his bag from the Brighton shop. He always left by the last train, got out at Norwood, and took his bag on to London the next morning.

"Well, a couple of blackguards got wind of his movements, and determined to rob him. Their plan was this. One of them hired a trap and waited near Hassocks station, while the other was to get in with Buxton at Preston Park, *if* he were alone, and chloroform and rob him between that station and Hassocks, then jump out when the train stopped and make for the trap. Twice an attempt was made, but each time Buxton was not alone. The third time, however, there was no obstacle."

"And was he robbed?" we asked.

"Worse than that," replied Wingrave. "When he was attacked by the other he made a most desperate resistance, and the end of it was that there was a knife drawn, and poor Buxton was stabbed in the heart—the affair happened in the Hassocks tunnel. Well, the murderer propped him up in the corner of the carriage, got out at Hassocks, found his friend waiting with the trap close by, and the two of them drove off furiously,

while the body went on to London Bridge before they discovered that the old man was dead."

"And is that *all?*" said the Doctor.

"Oh, dear no. Don't you know the sequel? But there, I forgot you were all three so densely ignorant about such a well-known thing. Why, the murderer himself was killed within twenty minutes of the death of his victim."

"How?"

"The horse shied at a sign post or something and upset the trap. The murderer was thrown out and broke his neck instantly, while his confederate was badly hurt. It was through the latter that the whole affair became known."

"What a ghostly story," said the Artist as Wingrave slowly filled and lit his pipe. "But what about the locking of that carriage door? What has that to do with it?"

"Ah, that's the sequel. And a very curious thing it is," he replied. "Ever since the affair happened there's been a difficulty about the second-class compartment nearest the engine on that train, until for some time past now, no one is permitted to enter it until the train gets to Hassocks."

"But what *is* the difficulty?" asked the Doctor.

"Why, people who travelled in it used to complain of all sorts of things which happened between Preston Park and Hassocks. Several times ladies travelling alone were found in a dead faint and afterwards declared that they had seen two men scuffling in the carriage. Sometimes a hideous shriek would be heard, and once or twice the train was stopped by some frightened passenger pulling the electric alarm. So at last it was determined to keep the door locked, as I've said before."

"But surely," I said, "they don't run the very same carriage in which the fellow was murdered every night and in the same position, do they?"

"No, and that's just the curious part of it. It doesn't matter *what* carriages they put on, or how they arrange them. The second-class compartment *nearest the engine* always gives them trouble unless they lock it."

"Well, and is *that* all?" said the Doctor with a tinge of scepticism in his tone of voice.

"No, there's something more. Every night just after the train gets to Hassocks Station a horse and trap are distinctly heard galloping along the road."

"Gammon!" said the Doctor.

"They *are*, I tell you. Why, every farmer in the place knows about it, and if one of them happens to be driving on the road near the station when that train comes in, he'll jump down at once and hold his horse's head."

"Why?"

"Why? Because haven't I *told* you a horse and trap are heard directly afterwards? And horses that this sound passes have been known to bolt from fright."

"I should like to have this story corroborated," said the Artist.

"So you can; it's easy enough. Anyone at Hassocks Station will tell you. Why don't you write to the station master? He'll be able to give you fuller details than I can."

"Look here," ejaculated the Doctor. "Do you mean to say you believe all this?"

"My dear fellow," replied Wingrave, "I've just told you the facts of the case as I heard them. I don't pretend to offer an explanation. I only told you of a most remarkable circumstance, and, as I said a moment ago, you can easily get the story corroborated if you want to."

* * * * *

That story interested me so much that I thought about it all the next day, and finally determined to try and get some further information. So I wrote and sent a letter directed to—

The Station Master,
Hassocks Station,
Hassocks,

detailing what I knew of the case, and asking him to supply me with further particulars.

The "further particulars" arrived by return of post, and were as follows:

Hassocks Station, December 9th, 1896.

DEAR SIR,—In answer to your letter I beg to state that I know nothing whatever about the matter you mention. No carriage arrives here locked from Brighton, and no sounds as of a horse and trap are heard. Neither was there, to my knowledge, any such murder committed. I might mention that I have to-day received two other letters asking for information on the same subject.—Yours faithfully, J. CLARKE,
Station Master.

"Sold!" I ejaculated, as I put on my hat and started for the Doctor's. On my way I met the Artist.

"Have you had a letter from the station master at Hassocks?" I asked.

"What! Have *you* been made a fool of too?" he growled.

"Just so. But come on. I'm going to see the Doctor."

We found him at home, and as we entered the room he tried to hide an official-looking letter laying on the table.

"All right!" we cried, "you needn't put that out of sight. We've both got one like it. Quite a job for the station——"

"Oh, shut up, do! So *you're* both sold as well. That's one consolation."

And now we keep studiously off the subject of ghosts when that arch-inventor, Wingrave, appears, while if he dares to mention a railway carriage, or the station master at Hassocks, or anything approaching the subject of that terrible "sell" of his, we take up the nearest thing to throw at him, and he has to fly for his life!

VICTOR LORENZO WHITECHURCH.

A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.

£10 in Prizes.

ON page 156 four sketches are given in their proper order. £5 is offered to the reader who sends us the most appropriate wording to go under each sketch, the whole to form a story descriptive of the illustrations, and £1 will be given to each of the senders of the next best five attempts. These competitions will alternate with the Jumbled Story competitions, at all events for a time.

It is not necessary for competitors to have any literary ability. If you have a good idea, surely there should be no difficulty in putting it down in words. The whole of the story is limited to one hundred words, which may be distributed under the sketches according to the judgment of the competitor.

All that you have to do is to write in the order of the sketches the wording that you think most appropriate, inclose your attempt in an envelope (which should be marked "Picture Story"), and forward it to this office before Monday, February 8th.

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THE QUEEN AGAINST OWEN.

By **ALLEN UPWARD**, *Author of "Secrets of the Courts of Europe," "The Prince of Balkistan," etc., etc.*

CHAPTER IX.

THE JUDGE.

WHEN evidence is called on behalf of the prisoner, counsel for the prosecution enjoys the right of reply. This right young Pollard rose to exercise, and, as is often the case with beginners at the Bar, he did much better as a speaker than he had done as an examiner.

As soon as he was fairly on his feet, his leader came into court and took his seat. The other case in which he had been engaged had come to an end shortly before this, but Prescott had purposely lingered outside, so as to avoid the duty of replying, which would have been assigned to him had he returned in time. As he had heard nothing of the case, nor of Tressamer's defence, the course he adopted was the best even for the interests of the prosecution—in fact, it was the course usually followed under parallel circumstances.

The first part of Pollard's reply was simply a recapitulation of the evidence. Afterwards he made an attempt to answer the attack on Lewis.

"Gentlemen," he said, "my learned friend has practically charged Mr. Lewis with this murder. On what grounds has he done so? What evidence has he brought against Mr. Lewis? Mr. Lewis is the heir of the deceased, it is true, but then he is her nephew. When he came back from Australia, he went at once to see her. He has told you, in answer to my questions, that this was out of gratitude to her for her kindness to him when he was a young man. There is nothing suspicious, therefore, in his going to her before his sister, who lived in the North of England, moreover, probably a long way off.

"Then my learned friend has laid stress on the fact that this crime occurred the night of his arrival. But I submit, gentlemen, that it would have been more natural if he had abstained from it the first night, and done it some time after, if he did it at all. I might suggest to you that the prisoner did it the night Mr. Lewis arrived on purpose to throw suspicion on him."

And so on. Finally he closed in a form of words which even the most inexperienced prosecutor has by heart.

"In conclusion, gentlemen, I ask you to banish from your minds every trace of prejudice, and to forget everything which you have read elsewhere about this case, and to determine it solely on what has passed here to-day. If the evidence you have heard leaves a fair and reasonable doubt in your minds as to the prisoner's guilt, no doubt you will acquit her; but if that evidence is so strong and convincing that you are morally satisfied that the deceased woman met her death at the prisoner's hands, then it is your duty to return a verdict of guilty."

With this he sat down, and his brother leant over and congratulated him, while the other solicitors began to consider whether there might not be something in the young man after all.

And now it was Sir Daniel Buller's turn, and all eyes were directed upon him as he settled himself in his chair, with his face towards the jury, who strove to catch his lordship's eye, and conveyed as much appreciation as possible into their faces.

"Gentlemen of the jury, it now becomes my duty to recall your attention to the facts of this case, and to give you what assistance I can towards finding your verdict. You have been told by counsel on both sides that this is a grave and important case. Gentlemen, every case which comes before a criminal court is grave and important. In this case, it is true, the life of a fellow-creature is at stake; but that consideration ought not to affect you one way or the other in bringing to bear upon the evidence before you that impartiality and cautious discrimination which it is the duty of a jury to apply indifferently to every matter that may come before them."

A slight sensation of relief in the jury-box. Among the audience an impression that his lordship is going against the prisoner.

"The duties of a jury in a case like this are exceedingly simple, but perhaps it may be advisable that I should briefly remind you in what they consist. And, first of all, it is, I am sure, unnecessary for me to insist on the absolute necessity of your resolutely putting out of your minds every particle of knowledge, and every impression of whatever kind, which you may have collected in regard to this case from sources external to the inquiry conducted here to-day. It is, I feel, equally superfluous for me to caution you against attaching the smallest weight to any evidence which I was compelled in the course of this case to exclude. The law of evidence is the accumulated experience of the ablest intellects that have adorned the Bench of which I am so unworthy an occupant." (Strong impulse on part of jury to murmur "No," manfully suppressed.) "And, in applying it, I can only say that I have never personally laboured under any hesitation as to its general soundness, though I may occasionally doubt as to its applicability to particular instances.

"You will remember that allusion was made by the prosecution in their opening to the supposed existence of certain valuables, the property of the deceased. It is my duty to tell you, speaking as judge in this case, with all the evidence before me, that there is not sufficient evidence that any such valuables were in the deceased's possession at the time when she came to her unhappy end, and that in any case there is not a particle of evidence that the prisoner had ever heard, or was even remotely aware, of the existence of the articles in question.

"Whether they were there or no is, of course, immaterial to the case. The jeweller, whose name, I believe, was John —Thomas—no——"

"William Williams, my lord," called out Pollard.

"Ah, thank you, Mr. Pollard! But it is of no consequence, because, as I am explaining to you, gentlemen, his evidence really ought not to affect your minds one way or the other. Even if deceased bought these things, there is no evidence that she kept them by her. She may have disposed of them in some manner of which we know nothing. The fact that they have been missing since her decease affords in itself some ground for supposing that she did so part with the control over this property. But, as I must repeat, what became of it is perfectly immaterial, because there is absolutely nothing in the whole of the evidence before us, and by which we must be guided, to fix the prisoner with knowledge that these valuables existed at all.

"You will observe, gentlemen, how important this becomes when we come to consider the question of motive. I agree with Mr. Tressamer, about whose general line of defence I shall have something to say presently"—(Tressamer frowned; the rest of the Bar looked nervous)—"in saying that the apparent absence of motive is the most inexplicable feature in the case for the prosecution. You will, of course, have fresh in your minds the evidence of the servant on this point." (The jury found it quite

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hopeless to even pretend that they had anything of the sort.) "I refer to her statement, which I will read to you presently"—(visible depression in the jury-box and throughout the court)—"that deceased promised the prisoner on one occasion to leave her a legacy, or something of the sort. Gentlemen, that is peculiarly and emphatically a matter for you to deal with, and on which it would be out of place for me to offer you any guidance whatever." (Dismay among several jurymen; stolid pride among others.) "If you believe that evidence—and I confess I am wholly unable to follow the prisoner's counsel in some of his comments upon the general demeanour of the witnesses, most of whom appeared to me to give their evidence with every appearance of impartiality, and in a manner which showed that they realised their responsibility—but all that, again, is rather a matter for you than for me—if, I say, you believe that evidence as to the legacy, you must consider for yourselves what weight you ought fairly to attach to it, and how far in your opinion it furnishes a motive adequate to inspire the very heinous crime into which we are now inquiring."

The jury by this time were fairly at sea. They could not for the life of them make out which side his lordship was taking, and, of course, it never once occurred to them that he was trying to avoid taking any side at all.

"And now, gentlemen, to consider the evidence against the prisoner more in detail." (Suppressed sighs from the gentlemen.) "This is one of those cases which depend entirely on what is commonly known as circumstantial evidence. Well, gentlemen, the evidence of circumstances is just as good as any other evidence, and very often it is far more reliable and far less subject to be vitiated by improper influences than ocular and oral testimony. In cases of this kind it is seldom that we can get anything but circumstantial evidence. When a man is going to do a wicked and criminal act he does not call witnesses around him. No, he avoids all human sight, he perpetrates his deed in secrecy, and all that we can do is to seek to penetrate the mystery by such means as are at our disposal."

Impression confirmed that judge is against the prisoner. Tressamer looking slightly anxious.

"The question for us, therefore, or rather for you, gentlemen" (the jury look important), "is not whether the evidence is circumstantial or not, but whether it is sufficient to convict the prisoner. Sufficient, that is, in your opinion, as men of intelligence and firmness, bringing to bear on this case the same qualities of mind which you bring to bear from day to day upon your ordinary avocations, whatever those may be. That the evidence is sufficient in law I am reluctantly compelled to decide. Whether the court which deals with points of this description will confirm my judgment or overrule it I cannot say. In the meantime, you must take it from me that you are legally justified in convicting the prisoner. Whether you are really justified on the facts is, of course, a very different question."

Impression among many that judge is going for acquittal. Jury still in doubt.

"This is one of those cases which make a judge congratulate himself on the existence of trial by jury. It is one of those peculiarly difficult cases in which the mind is perplexed between its desire to mete out punishment for a singularly atrocious crime, and its inability to disentangle the knotted skein of mystery which shrouds the whole circumstances of the affair. I rejoice unaffectedly that the responsibility of discharging this delicate and dangerous task is thrown, not upon my shoulders, but upon yours."

Undisguised dismay of jury. They cast appealing looks round the court and meet nothing but contempt. The general feeling is now that the judge is in the prisoner's favour. By this time the majority of those present share the same view.

Then Sir Daniel proceeded to go into the evidence at great length, reading passages here and there from his notes. When he came to the evidence of the servant Rees, he threw out a suggestion which struck doubt into many a mind which had till then believed in the prisoner's innocence.

"A very great deal in this case undoubtedly turns on this evidence as to footsteps. You may, I think, take it as admitted on all hands, by the prisoner's counsel as well as by the prosecution, that the witness is correct in saying that she heard the prisoner leave the house. That she recognised her walk correctly that time there can be no manner of doubt. Then we come to the second time, when she heard footsteps ascending the stairs. And I may pause here to remark that I think a quite exaggerated importance has been attached to the discrepancy between the witness's ideas of time and the correct idea. Gentlemen, we should all of us fail if we strove to indicate with accuracy the length of a given interval of time. We use the expressions 'five minutes' and 'ten minutes' in ordinary conversation, without attaching any very definite meaning to them, and, therefore, I cannot see that the witness is in any way discredited if she mistook a period of three minutes for one of ten, or *vice versâ*."

The jury nodded approval. Now they were on firm ground.

"But it is her answer to Mr. Pollard, when he asked her as to the second set of footsteps, that I wish to draw your attention to. She said, as I took it, 'I did not notice them,'—that is, the footsteps—'but I think they must have been Miss Owen's, or else I should have noticed the difference.' Now, I think you will see the importance of that." (The jury try to see it, and, failing in that, try to look as if they saw it, and fail a second time.) "Remember, the state of things is this: the witness is wide awake; she has just been down to the front door and up again, and ten minutes after, or three minutes only according to Mr. Tressamer, she hears someone come in and walk upstairs. Now, gentlemen, under those circumstances one would naturally expect the witness to be on the alert to distinguish any difference, if difference there were, between the footsteps. And if the person entering the second time were not the prisoner, to whose tread she was accustomed, and which she was expecting to hear, but if it were someone else—a man, let us say, with an entirely different tread, and a tread to which she was wholly unaccustomed—I say one would naturally expect the witness to note the difference instantly, to wonder who it was that had entered, to feel alarm when she heard the unknown stranger proceeding upstairs and into the bedroom; and, in short, one would expect her to get up and rouse the whole household to discover the robber, as she would naturally assume him to be."

The jury were much impressed. A feeling of gravity spread all over the court. In the prisoner's mind there was a sensation as if the sun had retired behind a cloud, leaving a leaden atmosphere all round her.

"Leaving you to attach much or little importance, as you please, to that observation" (jury puzzled again), "I will pass on to the point about which so much has been said—namely, the latch." (Jury bend forward with straining ears. They have felt this to be the difficulty all along, and are anxiously desiring to be told what it all means, and what bearing it has on the case.) "This latch, or rather lock, appears to have been of peculiar, though not unusual, construction. As you doubtless know, gentlemen, locks do differ very much from one another, and it is essential to their usefulness that they should do so. If all the locks on our doors were of the same pattern, one key would open them all, and consequently the locks would be rendered useless for the purpose for which they were designed. In ancient times, before such articles had come into common use, it was no doubt the custom to have a rude species of door-fastening, calculated rather to keep the door fixed in its place as against the violence of the weather, than to furnish any obstacle against the ingress of undesired visitors. But, gentlemen, we are not living in those times, but in our own; and we are here to administer justice, not

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with regard to the ideas prevalent among our remote ancestors, but with regard to the ordinary and reasonable practices of everyday life around us."

This last part appeals to the jury. They nod their heads in approval, and wait for further enlightenment.

"Law, gentlemen, it has often been said, is common-sense; and though there may be a sense in which that maxim is not strictly verifiable, yet in a broad and general way its applicability has never been and cannot be disputed. And, therefore, gentlemen, your common-sense will agree with me when I say that it is a lawful presumption—a presumption which the law warrants you in drawing and in holding till you have some satisfactory evidence to rebut it—that the person who obtains access to a house or any other building secured by a lock of this description must have in his or her possession a key which is capable of opening that lock."

Continued approval of the jury. They find his lordship a little tedious perhaps, but sound. At last there seems a fair prospect of light being thrown upon the case.

"Now, that there were in existence keys which fitted this particular lock cannot, I think, be seriously doubted by anyone who has listened carefully to the evidence which has been put forward both by the prosecution and by the defence in this case." (Gratification of jury. How simple it all seems when a master-mind is at work upon the apparent mystery!) "The only question left for you to decide, so far as I can discover, and if I am wrong it is not for want of careful consideration, is this: whether, on that night into which we are inquiring, the prisoner had or had not a latchkey, and, if so, whether she used it, and in either case, whether any other person had a similar key, which he also employed in opening the door of this house." (Jury getting slightly fogged again. But they no longer sorrow as one who hath no hope. They rely on his lordship to pull them through.)

"It is perhaps a circumstance worth noting, though the explanation may be very simple, that neither side has produced a latchkey purporting to be one of those belonging to the latch in question." (The explanation *was* simple. Neither side had thought of it.) "But in the absence of any ocular demonstration one way or the other, we are, I think, justified in assuming that the keys in question were small, portable articles, such as could conveniently be carried in the pocket. In saying this I merely appeal to your own experience as men of business and householders, who are most of you probably in the constant habit of carrying articles of this kind yourselves." (Jury in smooth water again. How could they ever have thought this matter presented difficulties?) "There, gentlemen, I must leave you. I can throw no further light upon the hidden circumstances of that night, and must leave you to decide for yourselves on a calm and deliberate review of the evidence whether, in your opinion, such a key as I have indicated was, or was not, in the possession of the prisoner at the bar, or of any other individual whose name has or has not transpired in the course of this trial, and if so, whether the prisoner, or that other person, or both of them, did or did not obtain access to the house by means of that nature."

Collapse of jury. Dashed in a moment from their height of fancied security, they lay helpless at the bottom of the abyss.

The summing-up was nearly over. Tressamer had begun to hope the judge had forgotten him. But Sir Daniel had reserved his melodramatic effects to the last, as all orators know they ought to do.

"And now a few words as to the unusual, I may say, I hope, the extraordinary, though unhappily not quite unprecedented, line of defence which has been adopted in this case. The prisoner's counsel has not contented himself with merely defending the prisoner, he has gone far beyond that, far beyond the necessities, so far as they present themselves to my mind, of his position, and has distinctly and deliberately brought an accusation against one who is not on trial before you, and has, therefore, no means of rebutting the attack. For such a course there is, in my opinion, not a shadow of excuse. I have listened with great patience to the evidence in this case from the beginning to the end, and I have not detected anywhere anything that casts one particle of suspicion upon Mr. Lewis.

"He was attacked for having come so promptly to visit his relative on his return. But his explanation was straightforward, and such as to commend itself to everyone who heard him. I shall not trouble you with any defence of Mr. Lewis, however"—(gratitude of the whole court)—"but I must condemn in the gravest and strongest manner the way in which Mr. Tressamer has abused his privilege as an advocate to spring a charge of this deadly character upon one who is, so far as we can see, a perfectly innocent man. If this sort of thing is to be indulged in, the honour of the Bar—that noble profession to which it is my glory to have belonged—will be dragged in the dust and its formidable immunities will have to be sharply and summarily curtailed. It has been well said that no assassin is so terrible to the community as the assassin of reputations, and in my opinion the man who is capable of taking advantage of a technical immunity from punishment to lie in wait for and destroy in cold blood the whole character and career of another, reveals a blackness of disposition which fits him for the commission of any crime, aye, though it were as heinous as that of which he has accused his victim."

It was a crushing rebuke. The crowded Bar turned and looked at their comrade as though they expected him to sink through the floor. But he sat pale and rigid, tearing off the feather of a quill with his teeth, but showing no other sign that he had heard the Judge.

"It is the prisoner who must suffer most by such a line of defence." (Here Eleanor looked up suddenly, as if she had only just begun to pay attention to what was going on.) "Its natural effect on your minds must be to induce you to ask yourselves not the real question before you, namely, is Eleanor Owen guilty or not? but this other question: which is guilty, Eleanor Owen or John Lewis? And to that you could, as conscientious men, give only one answer.

"But that is what I want, if possible, to avoid. My principal reason for making the remarks I have made about Mr. Tressamer's speech is that I do not want you to confuse the issues, as he has confused them, but to return your verdict freely and impartially, having regard solely to the bearing of the evidence which has been given upon the guilt or innocence of the prisoner."

Here his lordship abruptly came to an end, just when the long-suffering jury were expecting that he was at last going to give them a hint as to his own leaning in the case.

It was now the part of the clerk of arraigns to rise and request the jury to consider their verdict. But that functionary had taken advantage of the charge to fall into a light and pleasant slumber, from which it became necessary to rouse him. One of the Bar, therefore, put out his hand and pulled the clerk of arraigns by the sleeve. He started awake, and, hastily stumbling to his feet, looked wildly round for information.

The day before this incident would have provoked mirth. To-day it caused nothing but impatient annoyance, except to a few junior barristers, who thought it professional to show callous indifference to what was going on. At last, however, the clerk of arraigns was made to realise what stage had been reached, and he called the bailiff of the court and gave the jury over to his charge, with the following form of words:

"You shall take this jury to some convenient place, where you shall lock them up without meat, fire, or light; you shall suffer no man to speak to them, neither shall you speak to them yourself, except to ask them if they have agreed upon their verdict; so help you God."

The oath was taken, and the twelve men filed slowly out.

(To be continued.)

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WHAT COMES OUT OF THE GRASS.

AN extraordinary man was Joshua Key—ugly, deformed and morose; long, lank, and bony; narrow in his shoulders, and hollow in the chest. His arms were long and skinny, and his head, clad by a thin, strange-coloured hair, was pear-shaped, narrow at the jaw, and massive at the forehead. His brows were hairless, and his pointed chin and sunken cheeks bore not a trace of beard. Two little dark eyes, restless and dilating, flashed beneath his hairless brows. His arms were strangely long, and reached, as they fell to his side, the bony knee of his short leg. Yet, despite his deformities, he was graceful in all his movements, which were slow and indolent.

The life and soul of the man lived in his eyes; they never ceased flashing. Roving or fixed they flashed the light of anger.

The manner of this man was strange, and his surroundings weird, uncanny. He spent the main part of his days up in the low, dark loft, which, by a long window, overlooked the marsh and swampy moorland that stretched some miles away from the rising ground upon which the dilapidated house stood.

This loft, with its thickly-sanded floor, with the withered bush and bramble that stood heaped in every corner, with its common deal table under the window, and its low milking stool, was Joshua Key's retreat, Joshua Key's monastery; and the graceful, coiling creatures that entwined themselves round the stems and boughs of the bramble, or lay coiled up in the corners of the long glass cases arranged round the room, were his idols. He loved those creeping, curling, wriggling, rearing snakes. He loved them, as we love at twenty, with a silent, pitiful, melancholy adoration, when a glance of recognition quickens the pulse, and brings the hot blood tingling to our ears.

He was pleased to lie upon the sanded floor and watch their movements as they curved their way towards him and pressed their little black noses against the plate glass cases, or as they turned and twisted their graceful, supple bodies around some branch of bramble, and, swaying to and fro, spat out their tongues as if to mock him. For hours he would lie prostrate upon the floor, and imitate the motions of their heads, fixing his round, black eyes on theirs, and spit as they spat, hiss as they hissed.

Or he would while away his day sitting on his milking stool before a boa-constrictor's cage, and imitate the serpent's mode of rearing; contracting his body, and swaying to and fro; then elongating himself, and twisting his head quickly to the right, to the left, and fixing his eyes upon some object, thrust out his tongue, ten, twenty, thirty times in rapid succession.

Hours he would while away in such a manner; days he would stay shut up in that dark, low loft, living upon biscuits, and the raw flesh of rabbits and pigeons, which, anon, he flung to his vipers, and a few stray leaves of a lettuce's heart. He was dead to the world, but most of all to the fair-haired girl in the room below his loft, the girl who bore his name, and called him husband, master.

She was a fair young girl, with a thin, pale face that had been beautiful. Deep, dark lines in her cheeks, once so plump and rosy, marked the dry courses where tears of bitter disappointment had so often flowed. All that remained of her early beauty was the cloud of soft brown hair that loosely fell upon her shoulders.

She was alone! alone, save for Joshua her husband, and Donald, the old male help who made pretence to do her bidding. No other voice than Donald's would ever reach her ears, unless it was the chattering babble of some smiling child, whose prattle the low wind carried across the moor from the rising land beyond; for Joshua was as dumb as the dead.

She rarely saw her husband, moreover. Days often grew into weeks without her meeting him, and, per-adventure, when she chanced to meet him on the stairs, he would pass her by without a glance or sign of recognition, and wander out, and down to the marsh-land, where he would stay until the white mist rose, and the sky grew dark. But sometimes he would meet her and, seeing, would silently and indolently take her into his long arms, and press his thin, bloodless lips to hers—and hasten. Sometimes she would find her solitude insufferable, and call for Donald, to ask him something, that she might feel the strange sensation of hearing a human voice. But Donald was generally as dumb as his master; he would hearken to her calling without responding, and she would call in vain, and call again, in loud tones that struck strange terror into her sad young heart, when she would seek her bed-chamber to bury her face in the pillows, and sob herself into the oblivion of sleep.

One day she sat alone in her room, gazing out of the window at the thin white mist that hung on the marsh-land, grey in the evening light. She was asking herself, as she did a score of times each day, why she had allowed herself to leave her home of two years before, to plight her troth to a man she loved not; and she buried her face in her arms, and answered the stereotyped answer:

"It is in the power of his eyes!"

Therein lay the secret of her misery, and all that had led up to it. It was the power of Joshua Key's eyes that had fascinated her, and enticed her from her home. She had not strength to resist the influence of his glance. His will was her wish when their eyes met. He was her master, she his slave, and her impotence was a bondage and a bane. Early in her married life she had found her level, and had abandoned speculation upon her master's occupation in the room above her own. She knew his worship, and his idols, and was well contented with this but scanty knowledge.

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Sometimes she would hear him moving, and the creaking of the three-legged stool upon which he sat to mock the movements of the boa-constrictor; but she was now well used to it all, and it never set her wondering what he could be doing. She never dared to question him; indeed, during the whole two years they had been married she had only spoken seven slow words to him, —"Don't, don't look at me like that!" The thought of freeing herself by any means of the burden of her existence had never occurred to her. The question that ever filled her mind was as to how it would all end. It could not go on for ever, and yet it appeared to her impossible that it could ever end. The past two years had seemed to her a whole eternity. She could not conceive the end.

Her mind was full of the queries she set herself, as she sat at the window watching the curling mist upon the swamp grow thicker and greyer, as the daylight died behind the distant hills. How could it end? How would it end, if end it could?

A sudden terror seized her. She know not what there was in the sounds she heard in the room above to strike terror into her. She had heard many similar sounds which never had disturbed her. It was only as if some heavy body were dragging across the floor. That was all, and she knew not why it terrorised her. But it surely did.

She rose involuntarily from her seat and with a cat tread left the room and made her way up to the loft. Never had she seen inside this room. All that she knew she had learnt from Donald. And now the door of the loft stood ajar and she before it. But she hesitated. There was absolute silence within, and it filled her with an inexplicable dread. She dreaded to learn; she dreaded to see. But she dreaded the most to retreat in ignorance.

The sounds of dragging were renewed, and she hesitated no longer. One step, one motion of her arm, and the door stood open, and she within the loft.

Full length upon the floor, leaving a track behind him in the thickly strewn sand, lay Joshua Key, wriggling and creeping in the manner of the mode of progression of a snake. His long arms lay closely at his side, and his legs together. His head was raised, and his small black eyes flashed fire incessantly. He had wriggled on his stomach from the farther corner of the loft, and was creeping gradually towards the door. Nearer and nearer—then his flashing eyes caught hers, and he stopped and fixed his glance unfalteringly upon her. She stood transfixed. She neither moved nor spoke, but her breath was hard and heavy, and her body swayed to and fro like a poplar under a heavy breeze.

* * * * *

She lay upon her bed, and Donald was chafing her cold, white hands. In an instant she recollected.

"Did I faint, dear Donald?" she murmured.

Donald nodded, and then left her.

Afterwards, a hundred times a day, she went all over that scene again. And yet she never anticipated how it would end.

* * * * *

The day had been warm, but now a doubly-heavy mist hung over the swamp, and gave a grey-blue light to the long grass and rushes that flourished to hide the bog. Still, Joshua Key's wife sat out in the damp, cold air, which clung round her like a moistened cloak. A book lay in her lap. Her eyes wandered from her book to the strip of neglected ground that stretched from the house down to the reeds and rushes bordering in a thick band the vast swamp. Then her eyes traversed the swamp, and rested upon the blue-black peaks that rose in the far distance above the mists and plain. Not a sound disturbed the air; not a human figure lent a vestige of animation to the melancholy scene for as far as the eye could reach. The only moving object was the blue-grey mist, which rose and fell, in curves and clouds, as each soft rain-breeze swept across the swamp.

She let her head rest back upon the peeling wall of the house, and fixed her eyes upon the sky. The clouds were dark and lowering. There would be rain in the night, she thought, and the swamp would rise and encroach upon the bordering land.

The air was growing colder, damper. She felt it touch her skin, and shivered. She felt the moisture on her hand and cheek. A feeling of unrest, as though some magnetic influence was at work upon her, but too impotent to move her, crept over her. She moved restlessly, and watched the curling mist as it rose and fell.

Her husband was down there, she recollected. Her lord and master, and her king, was wading in the marsh and bog, among the tall green grass and heavy-headed rushes, seeking a snake that had escaped.

The feeling of unrest grew stronger. She felt more distinctly from whence the magnet worked, down in the marsh, among the stagnant pools and waving reeds. It moved her now. It drew her eyes, it moved her limbs, and she saw where marsh and meadow met, reeds angrily dividing, as if some creeping creature was through them making way towards her. She watched the tall grass tremble as the creeper crept along, which clearly showed the course the creeper took. She took two steps towards the marsh, and stopped. What could it mean? What could it be? The movement of the grass was such as might have been caused by the travelling of a snake.

An irresistible force seized her, and dragged her down to the marsh. It took her without her wish or will towards the spot where the mysterious creeper would emerge from the reeds.

Her eyes grew heavy, her pulse grew slack. Yet she still saw the trembling of the grass. Nearer and nearer to herself it trembled. Nearer and nearer she approached the edge. She reached it, and the reeds and grass, and the extreme border of the marsh, trembled, snapped, and fell before the prostrate form of Joshua Key.

He was clad in a long, black, and slimy waterproof. His arms lay closely to his sides, and his head was bare.

As he emerged from the long grass, he raised his head and stopped. His eyes met those of his wife, and blazed with the light of fury.

Slowly, with snake-like grace of movement, he crawled up to her, and raised himself to his feet. She neither moved nor trembled, but let him entwine his long, thin arms around her neck, and press his lips to hers. With supernatural strength, he pressed her lips, forcing her head back—back further, until something snapped, as the reeds had done, under his weight. He let his arms relax. She fell. He crouched upon the ground, and crept back into the reeds. On and on through the path he had made in coming. On and on till he sank exhausted in a stagnant pool.

That night rain fell for hours, and the waters of the swamp rose two feet.

C. RANDOLPH LICHFIELD.

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A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.—No. 2.

SEE PAGE 150.

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OR,

The Romance of a Lost Continent.

By **Geo. C. Wallis,** Author of *The Winning of Gunhild,* etc.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON THE SHORE OF THE SHADOWS.

Two days I sat mourning over the body, speechless as a marble statue, taking little nourishment, save scanty drinks of water from the ample store in the boat, and anon gazing fixedly at the waste of water tossing outside the massive tower; after which time I roused myself, though every movement caused my wounds to gape and pain afresh, and with much labour got the boat with its melancholy freight inside the sheltering building.

Then I drew the sail-cloth from the body, and bound it up again with care, as it is the custom to bind the dead, smoothing the white robe, stroking the calm, lovely face, arranging the locks of raven hair. Then I secured a Passport Coin within her hand, according to her last wish, and next laid my beloved sword, my "Sunderer," upon her breast, encased still in its jewelled sheath, and cleaned and brightened as though fresh from its maker's forge.

"Lie there, good sword," I said. "Thy work is done now thy master's love is gone; and none shall use thee now that I have no more need!"

So I bound the two together, and after imprinting a lingering kiss upon the cold lips of the dead, bore my sorrowful burden down the winding stairs till I came to where the sea in the lower stories stopped me, and there, weighting the shrouded figure, consigned it with a bitter heart to the still, black water, watching the ripples and bubbles on the surface as it sank down—down—to where the form of little Didron already lay.

"Farewell, sweet wife!" I cried aloud in the gruesome silence, the words echoing dismally in the solitary place; "farewell. Thy Arnon will be with thee soon."

And the emptiness replied: "Will be with thee soon."

Then I crept back up the stairs and sat down on the highest floor, weary and forlorn, for it is a sad thing to bury your own dead, with your own hands to place them in the grave from whence none return. In the misery of my soul I strove to curse the gods, but my lips grew feeble and my courage failed, so that I dare not, and sat alone in silence, grieving, wishing that I had never been born. At last sleep, long delayed sleep, pressed down my eyelids, and overcome with weakness and fatigue I succumbed to its subtle, healing influence, waking not till the sun had set and risen and was near to setting again.

I was refreshed then, and in less pain and strangely calm in mind, though grief weighed upon my heart heavily as a load of lead. I parcelled out my store of food and measured my quantity of water, finding that the first would last me for some months and the latter but a few weeks. However, I knew that the season of storm and rain was coming on, when I could collect sufficient water in the channels of the tower top, and with my spear and sling I could obtain fish and bird whenever my supply should fail.

Whilst searching the deserted chambers I found some writing tools, and many sheets of prepared parchment, which had been reserved for State Rolls and priests' sayings, and the fancy seized me to beguile my solitary lot with setting down the thoughts and doings of my wandering life. I welcomed the sudden inspiration with avidity, for something I must do if I did not mean to go distraught, and so, after nursing my wounds till I could sit to the wooden bench with ease, began to write this strange and stormy history.

Having plenty of oil in my lamps, I started towards the even of a lowering day, the style and method of my writing

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coming to me in a flash of thought as I gazed out upon the desolate expanse of sea.

As though to mock me, the land had risen again somewhat, so that the heaped-up wreck of the many buildings of Kronos formed a sunken reef at the mouth of a new bay which extended over the lower part of the city, and the blackened shores of this bay, mere reefs in themselves, were awash with the billows at high tide.

Here and there some pile of masonry projected from the surface, and right in the midst of the shallow inlet a single granite column rose defiantly from the waters—a melancholy memory of the Temple of the Three Spirits.

As the darkness of the even grew, the promise of wild weather was well fulfilled; the surf broke heavily upon the sullen shores and curled in a foaming ridge above the buried bar, the seamews screamed, the gale howled fiercely round the massive tower.

A few tattered clouds sped swiftly under the stars, and away in the south the lightning forked across the sky.

I seized my writing tools in haste and began; my hand hurried over the pages, and the spirit of the storm spoke in the written words. I wrote on swiftly, heedlessly, far into the wild, wet night, nor rested from my labour till the story was so well begun that I knew I could set it down to the end. To the blinding glare of lightning, the deafening roar of thunder, and the angry dashing of the billows on the mighty tower, I wrote on, living over my youth again, and when I laid the sheets aside, the sun was glowing in the hazy east like a ball of fire.

So day by day I took up the long story, writing out of the sincerity of my heart, omitting nothing, not sparing myself, nor avoiding my weaknesses in the least, and growing to like the task until I came to tell of where I first met Briseis in that well-remembered garden.

Then my hand trembled, refusing to proceed, and my sorrow burst forth anew. For a week the parchment lay untouched, and I paced the stony floor with gnawing misery eating into my very soul.

The strain grew great. The solitude, the lack of a cheering voice or a friendly face, was getting too much for me to bear, when I recollected my skill in preparing noxious draughts that I had when a priest in the Land of Khem.

"Ha! ha!" laughed I, with bitter mirth, "'twas not in vain old Mitres taught me the mixing of the poison cups which stood in the sacred parts of the temple of Karnac for the punishment of desecrators! 'Twas not in vain, I swear!"

So I compounded a deadly draught from the infusion of many dried herbs that were stored in the tower; a cupful of poison running over; a measure of dark-brown liquid, full of the death that is the beginning of a new life; and, placing it on the bench before me, sat down with a feeling of reckless defiance of all the powers that be.

"Soon, Briseis, I shall be with thee," I said, "for when the sun goes down I shall drink this cup and set my spirit free!"

Patiently I waited, with the Passport Piece bound tightly in my hand, till the light of day dipped slowly in the sea, casting a softened twilight glow over all the scene, most pleasing to the senses after the scorching glare of a tropic moon. Then I seized the fatal cup, and crying:

"Health to thee, Amarunth, great god of death!" raised it towards my lips.

But ere they touched the noxious liquor a shadow passed before my eyes, and a sweet voice whispered in my ear:

"Stay!"

I looked up, and at what I saw dashed the cup upon the stony floor, shattering it to fragments, and spilling the contents at my feet. It was the shade of my Briseis—nay, it was herself in very truth who stayed my hand and drove the fierce despair from out my soul with one beseeching glance of her endearing eyes!

I was not alarmed nor felt a great surprise, being so full of the thought of my beloved that her appearance fell in with the humour of my mind, and I sat regarding her beauteous figure—which shone faintly luminous in the deepening dusk—with admiration and content. She was clad much as in life, and upon her head was twined a spray of berries, like those of the mountain ash, only that each berry glittered in the shade as a diamond of the purest water. After the first glance she looked at me no more, standing with downcast eyes till I spoke.

"Briseis," I said, breathing softly lest I should dispel the vision, "why keep me from thee longer?"

"For thine own good, my Arnon," she replied. "Knowest not that 'tis written in the Book of the Soul: '*Let him who would forestall the hand of Destiny take heed for himself, lest he find not for ever the peace that his soul craveth?*'"

"Ay, I know it," I answered, "but solitude and anguish hath unsettled my reason."

"Wherefore I came to save thee from thyself," the shade of Briseis made reply; "for I saw thy mad intent, and would not have it so. Think not I have forgotten thee," and she looked upon me with the old bewitching tenderness.

"Do the spirits, then, see all that happens to those left in the flesh?" I asked inquisitively. "Have they power to appear and speak with whom they will?"

"Thou would fain know the secrets of the future, Arnon," she answered smiling, "and it is deemed that the message of the Book of the Soul is sufficient for the children of men."

"You may be," I intreated, loth to bate my curiosity. "There are some things thou couldst tell me of without angering the gods?"

She seemed to think in silence a moment, looking upwards, then answered me:

"Some inkling of the glory of the Garden of Joy and some forewarning of the Land of Shadows I can give thee. When thou diest, linger not in the murky vapours of the Shades, but press forward to the Light of the Spirit World, which shineth bright and constant as the evening star; press towards it heedless of the many luring lights that glimmer all ways through the gloom, for these latter are never still.

"The portal of the Garden is ever swinging slightly open for the faithful ones to enter in, and having found the Steadfast Star thou wilt see the way thereto clear before thy feet. The Warden of the Gate is an old man with a flowing beard and a grave, stern face, but his eyes are kindly, and the passers-in are welcomed with his blessing, giving him the Passport Pieces from their hands as they come. He straightway casteth down the coins upon the fertile soil, and from each piece there springeth up at once a lovely plant with a sweet-smelling flower. And the faithful enter in and wander in the Sacred Groves.

"Of the Garden I may not tell thee much, only saying that the beauty and the glory of it passeth all belief, and never palleth on the soul's most subtle sense. It is the dwelling of the Three Spirits which yet are one—the Great Eternal All-in-All, and the light of Their Presence shineth everywhere throughout the land—upon the waving trees, the gorgeous blossoms, the rippling brooks, and the tinkling waterfalls of the winding Stream of Peace; and the sound of Their Voices breathing words of love and rest is ever stealing through the Garden in the form of a whispering wind, fanning the bloom-laden branches of the avenues and rustling through the pliant rushes by the River's brink.

"One thing more I will tell thee and have done, and must be gone. They who choose rather to wait the coming of their beloved than to go forward alone into the full perfection that lieth far within, can rest near the Gate till their loved ones come. There is a great crowd waiting now, for many are they who would rather wait than proceed alone."

"And thou, Briseis?" I asked.

"I am one of those who wait," she said, "and our children also, with many other of thy friends. We shall rest by the Gate till thou hast passed the Golden Portal and we can go

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on together into the greater glory and the nearer presence of the All-in-All. And to comfort thee I say: thy waiting shall not be long, nor weary, and thy end shall be in the arms of the sea that thou lovest so well—maybe in thy hours of sleep. And now I leave thee till we meet beyond the Shadows."

Her glorious form grew fainter and more filmy and darkness deepened before my eyes. With a smile of love and half-regret the vision passed away.

Then I went to my writing again, plying my stylus on the smoothened sheets with fresh vigour and new inspiration. Hope, fair hope, now shone before my onward gaze, and calm assurance of the future took the place of a frenzied despair. The solitude grew less irksome, and the hours of sleep more welcome, and ever the echo of my beloved's words rang sweetly in my ears.

As I wrote, my loneliness seemed to pass away, and I felt as though I lived and moved in the scenes I depicted, heard and told the stories that I wrote, saw the friends and foes with whom my narrative is full.

Now I draw to the close of my task, and the written sheets lie curled in the copper wrapping ready to be sealed before I shut my lids in sleep. The sea has risen since I first began, at first slowly and then quickly, till it is awash with the floor on which my feet now rest—the highest floor of the great tower—and it may be this night or the next—who can tell?—when it will submerge the lofty summit itself, and I shall pass away in a rush of water to the great beyond.

So each night I seal up the writing before I lie upon the couch, thus knowing that 'twill last for ages till Destiny shall bring the hand to open it, and the eye to read its tale of wonder to a world which has forgotten that Atlantis ever was or deems the memory of it but an idle legend, idly told.

But the day of the end lingers, and every dawn I look out wistfully upon the great, glittering sea, thinking that I would fain once more be on its bosom with a good ship's timbers under me, and a gallant crew at my command, breasting its rolling billows, and its plunging storms; for in spite of the ruin it hath brought to Atlantis, and to me, I love the ocean still, knowing that 'tis but the instrument of the wisdom of the All-in-All.

I long once more to hear the curling of its creamy surges on the reefs and shallows of its island shores; to watch its mighty breakers bursting into foam upon its rocky coasts; to hear the distant booming of its tides upon its stony bars; to see the splashing of its wavelets on the shelving sands of little promontories, or the dewdrops of its high-flung spray upon the green fern-fronds of craggy tropic shores; to hear its rushing waters hurrying in tumults through inlets and deep channels; to hear or see it anywhere but here, in calm or storm; heaving restlessly beneath the deep, clear blue of a summer sky, or tossing in fury under the driven clouds of a winter's night; receiving gently the pattering fall of a steady shower, or raging fiercely to the glare of the lightning's flash and the roar of the thunder's roll.

But 'tis in vain: elsewhere than from this silent tower I have looked my last upon the foam-crested sea.

The end lingers, and though this even the water is creeping 'neath the door and darkening the stone flags, it rises but slowly. Still, a sense of something new to come is in my mind, intermingling with the ever-present thought and fond remembrance of my beloved Briseis, and her last appearance and message to me, and feel that soon, in the dim hours of night, I must put off from this misty shore. Sixty years I have lived; a life for the most part stormy; and now must meet my death forlorn, alone, untended, in the time of sleep.

But I fear it not, for I know that beyond the gloom of the Shadowland the light of the Spirit-world shines where the Gate of the Garden stands ajar, and 'tis only a step from the Golden Portal to the presence of my love.

THE END.

"The Last King of Atlantis"

has come to an end, and next week will appear the opening chapters of a new serial story by MR. CHARLES EDWARDES, entitled—

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RESULT OF JUMBLED STORY COMPETITION.—No. 27.

The first prize of £5 goes to Miss M. Cocks, 35, Pascoe Road, Lewisham.

Prizes of £1 each have been sent to G. Puddy, 26, Moore Lane, Clevedon, Somerset; James Matthews, "The Elms," Newbury, Berks; Charles W. Sayer, Arcade Villa, Arcade Road, Ilfracombe.

£2 goes to Julia McDonnell, 84 Maine Street, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

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RESULT OF POST-CARD COMPETITION No. 2.

(NEW SERIES.)

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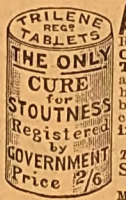

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No. 423. FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 6TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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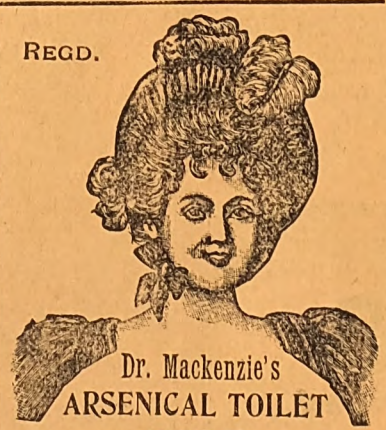
REGD.



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No. 423.] [One Penny.

For the Week ending February 6th, 1897.

FROM DUSK TO DARKNESS.

I.

WITHIN the outward wall of a great convent, Father Phillip walked alone. The dusk fell quickly. It was the eve of Ascension, and the gathering shadows, enfolding each other in silent embrace, crept gently into night.

The pale outstanding pillars of the building threw cavernous interstices far back amongst the cloisters, so that a host of fiends might have lingered there unseen.

The solitary man was reading, and the naked trees moaned a wild accompaniment to the soul of the book. Presently a deep shadow fell across his book. Looking up, he saw the figure of a nun passing towards the outer gates. The incident was in no way curious, but the rigid walk—so unlike the general bearing of a sister—and the unusual hour, arrested his attention, and he stepped a few paces after her. She reached the gate, and suddenly stopped.

[*All rights reserved.*

Then she gave it a thrust with her hands; but it remained unresponsive.

The mere suspicion of a sigh escaped her, a sigh peculiar in its quiet intensity, but of which she seemed to be unconscious. After some hesitation, during which she stood utterly immovable, she bent down, scraping a hole in the encircling snow. Then detaching her crucifix, she placed it quickly in the hollow, and returned the snow to its former condition.

During these movements Father Phillip had come close behind her, witnessing with wonder and indignation her strange performance.

As she rose to go, he took her by the wrist, turning her face towards him: but no sooner had the moonlight touched her features, than he left his hold, and with a cry, sprang several paces back.

He stood petrified, gazing with tongueless awe at her passionless face.

"Madaline!" he gulped at last.

There was no response.

"Madaline!" he said again.

Still no answer.

Then, going with a cat-like tread close up to her, he peered into her eyes, and whispered a long drawn "Madaline!" His voice trembled, but had scarcely a sound.

Stepping back again, he surveyed her at a distance. Though wide open, her eyes were fixed and fireless, like those of a sleep-walker, or a person born blind, or one dead.

Apparently satisfied with his scrutiny, he whispered: "Wait here!" and turned away.

In that one brief space, the established tenour of a strong life, strengthened again as it were by woe, was shattered. He had causes in his heart—projects of spontaneous birth—which thoughts could not fashion.

He crept by the chambers of his chanting brothers, suffering the vespers to stick in his brain.

He reached the room where the keys were kept.

"The key of the outer gate—quick!" he demanded of the monk in charge.

"To-night—Ascension Eve?" queried the man.

"Yes, yes—quickly!"

"I dare not."

"You must—or——"

"Then I *will* not. You——"

In an instant, before the phrase was complete, the hands of Father Phillip were clenched around the man's throat. The shaven head leapt violently up and down, the jaw fell, the eyes rolled upward, and the skinny hands beat and beat again against the stone wall of the cell. Blood dripped from the wretch's mouth where the tongue was nearly bitten through, but not a cry left his blackened lips, so fearful was the grip of the father. A second later the father felt something "click" beneath his fingers, and the man became suddenly limp.

Releasing his hold, Father Phillip took the key and walked swiftly back to where he left the woman.

Not a soul had seen or heard him, and taking his companion's hand, they passed together beyond the convent gates, unmolested.

II.

Many years before the events above recorded, these two had met and loved—loved with all the passion of natures too long restrained. It was a love acknowledging no tie, no relative emotion, no right or wrong.

Then came the fall.

If Satan fell from Archangel to Devil, why not men and women from ideals to frail mortality?

The man was in the wrong, as usual, seeing which he erred still further; also usual.

He tried to deceive himself it was a reiteration that his sin was the natural consequence of love, and that what *is*, *must* have been, and is, consequently, right.

For all this the scales eventually fell from his eyes. Remorse saddled itself on his love, and straightway drove towards a pilgrimage—a life-long palliation.

The woman became insane, and was consequently placed under restraint.

Meanwhile the woman recovered, the only effect of her malady being an inclination to somnambulism. She fancied the voice of the great God addressed her, in response to which, by some strange coincidence, she entered the identical convent where her quandom lover had already for many years been established.

The opening of such a life would naturally be perplexing, and the immediate result was her somnambulistic tendency showed itself, as we have seen, on the very eve of her arrival.

In the hearts of these two the love still raged as strongly as ever.

Father Phillip regarded the meeting as a pre-ordination of Fate. He would possess her, living or dead.

The man still led the woman by the hand, she maintaining a stern insensibility to all transpiring about her. In this order they came upon a rugged, rambling hostelry lying at the bottom of a hollow.

Summoning the keeper, Father Phillip asked for the purchase of beasts and a vehicle. At first the man demurred, casting suspicious glances at the requester's garb and at the statuesque woman by his side. But the sounding chink of money as the Father loosened a bag at his girdle over-scored every scruple, and the equipage was furnished without more ado.

In rewarding the man for his sacrifice, Father Phillip said:

"Take the money, man; it should increase a hundredfold, for it is holy money. Holy in the purpose it serves and holy by reason of its source."

The keeper handled the money as if it were red-hot coal, then, turning into his house, left them to make their departure unassisted.

After the usual preliminaries the cart set off.

The awkwardness occasioned by long absence from such uses soon wore away, and one might have seen that Father Phillip had been and still was an expert driver.

At starting, the pace he kept was very even, skirting all undulations in the ground to avoid jolting. Ever and anon he would glance at the woman beside him to ascertain the effect the change of transit had upon her.

Still she remained unconscious.

By degrees he increased the rate, graduating his efforts with the animals, but never relaxing his watchful care.

They swept along like an awakening hurricane.

The swerves and curves he made to avoid hills were speedily lessened, until, seeing no disturbance in his partner, his course took the line of an arrow. Over hill, over crags and recesses, down hollow and dale, the steaming animals plunged. By hedgerows and wooded land, through drifts and dangerous gullies, they swept like a cloud.

Relaxing his hold somewhat, he gave the beasts their heads. Several times they plunged knee-deep in snow, when with a muffled growl the driver would whip them

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angrily; but so sure-footed were these factors of instinct, and so keen of scent, that no time was lost by the trifling mishaps attendant on such a journey, and which, if too well considered, would probably have been twice as perilous.

Suddenly Father Phillip sprang up, his nostrils distending like a hound's.

He peered back into the darkness.

Listening intently, he heard a faint moaning proceeding from the direction he had travelled.

Gradually to his stiffening ears it became more distinct, eventually assuming the sound of a hollow baying.

The band about his neck snapped sharply as he strained in his eager posture. Then he lashed the animals to a frenzy.

Emerging from a wood, they dashed along a straight road. It stretched along the extreme edge of a precipitous cliff. Far away down below could be heard the thunderous boiling of the sea.

Once or twice, where the land had given way, the cart and its occupants were nearly precipitated down the awful abyss; but so lightning was the speed, that the cart seemed hardly to touch the ground. The road lay stark and ghastly before them, and they literally flew over it.

Standing there in the vehicle, bare-breasted and bare-headed, Father Phillip looked like some legended charioteer sworn to outrun death.

Presently a longer and louder bay swooped upon his ears.

For the first time he uttered a shout—a short, sharp monosyllable, proceeding from far below his throat.

It sped between his parted jaws like a musket shot from the depths of a cavern. Simultaneously, a figure appeared in the path before him. He could characterise no action in particular, but he knew it to be human by reason of its darting swiftly towards the line of his passage.

He saw no more: but the next moment he was conscious of a jolt, accompanied by a piercing shriek, and something flew over the brink of the abyss.

He looked at his companion. A slight tremour shook her, and the mantle of stillness fell. Reviving consciousness laid its hand roughly on her senses, and that oblivion, so closely allied to Heaven, brutally forsook her. Her lids fell quivering. Her hand sought the crucifix at her breast, and she shuddered to find it gone. The languid eyes opened again; this time in the function of sight and inception, and her gaze lighted upon Father Phillip's face. For just an instant they lingered there, when an indiscribable wave swept across her pallid features, the manner of which, probably, had never before been realised.

She sank back without further movement or sound. From the driver's eyes sprang one gleam of deep emotion. His jaws closed, and his finger-nails became embedded in the palms of his hands, so that they dripped blood.

Again the hollow baying reached his ears, and turning he saw two dusky forms limned against the snow. He drove like a madman: lashing the beasts and panting wildly. Foam gathered upon his lips, trailing in his wake like the breath of a demon. Just then another and more frantic exclamation escaped him, for he felt the earth crumbling beneath the wheels of the cart.

With a resounding shriek he urged the animals more madly than before, and with one gigantic bound they cleared the chasm, landing safely on solid ground.

He turned again.

Simultaneously a frightened, frantic wail reverberated through the night. Then there came a roar of falling earth—a terrific crash—as his hungry pursuers fell headlong over the cliff.

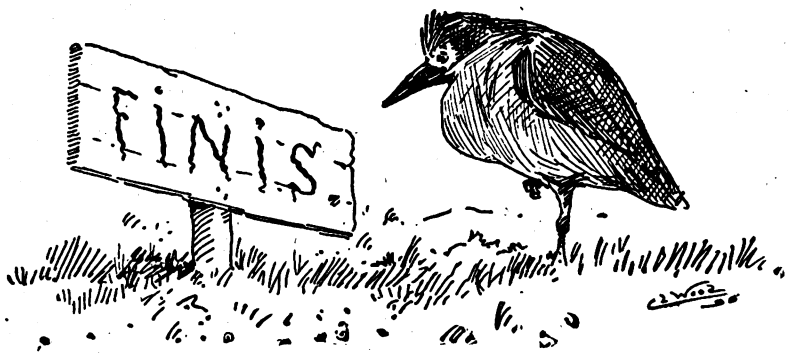
At the same moment the animals fell dead from exhaustion.

Leaping from the cart, he drew the placid woman to his heaving breast, pressing his foaming lips to her forehead.

With a cry of anguish Father Phillip realised his burthen was dead.

"Madaline! Madaline!" he moaned.

Dunstan Denn.



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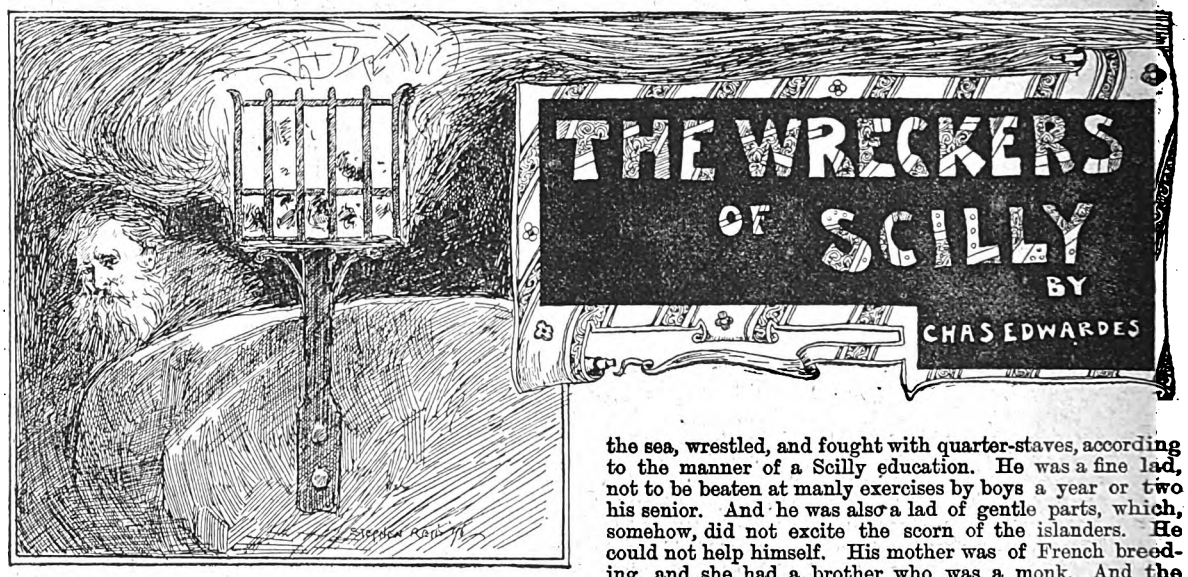

CHAPTER I.

The Flogging of Nigel.

"That for thy evil spirit, and that, and that! A pretty rope's end of a business that men, fathers of fitter lads than thou, should be preached to and blamed by such a barleycorn of a man!"

"I say it, though you kill me for it, Manuel Nance; 'tis a bad trade—a devil's trade, and——"

"Oh, so thou wilt have more of it, wilt? Come, now, off with thy woollens, that I may whack the bare skin o' thee. Quick, man, and you others lend a hand too. 'Tis rare that we heads of St. Agnes should be talked to thus, by this hop-o'-my-thumb!"

But there was a murmuring among the assembled group of islanders. They were not a very merciful set of men to the eye. Their tanned faces and the long, tangled hair of their heads and their bloodshot eyes gave them indeed a formidable appearance that their hearts somewhat belied. For all that, they were a proverb: "A St. Agnes man" even in Scilly meant cruel things; and on the mainland of Cornwall it was but a round-about phrase for assassin.

Still, even the St. Agnes men had feelings of their own. They had known the lad, Nigel Prideaux, since the day when Mistress Prideaux had stretched the babe in their direction as they crowded round the door of the Prideaux hut to drink in their own riotous way to the new inhabitant of the island, thus born into their very exclusive, if not very tender, society.

Stout limbs!
Stout heart!
And a maw for plunder!

Such was their coarse toast to the crying babe! And the mother had smiled towards them, content that they had paid her and the child the customary honours!

And after that young Nigel had rolled and run with the other half-score or so of children in the island, swum in the sea, wrestled, and fought with quarter-staves, according to the manner of a Scilly education. He was a fine lad, not to be beaten at manly exercises by boys a year or two his senior. And he was also a lad of gentle parts, which, somehow, did not excite the scorn of the islanders. He could not help himself. His mother was of French breeding, and she had a brother who was a monk. And the monk, being on a visit to his sister, found time to instil much into the lad's mind, and to adapt him for the acquisition of more knowledge than he was ever likely to get in all Scilly.

Poor monk! The shocks his sensibilities were subjected to among the islanders would have slain a weaker man. He grew to think of the people among whom his sister's lot was cast as little better than devils; nor would he have been surprised to learn that, with their other Pagan and inhuman practices, they were cookers and eaters of the flesh of babes. This also they had been charged with, though upon no certain evidence.

But the monk in time returned to his own land of

They had paid her and the child the customary honours.

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Brittany, and Nigel matured as best he could. There was no such boy of fourteen or fifteen in all Scilly as he. To him it was child's play to swim to Meledgan and back of a morning, even with a swell in the water that would have wearied many a man, and bruised some to death against the black rocks which so closely underlie these sad waters.

And now when our story opens Nigel was nineteen, and a man.

How it had happened even he could not have told precisely, but he was in grievous dissympathy with the rest of St. Agnes—save one.

His mother had died in the meantime. Father he remembered none, for he had gone off to Cornwall one day, with a cloudy sky and a fretful wind, which anon became fierce; nor had he ever returned or been heard of. Doubtless he lay at the bottom of the Atlantic, amid the bones of the myriad of men and ships that the ravenous ocean annually devours.

And so Nigel stood almost alone.

His first notable dissension with the others was about the lives of two men whom he had saved in the night.

It was in November, with a roaring sea from the west. He had risen from his pallet and pushed open the door of his house and gone out into the night with his yellow hair flying loose behind him. It was such a night as he loved. From the adjacent houses—poor, thatched affairs, compounded as to their walls of big granite rocks, turf cuttings, and the beams and door pieces of ships that had been washed ashore in the Bays of St. Warna and Wingletang—he had picked his way towards the low uplands looking west and south. But ere going his eyes had sped in a direction with which they were sweetly familiar. Yon bigger hut, with a glow of light from its horn windows, was the residence of Manuel Nance, who exercised lordship in St. Agnes.

It was a lordship derived rather from his own brute strength and robust nature than aught else, for the Crown, the real Lord of Scilly, had issued no commission in his favour. No matter for that, however, in an isle so savage as St. Agnes. The Crown looked for no profit thence, and so long as the islanders did not notoriously misbehave themselves, they might thrive or starve unquestioned.

But Nigel had not lingered near this tiny sparkle of radiance, for the cry of men in agony had at that instant fluttered with the wind to his ears.

Herein he showed how in substance he differed from the other men of the island. They, at such a note of distress, would have girded their knives to their waists, and, with a vile chorus on their tongues, signifying how little hope there was for shipwrecked mariners who relied for rescue upon them, have hastened towards the rock upon which they trusted to hear the vessel strike. But, they would have cut the throats of any living and breathing mortal whom they had reasonable assurance was not worth holding for ransom. And at any time they would have laughed derisively at the notion that they would imperil their own lives to save the lives of these others whom the thundering Atlantic brought within arm's length of them.

But, thanks to the monk, his uncle, young Nigel was not of so abandoned a disposition. And so it happened that ere daybreak he had returned to his house with two poor fellows, the survivors of ten, whom he cared for as tenderly as if he had been a woman.

This of itself was bad. All St. Agnes, save one, rose against him when it was known, and there was talk of instantly slitting the strange gullets. But Nigel managed to postpone the fatal hour, and the next night, again with a yearning glance at the illuminated horn window, he launched the Prideaux boat and alone ran it towards the mainland, with the two strangers on board. Them he put ashore in St. Sennen's cove, and on the third day he reappeared in St. Agnes.

That same afternoon Manuel Nance had sentenced Nigel to be flogged in the place of execution for his treason against the majesty of law and custom as they were regarded in St. Agnes.

He had met Damaris Nance.

The place of execution was so called in jest. It was a smooth level space of turf near St. Warna's Well, with the bowsprit and figure-head of a vessel mounted in the turf between a ring of high granite stones. Here in old times the St. Agnes folk had worshipped their heathen gods, danced hand in hand, and submitted to the will of the priest, who was their intermediary with Heaven. But those days had passed; and now every islander was a Christian. The ring of stones, however, remained. The reverence with which it had been regarded had passed to the well hard by.

This was the work of the thrice-reverend St. Warna, who had come to St. Agnes one day from Ireland, and taught the islanders their catechism and the simple precepts of virtue which stand at the heart of Christianity. These precepts St. Agnes had long ago been content to forget; but the islanders remembered St. Warna. And periodically they took a sheep (or, if they could afford it, an ox), tied it to the figure-head of the broken vessel, and cut its throat in honour of the Saint. And in the evening they feasted, and drank strong ale and sack, and sang songs which had nothing of the Christian spirit in them, but much of the fiend.

This was where Nigel was flogged by Manuel Nance, and flogged well, so that the blood ran from his back on to the turf.

And the islanders did not hinder the flogging, though they had qualms. Nor was Manuel himself quite at ease afterwards when, with a tired arm, he stalked to his house, and called to his daughter, Damaris, for a cup of ale, and calling several times to no purpose, he at length found her in a swoon upon the earthen floor of her own room, the window of which, being open, commanded an entire view of

the place of execution. The old woman who tended her had no scruple in telling him what had caused this faint. Indeed, she somewhat jeered at him for having a daughter who could not control herself because she chanced to see the bare back of a young man red with the blood which her own father was so finely drawing from it.

"This once, Manuel Nance, I will endure it at your hands," were the words Nigel had said when the flogging was over, and the Lord of St. Agnes had thrown the rope on the grass. "This once, mind, no more. But it is not for your sake, either!"

Then the others had crowded round him, and the women-folk, ever less brutal than their husbands and brothers, had used oil and herbs to heal the wounds. To all which, though not without smiles and objections, Nigel had submitted. He sat on the grass with his eyes towards the house of Manuel Nance, and let them do their kind, womanly will upon him.

This had happened a month before the opening of my story.

It had been a happy month for Nigel. For three days in succession he had met Damaris Nance at dawn or soon after, amid the granite crags to the north-west of St. Warna's Bay. Damaris had her father's two spotted cows, Mary and Nell, to attend to. It had been mild weather, and the creatures were allowed to be out at night. But in the morning they had to be driven homewards for the milking, which, with the butter-making and all the other gentler arts of domestic life, were Damaris's affair. And Nigel, on a pretence of seeking drift timbers, had gone off at daybreak, too. He was not really bound to account for his own actions so minutely; but it seemed wise to have a pretext. Thus he equivocated excusably to Ban, the idiot lad who helped him with his simple establishment, and could bake bread or broil a mackerel as well as the most accomplished housewife upon the island.

Later, a constant spell of rattling gales had aroused expectation in the minds of the St. Agnes men. The wind was north-west, veering to north-east. In the night, during temporary lulls, the forked lightning played over the needle points of Annet Island, and the more distant western isles. But with the return of daylight the storms also returned, and a misty atmosphere yet further gave hope of disaster, sooner or later, to the rapacious islanders.

And now it was the evening of the seventh day of this unsettled weather. Each night the wicked fellows had kept a beacon fire alight on the headland called Troy Town. It was a misleading light. Mariners who cruised in these waters were accustomed to guide themselves by a beacon above Pelistry Bay, part of the large island of St. Mary's, a mile or two away. They could, by steering well for it, in rough weather get fair shelter between Toll's Bay Island and St. Mary's at this point. But the St. Agnes men meant to lure them to certain ruin by inviting them against the pinnacles and teeth of their island. There was no anchorage by Troy Town except such as Death himself could offer.

It had come to be Nigel's turn to attend to the beacon during the ensuing night, and he had said point blank: "I will not."

Damaris was heart and soul with him in his humane instincts. She had sighed, with her fair head upon his shoulder, and with her soft brown eyes looking into his, as they had discussed her father, and what it behoved them to do to change him.

As if that had been possible! It were as easy to tame a hyena twenty years used to the bloodshed and freedom of the open.

Upon his refusal to do what was reckoned his duty, Manuel Nance, with a flash of his white teeth, had resolved once again to beat young Nigel, this time until he had thoroughly cowed the lad's spirit. But as we have seen, the others interposed, and, with a growl, and a look that meant much, the exasperated and disappointed man had turned on his heel.

Persisting in his refusal, Nigel was passed over for the beacon duty. Another youth, with no scruples of conscience, undertook the charge.

CHAPTER II.

A WRECK! A WRECK!

THAT evening, towards sunset, forty-three of the forty-five dwellers on St. Agnes met in the little glade by the Well of St. Warna to hold execrable revel in the teeth of the gale that still blew mightily. No babe had been born on the island for six years, which by some was viewed as a portent of ill. But the others laughed at the notion that St. Agnes should ever lack men of the same kidney as those who at that time divided the island between them. And little Obadiah Hicks, the latest-born member of the community, ran gleefully at the tail of the throng, chiming out the chorus which was often heard in this unrighteous island:

> "Huzza for the rocks it splits upon,
> And hey for the corpse with its gewgaws on!"

This also was a privilege that Nigel had obtained. He loathed the tradition of St. Warna as it was interpreted by his comrades, and, in strength of his superior enlightenment, did his best to bring it into discredit.

But, of course, he did not succeed in this. The men had drawn the legend into their systems with their mothers' milk. Besides, it ran with their aspirations and degraded beliefs in general.

Nor was Damaris present upon these occasions. This, however, was the less wonderful as it was a bye-word among the islanders how Manuel Nance, her father, kept her apart from the rest. But the old woman, her nurse, went, and a pretty figure she was in the red *coiffure* in which she had attired her head, and her old eyes gleaming with an unhallowed excitement.

"Simple lily-bud," the old woman termed Damaris, in contemptuous pity for her bringing up; and she rejoiced to make the girl shrink and cry out with disgust at her tales of the rude and bloody deeds in which she—a creature of the same texture as Manuel Nance's baby daughter—had had a powerful finger. If the old hag spoke truth, she had used a knife as well as the worst of the men upon the poor wretches who had crawled from the stormy sea upon the St. Agnes rocks, just able to gasp out a word of pleading.

A bold scene it was, to be sure, this on the edge of the Bay of St. Warna, with the angry red glow of the veiled rays of the sun breaking through the storm clouds upon the white foam on the near rocks, and upon the bronzed faces of the men and women. The wind tore at the gowns and hair of the dames and girls, and was at times so violent that it carried them back a step or two in spite of their most vigorous efforts.

No sky could have been more full of promise to the assemblage of miscreants.

As they buffeted their way down the shore, jumping over the lesser boulders and the fragments of ships which lay about like the bones of mammoths, the men scanned the horizon, some with their hands to their eyes. But for the moment nothing was in sight except the raging sea, and the granite edges to their bay, above which the spray rose in fountains a hundred and more feet in height.

The Well of St. Warna was an insignificant enough object. It was a mere shaft sunk in the turf, with a smoothed granite stone as a sort of half lid to it. You could have bestridden it with ease; nor need you have been frightened at the puddle of turbid water which lay at the bottom of it, some ten or twelve feet down. It may have been crystal clear once upon a time. Indeed it probably was if, as the legend says, it owed its origin to a spring. But the iniquitous rites of which it was now the nucleus

may have turned it thick and muddy, and quenched the pure gushing liquid beneath. In short, it was a pool at which the St. Agnes sheep and kine would not have drunk if they could even have got at it.

The men and women formed in cheerless silence, in a half-circle about it, and then, taking each other's hands, they started into song with one accord:

THE HYMN OF ST. WARNA.

A pin for the wind that blows us a ship
Fat packed with good things,
With good things, oh!
Silks, jewels, and rings,
Heavy gold doubloons,
And crowns of the sun,
Of the sun, oh!
Huzza for the rocks it splits upon,
And hey for the corpse with its gewgaws on!
And hey for the corpse with its gewgaws on!

Santa Warna, hear us ask
On our knees thy helping,
While the winds are yelping,
While the winds are yelping.

Send us quick, a fog so thick,
That no ship can 'scape us:
One, two, she's on the rocks,
How she winces with the shocks!
See her shaking!
See her quaking!
And how they screech while drowning!

So a pin for a man and a pin for a boy,
And two pins more for the Saint at the helm;
Huzza for the rocks it splits upon,
And hey for the corpse with its gewgaws on!

Over and over again the St. Agnes islanders chanted this ribald hymn until the twilight was upon them. At the first time, as they mentioned the pins, they all closed in towards the Well, and each (even little Obadiah, who had come provided for it) cast in his or her tribute to the saint—"a pin for the wind" that might bring them a ship; "a pin for a man and a pin for a boy; and two pins more for the Saint at the helm!"

As this ceremony had been observed in St. Agnes for generations and was performed several times a year (oftener in winter, than in summer), none could compute the number of pins which St. Warna already had in her well. But, upon the whole, the islanders had no doubt that they were well requited for their expenditure in this particular article of merchandise.

With one more searching glance seawards, Manuel Nance put a stop to the exercise.

"Home, all of ye," he said, with the tone of a man used to be obeyed, "and you, Evan, to your perch, and see you have faggots enough to last the night through."

Men and women each bent the knee in farewell of their dear Saint, and turned away from the Well.

Two hours afterwards every light was extinguished on the island, save that on the headland called Troy Town, and every islander was asleep on his pallet, save Evan Carman, who sat on his granite chair with ears and eyes alert for the sounds that might tell him his flaring beacon was not lit and fed in vain.

At the beginning of the night he could from his post see the reflection in the sky of the legitimate and humane light of Pelistry—on St. Mary's. But by-and-bye the mist came on and obscured it. There was not the ghost of a doubt that any ship driving from the west to the north of St. Mary's would take the St. Agnes light for that of Pelistry, and, in default of being able to seek protection from the gale in other way, would run for the port that might be supposed to underly it.

The wind worsened in the night. Evan, for all the double sheepskin he wore upon his shoulders, shivered under the searching blasts. They ran round the granite rocks where he sheltered himself, and pierced the skins as if they had been mere cotton sheets upon him.

"A murrain upon the night!" he muttered many times, and he strained his eyes towards the east to see if the day might yet show signs of breaking.

But when his patience was most tried, and the blood seemed like to congeal in his veins, suddenly he became rigid as the boulders on the headland hard by, and he faced the waters with eyes wide open.

Had he heard aught, or was it fancy?

The wind wailed in so many keys that but little imagination was needed to distinguish the voices of men, women and children in its various modes of rioting.

Yet Evan was much mistaken if that was not the cry of real men, cold and hungry like himself. He held his hands to his ears, and listened again.

Then came a report differing from the cannonading of the Atlantic upon the cliffs, and in the lull that seemed to follow a faint cry like the mere echo of a human shout just reached him.

Without a moment's delay, young Evan took to his heels. He flung the sheepskins from his shoulders, and ran like one possessed, through the gorse bushes which grew inland from Troy Town. While yet he was a hundred yards from the cluster of cottages which made up the town of St. Agnes, he screamed at full pitch: "A wreck! A wreck!" Nor ever ceased his cry until a score of the men and lads had tumbled from their beds and joined him in the darkness outside.

"Home, all of ye."

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST KISS.

MANUEL NANCE appeared with a lanthorn and an iron-shod staff when six or eight of the others had already run off to the headland.

"A gun, say you?" he asked eagerly.

"And a heavy one to make himself heard in such a gale," was Evan's reply.

"Then she may be from the Indies. There ought to be good picking for us after daybreak."

"By St. Nicholas, Master Nance, I hope there will; and I shall have my tenth for telling of her, shall I not, sir?"

"Let's make sure we've got her ere we talk of that, lad. Run and fetch your knife. There's no knowing what may come. These big ships carry great store of men, and a score or two of them may float to us safe and sound if we ain't wide-awake. Get your knife, my son—and tell your women folk to keep to their houses!"

"Faith, an' I will, Master Nance. I was to have cut the throat of the sheep in Passion Week past; but they robbed me of the pleasure. I'd fain try my hand on higher tasks."

"Be off with you, you knave! You may have more of your wish than you'll care for," said the older man.

"Father," whispered a sweet young voice——

"Get thee to thy bed, daughter. Where is thy old nurse?"

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"Gone with the men, father. Prithee, father, do not do that which shall bring thee to eternal doom."

"I have no time to be prated to, Damaris, my daughter. Thou, at any rate, shalt not hurt thine eyes with sights too strong for thee—thou timid little turtle dove."

So saying, Manuel Nance drove the outer bolt of his house door into its socket. Often before had the girl thus been caged. And so she did but sigh quietly and lie down again on her bed as her father's heavy tread echoed away.

For a while she tried to sleep afresh. It was too early to be about. Though good amenable creatures, Mary and Nell, her kine, would on no account sanction a milking before their wonted time. And so the girl whispered the Lord's Prayer, and the Tresco Islanders' petition to their St. Nicholas, and was going on with a general confession of her trivial sins, when something arrested her.

No: it was not the wind. That had a voice of its own with which she was familiar enough. It was rather like the patrol of strong feet outside. But when she had held her breath until she was nigh to fainting, and had counted twenty paces—as they seemed—she drew her mind's attention elsewhere.

"It is one of the sheep," she murmured. "What a maiden for fancies I am! My nurse is surely right to say there never yet was girl child born on St. Agnes like to me."

Her thoughts must needs then turn abruptly upon him who was the bright morning star of her existence. When she was happiest she loved best to share her joy with him—if only in imagination. And when depression came over her, as it often did (for she was but seventeen, a time when damsels know not what to make of life, and are whiles frightened by its mysteries and harshness), away to him her soul was wont to flee that it might be fondled, until her strength and self-confidence had returned.

"My Nigel!" she exclaimed to herself; and she drew the silken quilt the closer about her shoulders from strange ecstasy. There was that in the mere utterance of the name that cheered her like nothing else.

But it was even with the vision of Nigel before her, his grey eyes and yellow hair as positive as life itself, that his voice also drifted into her room. Sure there never was youth before like him. So broad of shoulders and so fairly made. Some had mocked him to her for his eyes and hair, and the discord there was between them. But she had never seen that. She never looked at him without feeling that she was privileged to do what none others could—to wit, see into the youth's very soul and read the love for her that lay bowered there.

And now she was not only to see him in her dreams, and her morning visions which were neither pure dreams nor entire consciousness, but she was to hear his voice calling to her.

The winds might howl their worst, and her nurse might be as brutal as she pleased, if this boon also was to be bestowed upon her.

"Dear Nigel!" she said aloud to herself—why should she not, seeing that she was alone—"Dear Nigel, I am happier than I ought to be, because of thee."

But a moment afterwards, and while the silvery echo of her words yet tinkled from the Venetian glass and other treasures in the room, the girl bounded from her bed, and cast the silken counterpane upon the floor.

"Yes—I am here, my Nigel!" she cried. "But the words I spake were not for thine ears. I will join thee anon."

And, trembling with the joy that comes to timid girls with their lovers, she began to dress herself.

She had gowns enough to choose from, but for all her finery she cared little. It was the plunder of the sea: her crimson silks and her sapphire-coloured satins; the lace that edged her mantles and the embroidery for her neck. An hour in this thatched hut of St. Agnes, and a skilful tirewoman could have made of her a figure to win the admiration of courtiers.

But she cared not for these treasures—they smelt of death, as she once said to her lover. And so she hastily drew on a plain, puce-coloured bodice, and belted it to her common homespun skirt at the waist. Untanned cowskin shoes covered her pretty little feet. And then her toilet was complete. She would have no shame in bathing her face and hands before Nigel in the cool water in the granite basin by Priglis Bay, whither she would soon be gone for the cows.

As she stepped out by the door which her lover had unbolted for her, the day broke and the dull storm clouds in the west took a brighter hue.

"Damaris, my dear one," said Nigel, taking her by the hand when he had kissed the tips of her fingers, "there will be bad work on the south side of the bay this morning. I know not what to do!"

"Heaven and the Saints keep my father from staining his hands with blood!" exclaimed the girl.

"Didst hear the gun just now?"

"Nay, Nigel, for I was listening to thee!"

"And how didst know that it was I? My Maker has, I trow, given me a face of my own—as he has to all; but how differs my footfall from that of others—of Jewel Fortescue, for example?"

"Jewel Fortescue, quotha!"

"Well then, James Pender?"

"James Pender, he says! Why, Nigel, thy senses have strayed in the night. If the skies were to rain rocks, and each rock were to weigh a ton, then I might, in my ignorance, believe James Pender were taking a solemn walk before my father's house. But thou, Nigel!"

"Am I of such fairy stuff? But hark! Is it not a shame that we should be happy in each other's presence thus while yonder poor souls may be treading on the bridge which leads straight into Eternity?"

"Yet what can we do? My father believes me still in bed. We could not save them."

"Thou couldst not, my diamond eye, and perchance I, too, might mar more than I could mend. But, Damaris, the blood seethes in me. I know not why I am of such various ambitions from the rest. It must be inbred in me from my mother, for I've heard they're milder yonder in Brittany, and all for worship and honest work. But, however that may be, I cannot tarry here, and I will not help them."

"Then since thou art weary of me, and thou——"

"I said not I was weary of thee. I am not five score yet, sweetheart. When I am old and blind and can neither feel nor hear thee, nor taste the memories of thee which will be enthroned in the cobwebbed palace of my mind, then——"

"How flowery thou art, my Nigel! And thine eyes have a brightness in them that almost dazes me! Art sure thou hast not a dreadful fierceness in the back part of thy disposition?"

"Not for thee, my sunbeam, if so. Tell me, then; wilt let me bar thee up again?"

"Marry, no! I will not be barred up like a pig with a litter. It is not seemly treatment of a damsel of my time of life—for I was seventeen last March."

"I know it, beauty, and now thou art seventeen and just fifty-three days and a half."

"Faith, Nigel, there never was such a scholar in all Scilly as thou. To think of thee remembering so much that importest me only!"

"Is that so? I could tell thee more than that, pet. I could, an I would pleasure myself so far on a day like to be so full of dolor—I could number to thee the tale of the silken lashes to thy dear eyes, and score on a table the outline of those pearls, thy teeth, marking infallibly which outvalue the others, and are not to be matched anywhere in the realm. I could describe the exact shape and size, to the millionth of an inch, of the four little beauty spots which thy guardian saint on the happy day of thy birth put upon thy baby face by the touch of his holy finger-tip,

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though little even his saintship recked how fair they would make thee when——"

"Enough!" cried the girl, as she laughingly clapped her palm to the youth's mouth—he submitting with wonderful quietude. "I never heard tongue so runaway as thine, Nigel; and it says the very foolishest of things. Whence dost draw all this nonsense? From what part of thy anatomy? Art dumb at last, sir?"

"I have no choice, my jewel, but to take this little hand prisoner, if I am to open my mouth again. But since I hold it so fairly—how smooth it is, and how blue the veins for an island so sunbrowned as ours!—I would fain hold it always if——"

She stood watching him.

"Marry, good Nigel, I pray thee let me go. I heard the cry of one of my pretty kine."

"Well recollected, Damaris," said the young man abruptly. He let the girl's hand fall, and turned his face seawards. "I fear me I have been weak to tarry with thee, but" (with a fond look in her eyes) "I could not help it. Go thou after the cattle if thou wilt; and tell thy father, too, if thou wilt, who loosed thee from thy cage. I am a man like himself, and have the same yearnings in some kind as he had. I would marry thee, Damaris, though Beelzebub and all his armies massed themselves against me. But I will do nothing against honour."

"Preacher!" exclaimed the girl with a mirthful scoff.

"By this token, my beauty, I mean to preach to thee all the days of thy life—tide what may."

With these words, and somewhat heedless of what he had just said, Nigel suddenly, and like one urged beyond himself, snatched the girl into his arms, drew her passionately towards him, and kissed her lips and her eyes.

"Thou and I, Damaris," he added afterwards, with quivering lips, "were made by the Almighty for each other—I do thee no wrong therefore. And now farewell!"

Not without another ardent look, and a smile in which there was a touch of sternness as well as much sweetness, the young man sped away towards the cliffs. He did not make in the same direction as the other islanders had gone, but moved rather towards the rocks at the extreme west of the Cape of Troy Town. He hoped to be able to see what was going on in St. Warna's Bay without at first being seen. If he could do aught to mitigate the cruelty or inhumanity of his brethren, then he would not mind putting himself to some hazard in the endeavour to do so.

As for Damaris, she stood watching him until she could see him no longer. Never had she looked more lovely than thus, with the colour in her cheeks which her lover had, with so little warning, forcibly constrained thither. She looked on and on—at the dewy grass, the stormy sky, and the white spray of the sea where it rose above the farther slope of the island. But her thoughts were all with her assailant, who had taken such strong possession of her.

"'Tis well," she murmured poutingly, at length, "'tis mighty well to be a man. They do the things we can but just dare to dream of; and yet, indeed, I would not this day have been aught else but a woman, and just the woman I am. Nurse says I'm not a woman until I'm twenty-one; but for once methinks I know better than nurse. I am more of a woman than she is, for he would not do to her what he has done to me. Marry! was it not finely rude of him, and all without a 'Prithee, give me leave,' or 'By your sweet sanction.' And yet, Damaris, my dear, you know—none better—you love him all the more for his rudeness. Sure 'tis passing sweet to be kissed by one's lover. Mary! Mary! Nell! Nell! where are you, harum-scarums? Cows, cows, come and be milked. Oh dear, I shall surely die of pleasure; there's a nectar flowing in my cheeks!"

In this way the girl, fancy free, wandered on as she looked abroad for her cows. But anon a thought seemed to occur to her, and she retraced her steps with all possible speed. She re-entered her father's house and shut the door; and herein she sat on an Oriental six-sided stool with inlaying of mother-of-pearl, with her face buried in her hands, until she heard the lifting of the latch, and her nurse appeared with a red blowsy face, an air of intense excitement, and much dishevelled by the wind.

"Oh, thank you, good nurse, for giving me my freedom; I was growing weary."

"Her freedom, she says," exclaimed the old woman; "a fine thing she'd make of her freedom, a white and pink morsel such as her. Mistress Damaris, if you had spunk in you, you'd never have let yourself be cooped up thuswise. Get spirit, girl, and stuff the notions ye've got from Father Harris of Tresco into the throat of the wind that gives us such merry meals. Look here, girl, that's red for you, ain't it? and this, and this! It's man's blood, my daughter, make what you can of it; and now begone with the milk-pails!"

Damaris needed no second permission to get into the open air again. Her nurse always oppressed her as a sort of nightmare; but there was something quite devilish about her thus gloating over her gory hands. The girl was like to swoon ere she crossed the threshold, and a second time went in pursuit of Mary and Nell.

CHAPTER IV.

The Tragedy in the Surf.

Alas for the good ship *King Hal!*

She had done stout work against the freebooting Spaniards in the Western seas, and many a cannon ball and many a bolt had she shot right straight to the goal they were aimed at. And this was to be her end, to be broken like a sword scabbard on the hard rocks, which stood sentinel to the homeland that her brave passengers and seamen already scented in the mirky air!

They had had a merry cruise, as such adventures were regarded in those days. A duello with two galleys off the Florida coast, in which each combatant sheered off, content with what the *King Hal* had done against her. The taking of a fort in the Spanish main with a box or two of gold pieces, and a few score of suits of armour and stands of arms. And, best of all, that meritorious victory over the *Santa Trinidad*, a warship half as high again as the *King Hal*, and with a hundred more fighting men upon her. The *Santa Trinidad* meant rich prize money to every man aboard the *King Hal* when Plymouth Sound should be reached. In jest they said their ship sailed the heavier for the gold and silver of which she had relieved the Spaniard, after the tussle off the Azores.

And this was what it all tended to!

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They had had fair weather for the Atlantic until, according to the master's reckoning, Old England was but two score hours' distance. But then gales and fog, a driving this way and that, masts over the board, and a leak had put them all in mind of the proverb which bade them not talk of the child before it was born.

And so at length nothing remained for them but to trust in Providence, and fold their arms while they let the ship ride out the storm as best it could. Of what use was the tiller, when they knew not their bearings? And they had but one pole left to which they could hang a sail.

With stout hearts they went to their beds, and gave themselves into the keeping of the master, on the night that was to prove their last.

The captain of the troop that was on board felt anxious, and allowed his anxiety to keep him from sleeping. Sir Francis Seymour had much at stake on the issue of this cruise. He would have given years of his life to be assured that in a day or two they would be safe at anchor in English harbourage.

But the night worsened, and the master had few words of solace to offer to his superior. He tried to pierce the darkness, and listened for the sound of the sea on the rocks, yet more earnestly than young Evan that self-same moment was listening for what he was so soon to hear. But the wind and the waves made so furious a riot between them, and the air was so thick that he could tell nothing of the destiny that was before him, until it was well-nigh accomplished.

Sir Francis clung to a bar on the deck and prayed for the dawn.

"Is it mending?" he asked, as the master lurched past him with a shout to his men.

"It will be long, sir, ere it mends," was the quick reply. "Pray you, content me by withdrawing to your quarters. I fear for you, sir."

But Sir Francis was a proud man, and ill brooked a request even so civilly put. He was about to say words of a choleric turn, when there broke from the master a storm of directions, which for the instant out-roared the wind itself.

"Turn her, for your lives!" he thundered in conclusion, with his arms upstretched so that the light of the lanthorns above made him look as if he were appealing to the dark heavens themselves.

Then even Sir Francis's landsman's eye perceived what strait had come upon them.

A second time they were brought within viewing distance of a row of black, ugly shapes which could have but one meaning.

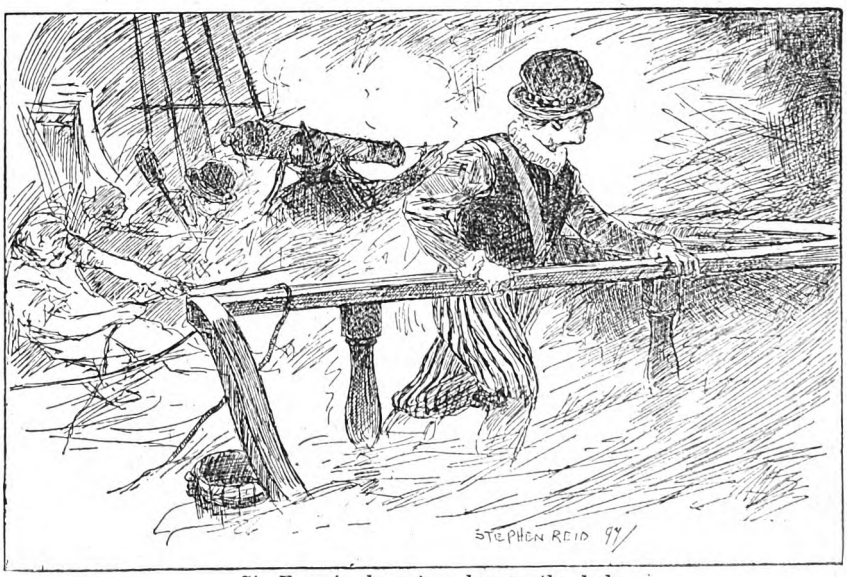
"Are we lost?" he asked.

"I think we are lost, sir," answered the master. "Out with swivel and fire her!" he shouted to the men.

It was done once, then a second and a third time.

Meanwhile, the soldiers from below were crowding on to the deck. They for once heeded not the commands of their captain. Some were in their shirts, some with their doublets unlaced upon their shoulders, and some, avaricious to the last, with their bags of treasure and loot dangling in their hands.

They could all see the cliffs of Troy Town now, only too well. It was odd that the ship had not already been driven upon them. But the current tending against the wind with the tide from St. Mary's was fighting for them. Even yet there was some hope that they might weather the point. If only the struggle between wind and tide lasted a little longer, they might get pushed a fraction more to the north, and then they would at least be free of St. Agnes.



Sir Francis clung to a bar on the deck.

But a sudden grating and instant arrest of the *King Hal* took this hope away, and a wailing sort of sigh came from the two hundred men who had struggled with Death hitherto in so many different forms—and hitherto successfully.

The master and Sir Francis looked each other in the face.

"Dost know where we are?" asked the latter.

"I judge they are the Scillies, sir," was the reply. "Make way there, men. Must I get my cutlass to ye? You must try it, Sir Francis. The stern boat will bear you best."

"You would do well, Sir Master, to take heed of your ship, while she hangs together. I will do what concerns me. How long will she stick thus, dost think?"

"A minute, sir, or an hour. I cannot tell."

A rush of men then parted the two, and the separation was confirmed by the horrid lurch of the ship, as a great wave broke over her from stern to the forecastle cabin. It took off some of the crowd, like the froth from a full tankard of ale. They cried out, and disappeared.

There was no longer any order or possibility of it on the ship.

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A knot of men had rushed to the stern to lower the boat. These had been shattered by the great wave. But fortune favoured the remainder. In a trice they had lowered the boat in the calmer backwater of the wave: a dozen had leapt into her: a dozen more jumped for her, and missed their aim: and then, by a judicious movement, one of the seamen promptly guided the boat where the water was less agitated.

These were all that had any hope of salvation. After the brief pause, another and another towering sea fell upon the doomed ship. She groaned and swayed, and then parted in the middle where the teeth of the rocks had spiked her. There was one more mighty cry, and then the foaming sea was marked with the bodies of men, like a pool with dead leaves in autumn, after a rustle of wind in the overhanging trees.

But the St. Agnes men had not in the meantime been idle. Their eyes were better used to the gloom than those of the dying soldiers and mariners. Besides, the white, tempest-driven reaches of the sea were a background of light, against which the agonies of the drowning men showed up completely.

They stood with their knives in their hands, embracing the fearful coast line, and so near to the water that they were wetted to the skin at each inrushing wave.

Little Obadiah Hicks was with them, much in the background, and his mother held him by the shoulders lest his ardour should endanger his fine young life. But this did not, of course, prevent him from piping forth the chorus of which he was so fond:

> "Huzza for the rocks it splits upon,
> And hey for the corpse with its gewgaws on."

Vain was it for Manuel Nance to signal for the stifling of the young monster. His mother, like the rest, had eyes only for the tragedy. And after all, what did it signify? A child's treble could not be heard in this pandemonium of breaking ship and tempestuous wind and waves.

It was a ghoulish business, carried through with method and but few words.

The ship was so close to the beach of St. Warna's Bay that one after another the bodies were hurled ashore. Most were stunned by the shock, yet not all. But whether dead or alive, the quick stab of a knife put away all doubts. They were practised slaughterers, these men, and they did not waste their energies.

This, however, was simple work to what was now to follow.

Young Pender had spied the ship's boat in a sheltered cove, with every likelihood of being able to land her crew. He told of it to Manuel Nance, who ran himself to see what was doing. Then, with three of the others, he scaled the cliffs, which here impended over the inlet, and, watching their opportunity, they rolled a monstrous block of stone over the edge, so that it crashed into the boat and wrecked it utterly. Of those who were not killed by the stone, the St. Agnes men could easily give an account.

The dawn found them still thus hellishly employed. The bay was littered with dead men; the islanders were reddened with their blood, and tiny rivulets of it oozed down among the stones until it reached the water side, where the waves caught it and snatched it off into the Atlantic, as if it were just what the ocean thirsted for.

At last it seemed that their butchering was all accomplished. They had stood for fully five minutes, knives in hand, with their eyes hungrily fixed upon the sea—and it had brought them nothing more.

Besides, the vessel had gone down. No man could continue to live in such a sea as still prevailed.

They were free, therefore, to look about them in other ways—at their wives and children, for instance, and at the inanimate relics of the *King Hal*, which had already begun to strew their terrible strand. On some of the faces of the women there was an involuntary expression of pity, almost indeed of disgust, for never since any of them could remember had there been so much bloodshed on the island.

But habit and doubt of the propriety of their feelings kept them unprotesting—though they shuddered at what they saw and at the memory of what they had so recently beheld.

Even the men themselves looked askance at each other, as they were now able to reckon up the toll of their achievements.

But Manuel Nance put a summary stop to the reaction which perhaps his experience made him anticipate.

"We have had a hard morning, my lads," he observed, with an attempt at a laugh, that made his bloodstained face look strangely repulsive; "but we shall be richly paid for it ere the day is out—by St. Warna herself, I prophesy that."

Then he sent the women and children away, and while he directed two of the men to continue to stand sentinel over the waves, knife in hand, he set the others digging a wide pit in the ground. Herein were duly cast the stripped bodies of the unfortunate voyagers of the *King Hal*.

When the grave was filled up, the islanders set their backs to the wind, all save those still on guard, and hurried home to break their fast.

(To be continued.)

MELODY.

Contents for February, 1897:

Song	*Only Memories*	Frank Moir.
Duet	*The Flower Thou Lovest*	C. S. Jekyll.
Song	*Beyond the Stars*	Reginald Somerville.
Violin Solo	*Silvery Waves*	Carlo Ducci.
Song	*We Loved in Vain*	Mabel de Feu.
Piano Solo	*Danse des Nymphes.*	Paul Steen.
Song	*Dream of Me*	F. Norton.
Plantation Song	*Honey Dear*	Milton Wellings.
Waltz	*Malmaison*	Caroline Lowthian.
Piano Solo	*Sylvia*	O. Cussans.

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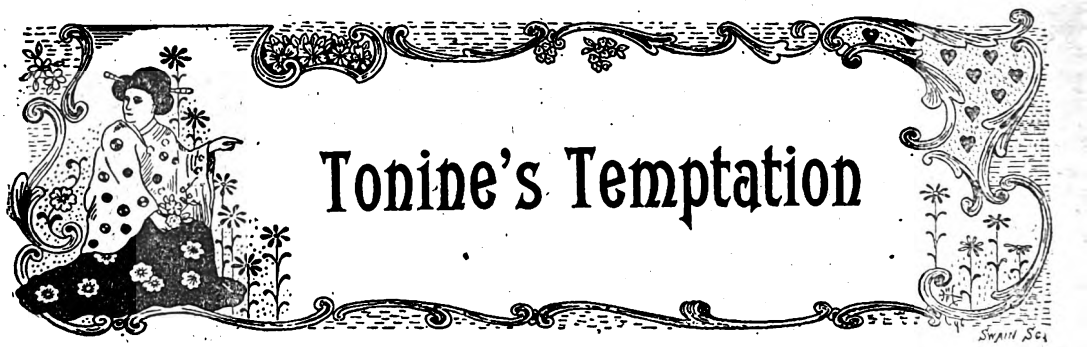

Tonine's Temptation

"Them ain't no fireworks," exclaimed Boule contemptuously.

"*Oui, oui,*" lisped Suzette, hugging the box of matches to her bosom.

"Lemme show you," cried Boule with a sudden inspiration. "I'll set 'em on fire all at once and that will make a fine blaze."

The two children were playing on the dingy stairs of a tenement-house in the French quarter of Soho Square.

Boule, whose real name was Boulanger, was general. He wore a soldier cap made of newspaper upon his sleek, dark head. Two fringed epaulettes decked the shoulders of his faded blue blouse. His sallow face was full of energy, and his black eyes brimmed with mischief.

"*Joli! joli!*" cried Suzette, clapping her fat hands when the box of matches flamed up with an explosive sound.

But a watchful hand seized the boy. The matches fell in a shower of fire on the stairs.

An old woman who was scrubbing the hall turned with a shriek.

"You little villain," cried the slender young girl who shook Boule vigorously, "you wish to burn the house down, eh? So, the papa shall hear of it. This very night shall he hear it."

"Good heavens, those dreadful children," cried the old woman.

"Never mind, Mme. Pierrot; I can put it out," exclaimed the girl, seizing the pail of water and dashing it over the blaze. The frightened children scuttled away upstairs. "Ah, it is well," growled the old woman, "but now, where is my water?"

"See, I will fill it again," said Tonine cheerfully. She went away singing.

"That boy will come to the gallows," muttered Mme. Pierrot, "but the maiden is very gracious."

Tonine seemed to light up the dingy hall with colour; her clothing was shabby and cheap enough, but the coquettish grace of a French girl was not wanting. Her faded pink dress clothed her as the petals clothe the rose. Her figure was supple and round and straight as a young birch tree. Her sailor hat had seen much service, but the small, graceful head was crowned with a pile of wavy locks, dark brown and soft, with a silky sheen. There were dimples in her pink cheeks. Her dark eyes were full of a shy radiance, for Louis Benoit had just told her they were like stars, stars of a summer night.

She ran lightly up the long flight of stairs to the top floor.

An old grey parrot with crimson-tipped wings called out as she entered: "*Voilà*, Tonine."

Then, as if eager to show off his greatest accomplishment, he began to sing in a somewhat cracked voice:

"*Mère Michele a perdu son chat.*"

A very angular, skinny old woman was stirring a pot of cabbage soup over the fire. She wore a pad of embroidery over her grey locks. Her scant black gown showed a gaunt figure, somewhat bowed, but clean. A white curtain screened the one window, and a scarlet geranium bloomed beneath the parrot's cage that swung there.

"Coco will think that he possesses a garden," said Tonine, when she placed it there.

"He will dream of Guerande, my flower-wreathed city," said the grandmamma, sighing.

In one corner of the room hung a picture of the Virgin with a yellow wax candle and some holy water before it. A wreath of immortelles surrounded it, and on the small table lay a prayer book and a rosary. On a larger table were set out some blue plates, and a brown loaf of bread, for the evening repast.

"Oh, there you are at last," grumbled the old woman, as Tonine entered. "It is that you linger on the way home. My old bones are aching; I think it is this climate."

"Sit down then, grandmamma," cried Tonine cheerfully, "I will finish the soup. You will see all will be ready when the papa comes. You take care of yourself and be well for the picnic, you know."

The grandmother sank into a wooden arm chair with a sigh.

"Ah, I make me notting of dat peek-neek anglais." Then, relapsing into French, she went on rapidly: "Oh, but to see one more holiday in my own Guerande. You remember the races, Tonine. That was to be gay. I do see it now: the grey towers, the moss-green water in the moat, and the flowers. Guerande is just smothered in flowers, decked like a maiden for her first ball. The crowds come from far and near, and the church bells ring out. The lads come singing arm in arm. The white caps of the women show from afar. And there is the sea all flecked with foam and the salt pits sparkling in the sunshine. Oh, France; oh my country, I shall never see you again!"

"When's that picnic?" said Boule, stealing from the next room like a culprit, his interest in the affair overcoming his fears.

Boule played with street urchins, who called him Bully, and his English was not undefiled. His mixture of French words with Cockney slang was curious.

"Monday week," said Tonine.

She had put her hat away and was stirring the soup, her dark face growing rosy over the fire.

"And where is it going to be?" asked Boule.

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"Oh, in Greenwich Park."

Suzette had toddled to the table and seized a blue bowl.

She held it out in her little fat hands. "*Bonne soup*," she lisped.

Tonine caught her in her arms and kissed her. "Little angel," she cried.

Suzette nestled against her, the fair cherubic face and golden hair touching Tonine's dark locks.

The work-worn, weary man who opened the door brightened at the sight. His face was very brown and thin, and when he took off his battered cap he showed grizzled hair. Yet Jean Predon was not old. Hard work and misfortune, not years, had lined his face. He moved stiffly, like an old man.

"We were talking of the picnic, papa," cried Tonine, as she dished up the smoking soup. "We will go; is it not so? We could not go last year on account of dear mother. But all your friends will be there and we will hear the Marseillaise and many French songs. You will think you are back in *la belle France* again."

Predon looked at the girl's glowing face. "You shall go," he said. What matter that he must resign the new hat he had been saving for so long?

Tonine cleared away the supper quickly, and then she had to put the children to bed. Predon smoked his pipe and the grandmother took out her knitting.

The young girl was shaking out a scant and torn white frock. She looked at it in despair. Tears filled her eyes. "It is impossible," she said. But she tried it on to be certain of the sad truth. She looked like a flower that had burst its calyx. There was nothing to be done with it. She must stay at home. And she could never tell Louis the reason. She could not expose their poverty to another. The grandmother passed through on her way to bed, and saw her sitting in the white gown like a wan little ghost.

"Behold," cried Tonine, rising and making a little curtesy. "Is it not a pity we are not like the flowers? They have new clothes every year, that are pretty and fit them well. And they grow on them and cost nothing."

"Wear what you have on," said the grandmother shortly. "What matters it?"

"Ah, when you were young did it not matter, grandmother?" asked Tonine.

"Perhaps! There is no money for fine clothes. It is hard to buy bread. If we die there is nothing to bury us."

"Then it is cheaper to live," said Tonine, with a rippling laugh.

The grandmother frowned and walked away.

Tonine woke suddenly from a dazzling dream. She had seen herself in a crisp, dotted Swiss gown, with pretty lace frills and pink satin bows. On her head was a wide Leghorn hat, bent in bewitching angles, with clusters of fine pink flowers nestling in filmy lace. She awoke. There was some strange presence in the room.

Her heart stood still. A glimmering light, a ghost-like figure, moved there. But this ghost was bent with age, and the flickering light showed a dark, strong face and gleaming eyes.

The grandmother was moving with slow, stealthy steps towards the sitting-room. "Is she walking in her sleep, I wonder?" thought Tonine, who was suddenly very wide awake. All at once she heard the click of coin. "Money," she thought, and her heart beat fast. "Can it be that grandmamma has a secret hoard?"

She slipped softly out of bed with a glance at the sleeping child.

On tiptoe she stole to the open door and looked in.

By the small table under the picture of the Virgin, the old woman sat. Spread out on the table before her were several pieces of money. One was a five pound piece that caught Tonine's eyes as it glittered in the light.

"And I never knew there was a drawer in that table," thought Tonine, with quickened breath, at the sight of the money.

The old woman touched each piece fondly as she counted them over. "Oh, Holy Virgin, let me have enough to take me back to my own land when I die! Oh, let me live till I am rich enough to die!" She gathered up the coin and slipped it into an envelope. Tonine saw that the drawer only slid in a groove under the table. The girl had only time to slip into bed and close her eyes, when the old woman crept back again.

"I wonder what she has been saving for? It must have taken a long time," thought Tonine. "And she talked as if she had not a sou. Ah, she is a miser then. She could lend me enough for a frock. That gold piece now would buy everything. I might borrow it."

The thought sent a cold chill over her. "I could pay it back in time. I might work evenings. Angele will be married soon and she will let me make her orange flowers, and there are others."

She saw herself in the toilet of her dream. Louis was gazing at her with adoring eyes.

"I would have one happy day. Louis would dance with me and see me for once *comme il faut*."

"Thief, thief!" whispered a small voice. Tonine looked about her with a startled gaze. It was as if someone whispered in her ear.

But there was no one. "I mean to put it back," she said to the unseen presence. "I am only going to borrow it."

The floor sent a chill through her little bare feet. She shivered in the warm air. She groped about for matches, but when she found one it lit with such an explosive shriek that she dropped it on the floor. She stood there a moment gasping for breath. Then she had to find another match.

At last the lamp was lit. The flames lit up the benign face of the Virgin above it. But there seemed to be a warning glance in those heavenly eyes.

Tonine faltered. A cold hand seemed to clutch her heart.

"But I am only borrowing it," she said, looking resolutely away from the holy picture.

The secret drawer was not hard to find. She wondered she had not discovered it before. In a moment the large white envelope was in her hand.

The writing upon it caught her eye.

"*For my burial in my native land.*"

Tonine felt as if cold water had been thrown in her face. She dropped the envelope. The damp air of a funeral vault seemed to blow about her. Ah, she could not do it. It was like robbing the dead.

No; she would stay at home. Louis would go. He would look into brighter eyes and clasp fairer forms in the gay dances. She would lose him. He was not pledged to her. He was free. But she was not free. When he left her, it was as if all men went with him. He was the one man in all the world for her.

Her heart beat fast now with throbs of pain. She put out her little brown hand and took up the envelope again. The shining gold piece slipped out first. She

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picked it up and it seemed to burn her hand. She suddenly remembered she had not said her prayers that night.

"But grandmother is not going to die. She is strong and well and I shall put the money back," she pleaded with herself.

But all the pretty bloom had faded from her face.

The drawer seemed to groan dolefully as she shut it. Everything was so noisy. The old clock ticked with loud strokes like a hammer on an anvil. Coco in his cage suddenly sang out in his harshest voice:

"*Mère Michele a perdu son chat.*"

* * * * *

The Bank Holiday festivities were in full blast. Greenwich Park was looking its gayest in the summer sunshine. People had come to eat and dance, and these delights filled the hours. The sunbeams danced as if they, too, were having a fête, and the leaves twinkled merrily in the breeze.

The grandmother had been strangely silent and stern all day. She wore her white Breton cap under her bonnet, and a decent black gown. When she dozed at the end of the warm day, Boule took Suzette over to the forbidden shooting gallery. He started at every report and jumped up and down with rapture.

But Suzette trembled and clung to him. "I don't like the bang," she said.

When he found a place where he could peep in, he forgot the child entirely.

Tonine and Louis were struggling out of the crowd in the smaller pavilion. She had danced till she was weary. Her white gown with its floating ribbons was not as crisp as it had been in the morning, but she still looked charming. The curves of her flower-wreathed hat set off the piquant face, where the dimples played hide-and-seek in the pink cheeks. From the crown of her shining hair to the tips of the dainty feet in their canvas shoes she was attired with perfect taste and fitness.

But there was a nervous tension about her. She had rushed from one amusement to another, as if to avoid thought. She felt as if she had quicksilver in her veins or as if she were drunk with new wine. Louis had never left her side. His chains were riveted that day, when he saw her for the first time with the charm of a pretty toilet enhancing her beauty.

She was very tired, and Louis led her away from the crowd to a seat under the shadow of an oak. She knew what was coming by one of those subtle intuitions that none can explain. He loved her, and he meant to tell her so. Thrills of joy went over her, tempered by a touch of pain. She had won, but, oh! had she not lost something that could never be regained? All day, even when gazing into Louis' blue eyes, the haunting thought had tormented her. "If he knew—if he knew I was a thief! How he would start from me in horror and loathing!"

Sometimes she thought of Cinderella at the ball, and how in a flash her fine attire changed to rags. What if she were punished in that way?

But what was Louis saying?

"You know I love you, *petite*. Is it not so? There is no one like you. Only to touch your little hand cheers me like wine. Tell me, *chérie*——"

He was interrupted by a sudden rush and hoarse cries not far away. Some one called out: "A doctor, quick; a doctor."

Tonine started and turned pale. "It is grandmother," she cried. "I feel it; I know it. Something tells me that it is so."

Her coward heart prompted the thought.

"Take me to her, Louis," she faltered. "Oh, if anything has happened, I want to die." Louis looked at her in amazement. But he saw her pallor and the strange misery in her dark eyes, so he said nothing. Boule was crying noisily. He caught Tonine by the arm. "I didn't do nothin'," he sobbed, "only told her I couldn't find Suzette an' she tumbled right over. 'Taint nothin', the peelers 'ill get the kid!"

A friend supported the old woman's rigid form. Her face looked as if carved from stone; her eyes were shut.

"Oh, is she dead; is she dead?" gasped Tonine, seizing one of the cold, nerveless hands.

"It's a shock," cried one.

"It's the heat," cried another.

Tonine was pale to her lips. She shook like a leaf in a storm.

"Oh, Louis," she whispered, "find Suzette; I forgot her. I forgot everyone but you." Louis turned away with a rapturous joy in his heart. After all, the grandmother was old. She had saved his life. But his seemed to lie all before him in sunshine.

It was not hard to find the little one. Affairs were too well regulated for a sobbing child to be lost. She was soon in Tonine's arms. Louis did everything. He brought the vehicle to which the still unconscious grandmother was borne. Boule found a panacea for his grief in the ride home. Tonine held her grandmother's head in her lap, and gazed with terror at the face which looked as strange as if it were a mask.

But this was not death. Once on her own bed, the old woman opened her eyes. Tonine sat by her side, shivering.

She rose and administered some stimulant with trembling hands.

"My son; my Jean," faltered the old woman.

"Oh, he is not here," cried Tonine, "but he will come soon. He is doing overwork; poor papa."

"I must say—good-bye," murmured the grandmother. "I am going—back to my own country."

"No, no," cried Tonine, with sobs. "You must not go—you must not leave me. I want to pay back the money. I saw you count it, grandmother, and I wanted the frock for the fête. I was a wicked girl. I took the gold piece. Oh, forgive me, do not die without forgiving me."

And she dropped on her knees besides the old woman and sobbed in a broken-hearted manner.

The grandmother had been hard and stern at times, but now she feebly stretched out her trembling hand and laid it on the bowed head.

"*Chérie*," she said gently, "I knew it. I forgive you. What matters it where the old woman sleeps? *Le bon Dieu* is as near us here as in my own Guerande. I was young once, *chérie*, and I saw the little love story to-day. The rest of the money shall be for your wedding. I die content—if I can see my boy—my Jean."

"Dear grandmother," cried Tonine. "I do not deserve to be happy. I am not good enough for Louis. But I will punish myself. I will not marry him till every farthing of the money has been earned and restored. And I will not take your savings for the wedding either, but make what is needful myself. Yes, it must be so."

And the grandmother did not die. She lived to dance at Tonine's wedding.

Helen W. Pierson.

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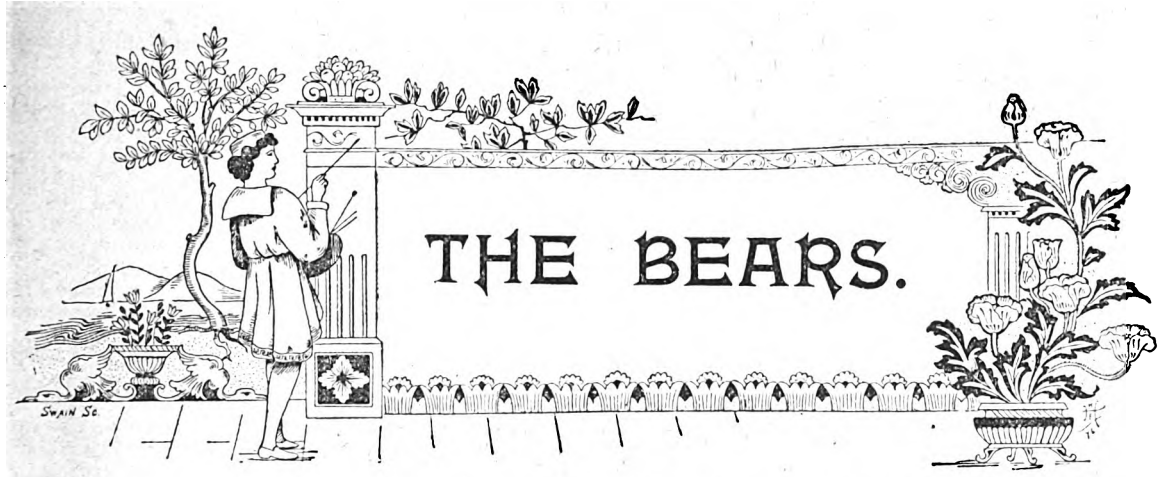

THE BEARS.

In 1875 expired the five years given to the gipsy bear-leaders to abandon their trade. At a fixed date they were to bring their bears to certain places appointed by the government and kill them with their own hands. I happened to witness such an execution in the town of Belsk.

From four counties the unfortunate gipsies gathered with all their households, wives and children, horses and bears. More than a hundred clumsy beasts, from small cubs to old grey bears of immense size, were stationed at the outskirts of the little town.

The gipsy camps awaited in a state of terror the decisive day. Those who came first had to stay there over two weeks, as the police authorities were waiting till all the bear-leaders on the list should arrive, in order to accomplish the execution at one stroke.

The bear-leaders went from village to village, giving their final performances. This was the last chance for the bears to display their artistic skill, so they danced and fought, they gave the familiar representation of how the boys steal beans at the farm, how the young lass walks and how the old woman creeps. It was for the last time, too, that they were treated to a glass of *vodka* (brandy). Standing on his hind legs the bear would take the glass with the soles of his fore paws and bring it to his shaggy snout, he would then raise his head upwards and let the liquid run down his throat. After this he licked his snout clean and expressed his satisfaction in a succession of prolonged growls, mingled with strange gasps.

For the last time the bears were taken on their rounds to the farmhouses, and where the bear walked in on his own accord there was great joy in the house; the animal was led to the place of honour in a front corner of the room, and everybody in the family felt happy, because it is a sign of good luck. But when the bear, in spite of coaxing and patting, obstinately refused to cross the threshold of the house, the hosts were unhappy indeed, and the neighbours said:

"Something wrong inside. He knows."

Most of the bear-leaders came from the western counties, and had to descend a two mile slope before they could reach Belsk, the miserable little town visible in the valley, with its thatched and sheet-iron roofs, and two or three church steeples.

No sooner did they descry the place of their misfortune than the air was filled with an indescribable howling and wailing of women, crying of children, and, above all, the terrific uproar of the bears, which forced the passing train of waggons to turn off the road to avoid the shying of the horses and oxen, and caused the accompanying dogs to slink with a howl of fear far under the waggons. Was it mere sympathy that made the bears join their masters in the wailing? Who knows? Maybe they became aware from the people's talk of the sad fate in store for them.

At the gate of the Police Captain of Belsk a few old gipsies were in waiting. They were dressed in their best holiday attire to appear before the authorities in a decent manner. They all wore long black or blue coats girdled with belts ornamented with silver, silk shirts with gold-gallooned collars, broad velvet pantaloons, and large boots. Some of them wore long boots ornamented all round with flowers of different colours, and all of them had astrachan caps. This attire is donned for occasions of importance only.

"Asleep?" inquired a tall, thin, old gipsy of the policeman who had just come out from the yard.

"He is getting up; he is dressing. He will call you soon," replied the policeman.

The old men, who until now had sat in silence, began to move more nervously and to speak among themselves in a whisper.

"Nothing will come of it," said the oldest among them. "What can he do? Does it depend on him? Bears are killed now all over Russia."

"We will try, Ivan, maybe in some way or other," answered an elderly man.

"We can try," said Ivan mournfully. "Only he cannot help us."

They were called in to the Captain and thronged the waiting-room. When a man with a heavy moustache, dressed in unbuttoned police uniform, under which a red shirt could be seen, appeared before them, the old gipsies bowed their heads low before him—many of them wept.

"Right honourable sir," said Ivan, "think for yourself, what will we do now? We had bears, we lived peacefully, we did not offend anybody. It is true, we have had some mischievous boys among us who are carrying on the wrong trade; but, sir, have you not a great many horse thieves among the Russians? We did not do anybody any harm with our beasts, and it was an amusement for all. What will become of us now? We will have to turn beggars, tramps, and thieves. Our fathers and forefathers were bear-leaders.

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To farm? We do not know how! We are almost all of us good blacksmiths, it is true, and it was well enough when we could go all over the country to find work; but now, when we have to live in one place, the work will not come to us itself. Our boys, sir, out of sheer necessity, will become horse-thieves. As before God, I speak the truth! A great wrong will be done to us and to all the good people by taking away the bears from us. Maybe you will help us? God will repay you for it!"

The old man fell on his knees, and the others did the same. The Captain looked gloomy, with one hand in his pocket, the other pulling at his moustache. The old man took out a pretty thick purse and stretched out his hand.

"I will not take it," said the Captain sternly, "I cannot do anything for you."

"Take it, right honourable sir," implored the crowd. "Perhaps there is some way—you may write somewhere."

"I will not take it," said the Captain more severly. "Not for anything. Nothing can be done. It is a law. Five years were given to you to be ready for it. What is to be done now?" He moved his hands in the air. The gipsies stood silently. The police Captain continued:

"I know myself what a misfortune it is for you and for us; now we shall have to look out all the time for the horses. But what can I do? You, old man, keep this money. When some of your boys fall into my hands with stolen horses, do not expect mercy from me. Keep it, I tell you, old man; you will need it by-and-bye."

"Right honourable sir," said Ivan holding out the purse, "allow me to say another word. Let it be to-morrow" (his voice began to tremble). "Allow us, sir, to do away with them to-morrow. We are tired out with waiting. I have been here two weeks with mine; I have nearly spent all my money."

"Another party of bear-leaders has to come yet, old man. You must wait. The whole town is nearly crazy over your presence here. It must be done at one stroke."

"They are coming, sir! As we came to you we saw them descending the hill. Kind sir, do not torture us any longer."

"Well, if they have come, to-morrow morning at ten o'clock I will be at the camp. Have you rifles?"

"Some of us have, but not all."

"Well, I will ask the Colonel to give you a few rifles from the armoury. You can go! I feel sorry for you."

The old gipsies turned round towards the door when the Captain called them back.

"Hey, there! Turn back! I have something to tell you. You go to the chemist, Foma Fomitch; you know the place, near the cathedral? Go there and tell him I sent you. He will buy up from you all the bears' grease; he uses it to make salves. He may also buy the skins from you. He will pay you a good price for it. Indeed, why should you lose all that?"

The gipsies thanked him courteously, and the crowd adjourned in a body to the chemist. Their hearts were ready to burst, and they gave away for a mere song the mortal remains of their friends. Foma Fomitch bought all the grease at threepence-halfpenny a pound, and about the skins he promised to speak with them later. There they met also the rich merchant, Rogatcheff, and he agreed to take all the hams at three-halfpence per pound.

It was a murky, damp September morning, but the bad weather did not prevent the inhabitants of Belsk from hastening to the meadow to see the extraordinary show. The town looked deserted. All the available carriages, droskies and stages were engaged in carrying off the curiosity seekers to the gipsy camp. The poorer people walked in crowds to the same place, and by ten o'clock the whole town was there.

The gipsies had lost all hope. It was not noisy at the camp, for the women with their little children hid themselves in the tents so that they should not see the execution, and only now and then a cry of exasperation was heard from them. The men, in a feverish state of excitement, made the final preparations. They moved the waggons to one side, put them in line, and chained the beasts to them. The police captain, with the chemist, Foma Fomitch, beside him, passed along the line of the condemned. The bears felt uneasy; the unusual surroundings, the strange preparations, the enormous crowd, the large gathering of their own species—all this made them very excitable. They tossed their chains violently, or gnawed at them, giving out dull and prolonged growls.

Old Ivan stood near his huge, old, lame bear, his son, an elderly gipsy, already grey, and his grandson, with burning eyes, hurriedly chained the bear to the waggon.

The police captain coming near them, said:

"Well, old man, order your boys to start."

A general commotion and tumult began among the throng of the lookers-on, but soon they quieted down, and amidst the dead silence a low, but grave voice was heard. The old man, Ivan, spoke:

"Allow me, kind sir, to say a word or two.

"Comrades, let me be the first to finish. I am the oldest among you. In a year I will be ninety, and have been a bear-leader all my life from childhood. In all the camps you will not find a beast older than mine."

He stooped his curly head over his chest, shook it a few times, and wiped his eyes with his fist. Then he straightened himself up, raised his head, and continued to speak in louder and firmer tones than before:

"That's why I want to be the first to finish. I never thought to live long enough to see such a calamity. I never thought that my beloved bear would live to see it; but it seems such is our fate. With my own hands I have to kill him—my bread-winner, my own benefactor! Untie him, let him loose. He will not go away. It is of no use for us, old comrade, to run from death. Let him loose, Vasia. I do not want to kill him as one would kill cattle—tied up. Don't be afraid," he said to the restless crowd, "he will not hurt anybody."

A young gipsy untied the enormous beast and led him away from the waggon. The bear sat down on his hind legs, the fore-paws hanging down. He swung from side to side, sighing heavily, with a rattle in his throat. Truly, he was very old; his teeth were yellow, his shaggy coat of a faded reddish colour, slightly grizzled. In a friendly and mournful way he looked at his master with his single small eye. Dead silence prevailed. All that could be heard was the clinking of the gun-barrels, and the dull rap of the ramrods upon the wads in charging the rifles.

"Give me the rifle," said the old man firmly.

The son gave him a rifle; he took it, pressed it to his chest, and addressed the bear with the following words:

"In a minute I will kill you, Potap. God help me that my old hand may not tremble, so that the first ball may pierce your heart. I don't want to torture you; it is not such an end as you deserve, my old bear, my dear

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friend. I took you as a young cub; one eye had been put out, your nose was rotted by the ring; you were sick, you were pining away. I looked after you as after my own son; I petted you, reared you, and you grew up a large, brave, and strong bear. Another like you could not be found in all the camps gathered here.

"You grew up, and did not forget my kindness to you. I had not a friend among men as good to me as you were. You were good and gentle, quick of apprehension, you learnt every trick easily. I have never seen a beast better and more intelligent than you. What would have become of me without you? Thanks to your work, all of my family is living now. You earned me three pairs of horses; through you I was able to build a winter hut. You have done a great deal more for me: you have freed my son from the military service. I have a large family, and everyone of them, from the youngest to the oldest, you have fed and provided for. How dearly I love you! I never hit you too hard, and if I have offended you in any way—forgive me. I bow my head to your feet."

He threw himself on the ground before the bear. The animal growled gently and pitifully. The old man was weeping bitterly, his whole body trembled.

"Shoot, father!" exclaimed his son, "do not tear our hearts any longer."

Ivan rose. The tears ceased running from his eyes. He tossed back his grey mane from his forehead, and continued in a firm and clear voice:

"And now I have to kill you. I am ordered to do it, my dearest friend—to shoot you with my own hands. You are not permitted to live any longer in this world. What then? Let God in Heaven be judge between us and these men."

He grasped the rifle with a firm hand, and levelled it at the beast, aiming at the heart, just under the left paw. The bear seemed to understand what it meant. He uttered a pitiful, despairing growl, and raising his two forepaws, as if to cover his eyes, that he might not see the terrible gun, he stood upright.

A heavy moan escaped the ranks of gipsies. Many in the crowd were weeping. With a sob the old man flung the rifle to the ground and fell powerless over it. His son ran to lift him up, and the grandson seized the rifle.

"Enough!" he called out in a wild, desperate voice, his eyes flashing. "Enough! Shoot, boys! Have done with it!"

The young gipsy ran up to the beast, put the muzzle close to its ear and fired. The bear fell down a lifeless mass. Only a spasmodic shudder ran through its paws, and the mouth opened as if in a yawn. The banging of rifles was soon heard in all directions, mixed with the deafening cries of the women and children. The light breeze drove the dense cloud of smoke towards the river.

"He has broken loose! He has broken loose!" was the cry heard suddenly, and in the twinkling of an eye the crowd scattered in all directions, like a flock of frightened sheep. The police Captain, the fat chemist, Foma Fomitch, boys, men, women, girls—all were running in deadly fright, bouncing up against tents and waggons, stumbling and tumbling over each other, and yelling like mad, and the bewildered horses whirled away the carriages. The danger was not very great after all. Maddened with fear the beast, quite a young, dark, grey bear, was running with astonishing ease, a piece of the chain hanging down from his neck.

All gave way before him, and he went like the wind in the direction of the town. Several gipsies ran after him with rifles. The few passers-by in the streets clung to the walls, if they did not succeed in hiding behind the gates. The shutters were closed, all living persons disappeared, and the very dogs vanished.

The bear rushed past the cathedral, up the main street, throwing himself now and then side to side, as if seeking a hiding-place, but the gates and doors were all locked. At the shops he was met with deafening yells by the salesmen, who wanted to frighten him away. He fled past the bank, school building, armoury of the county regiment, and to the other end of the town. He then ran out into the country roads towards the river, and paused.

The pursuers were far to the rear, but soon appeared—a crowd consisting no longer of gipsies alone. The police Captain and the colonel were driving in a drosky with rifles in their hands, and a platoon of soldiers kept pace with them.

"There he is!" cried the captain; "hit him! Fire!" Shots cracked, and one of the bullets wounded the beast. In mortal fright he ran faster than before. A mile from the town, up the river, stood a large water mill, surrounded on all sides by a small but thick grove. The animal took this direction, but, confused by the dams and the arms of the river, he lost his way. There was a broad sheet of water between him and the dense oak thicket, where he might, perhaps, find refuge for a time, if not permanent safety, but he dared not trust to swimming.

This side of the river bank was thickly covered with a strange kind of brushwood which grows only in Southern Russia—the so-called "lichum." The long, flexible, branchless stems grow so close together that it is impossible for a man to get through. Near the roots, however, there are broad chinks and passages by which dogs can make their way; and as they often hide there from the heat, and thus gradually widen the passages, a real labyrinth has been formed in the thicket. Into this the bear plunged.

The millers, looking out of the windows of the upper storey of the mill, noticed it, and when the pursuers came up, breathless with fatigue, the police Captain gave orders to surround the place. The unfortunate bear lay deep in the brushwood, the bullet in his thigh giving him intense pain. With his snout buried between his paws, he lay motionless, deafened, maddened with fear, not even dreaming of self-defence. The soldiers sent one bullet after another at random into the thicket, hoping to hit him and thus cause him to show himself; but it was a difficult matter to get at him in this way. He was only killed late in the evening, having been driven out of his place of refuge by fire. Everyone who possessed a rifle deemed it his duty to lodge a bullet in the poor brute's body, and when the skin was taken off it was so riddled that it was good for nothing.

GARSCHINE.

"THE WRECKERS OF SCILLY,"
BY CHARLES EDWARDES,
Commences in SHORT STORIES TO-DAY.

"THE SHADOW-HAND,"
BY LOUIS TRACY,
Commences in SHORT STORIES dated February 20th.

"DEEDS THAT WON THE EMPIRE,"
BY "VEDETTE,"
Commences in SHORT STORIES dated March 6th.

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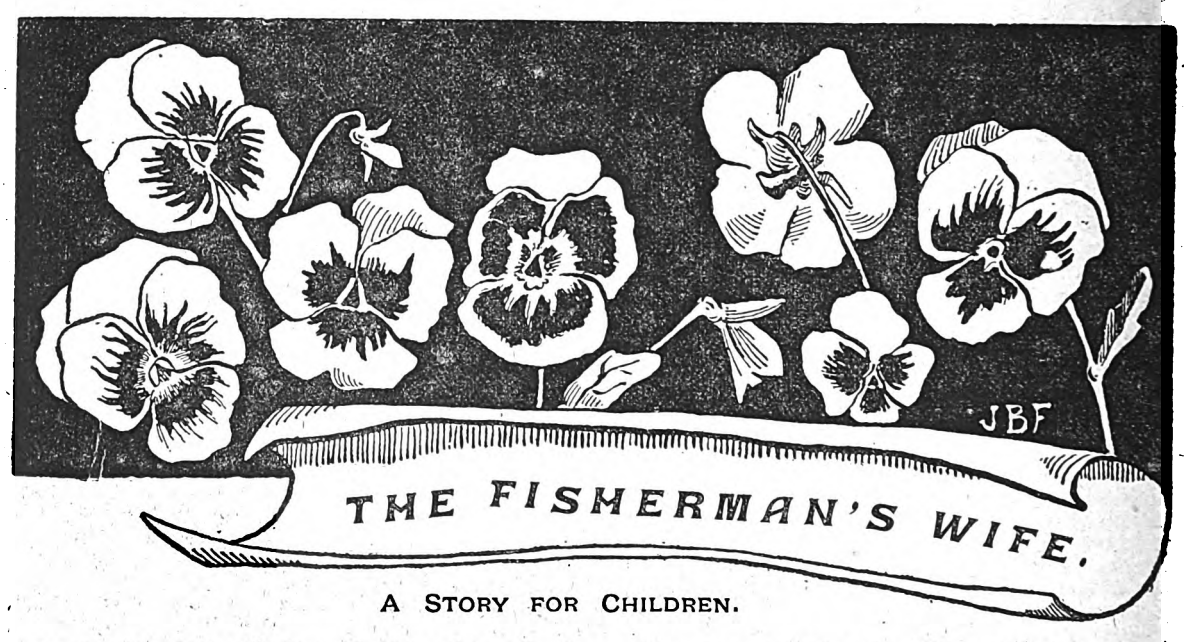

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

A FISHERMAN was living in a humble cabin with his wife, Stora. One day, after having uselessly spent several hours on the river bank, he suddenly pulled from the water an immense fish, with gold scales and a gold crown on his head.

"Ah!" cried he, "here's a fine catch. I will take it to the king. He will certainly pay me generously for it." But the fish said: "Give me my liberty. I am an enchanted prince, and can accomplish any wish you may express."

"All right," good-naturedly replied the fisherman. "This is the first time I have ever heard a fish speak, and that in itself is a proof of your claim."

Dropping the fish into the water, he returned to his cabin to tell the adventure to his wife. "What!" cried she, "and from that fish, who, no doubt, has the power of a fairy, you demanded nothing?"

"No," said the fisherman, "it did not occur to me. Besides, what could I ask for?"

"What!" she exclaimed, "when we are here in a miserable cabin. You might at least have asked for a cottage. Go back! He is under obligations to you. You saved his life. He can refuse you nothing."

The meek and humble fisherman was not at all anxious to make the attempt, but finally, giving way to his wife's determination, he went to the water's edge and called: "Fish of gold! Royal fish!"

"Why do you call me?" asked the fish.

"Alas!" replied the timid fisherman, "I am obeying my wife, who does not always think as I do."

"And what does she wish at present?" said the fish kindly.

"Ah!" he replied sadly, "she is not satisfied with our small cabin, and wishes a larger one."

"Very well, return home, and you will find your wish accomplished."

In fact, in place of the miserable cabin was a beautiful cottage. Stora was sitting radiantly happy on a bench in front of the door. Taking her husband by the hand, she said:

"Just come and see how beautiful it is!"

There was a bedroom with a comfortable bed, a kitchen with a complete assortment of cooking utensils, and near by a low court, from which came the cackle of geese and chickens. Then followed a garden full of vegetables and an orchard of fruit trees.

"Is it not charming?" cried Stora.

"Yes, indeed," replied the astonished fisherman, and both heartily rejoiced in their good fortune. Fifteen days later Stora said to her husband:

"I have been thinking that we were too modest in making our wishes known. This cottage is too small, and there is not a single field joined to the garden. I should like to have a beautiful country residence."

"What folly!" cried her husband. "What would we do with a country residence?"

"Make yourself easy. I know well of what benefit it would be to us. You have nothing to do but to again see your friend, the golden fish."

The poor fisherman, not being able to resist, went out with bowed head.

"Why do you call me?" cried the crowned fish.

"Alas," replied the fisherman, "I come in obedience to my wife, whose wishes are not always in accord with mine."

"What does she want now?"

"She thinks she would like a beautiful country residence."

"All right, your wish is accomplished."

The fisherman, thanking him, turned homeward. To his surprise he found before him a large house, with court, granaries and stables. His wife waiting for him in her loveliest Sunday dress, led him into their new home.

Here was the master's room and there a large one for the servants. The chimney was full of hams. Not far off was the milk house, and near by a granary full of wheat. In the stable were many beautiful cows. There was a pigeon house on the roof of the shed well filled with fat sheep, and a couple of storks on the chimney. Round the house were gardens, fields, and prairies.

"Is this not a delightful place?" enthusiastically inquired Stora.

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"Yes," replied the fisherman, "see that we live here in peace."

A few days passed, when one morning Stora said to her husband: "It is indeed a good thing to have a country house like this; but we can do better. We can have a château, and live as nobles do. This is what you must demand of your magic fish who is in your debt for life itself."

"No, indeed," said the fisherman, "certainly not. I will not make this additional demand of him. He would be angry, and he would have good cause."

"Oh, I beg of you," implored his wife, "go to him again. He will refuse you nothing. I cannot live in this farmhouse. If I stay here I shall be ill. If I have not a château I shall die."

The apprehensive fisherman again obeyed, and the fish said to him: "Go, your new wish is granted."

When he returned home, what a wonderful change awaited him! In the place of his rustic home, he found a beautiful château with flag waving on the top of its lofty tower; a wide moat surrounded the high walls inclosing the domain, and on its drawbridge stood Stora in a silk gown with a gold chain about her neck. Taking her husband by the hand, she led him to their apartment. Entering the large door, they passed from room to room completely and beautifully furnished with soft carpets, superb hangings, statuary, and pictures. On every side were domestics in livery. In the court stood a carriage with two beautiful horses, a coachman on the seat and a footman up behind. Near by was a garden full of flowers, a conservatory, and aviary.

"Ah!" said Stora with an air of triumph, "what do you think of all this? Is this not better than a country house? Are you not content?"

"Yes," replied the fisherman; "but for the love of all that's good, let us stay here."

A few days later Stora remarked to her husband: "I was on the tower to-day and was astonished and grieved to find how little land we have. It is not enough that you should be a lord. You must have a kingdom. You must be a king."

"What extravagance!" cried the fisherman. "Never, never will I permit it."

"If you do not wish to be king," replied Stora in a resolute tone, "I, nevertheless, am determined to be queen, and I desire you to go and explain my wish to the friend who is under so many obligations to you—to the powerful magician."

"No, indeed," reiterated the fisherman, "he has already been wonderfully generous to us. I do not wish to irritate and tire him."

But the ambitious Stora insisted, begged, and threatened, and the poor fisherman again gave way to her inflexible will. The fish looked upon him in pity, saying sadly: "This time also the wish of your wife is granted."

In place of the lordly château, there was a grand palace with a magnificent façade and four imposing towers. A marble stairway covered with rich carpet led to the first floor, to the reception-room where the ministers, generals, and courtiers were congregated, and where Stora sat on a golden throne, an ermine mantle about her, and a crown of diamonds on her head.

"Finally," said she, enthusiastically, to her husband, "here is a burst of fortune; here is power; here is happiness. There is nothing more I could wish."

"Heaven be praised!" he fervently replied.

A few moments later, with a grave air, she took him by the hand, drawing him into the embrasure of a window that she might talk to him unobserved, and said to him: "I am well satisfied that I am a queen, am contented with the respect of my ministers and the tranquility of my subjects, but sometimes the sun rises too late; sometimes the moon is too late, and sometimes the wind whistles and blows in a manner that inconveniences me greatly. I wish to govern them according to my pleasure. The fairy fish can refuse you nothing. He must grant me this additional favour. It will be the last."

The peaceful fisherman was stupefied. He could not believe she spoke seriously. But when she, in a resolute manner, repeated her demand, he declared he would never take part in any such insanity.

But, alas! the poor man had not the courage to resist the strong will of his companion. After violent protestations, he again acquiesced.

He went in fear and trembling to perform his strange mission. This time the fish regarded him coldly, and said to him in a formidable voice:

"This is enough. Your wife is insane, and you are an imbecile. You will no longer have either château or lands. In pity I will give you back your ancient cottage. You deserve no more."

And the fairy fish disappeared beneath the waters. The fisherman turned homeward with bowed head to find his wife dressed in wretched rags, and sitting upon the door-step of their old cabin, lamenting their lost wealth.

Ella Crim Monnette.

JUMBLED STORY COMPETITION.

NO. 29.

On page 180 appears a story, each line of which is numbered. The lines are all in their wrong position, and the prizes mentioned below are offered to those who write on a sheet of paper the numbers of the lines in the order most nearly correct. The title is jumbled up, and should be correctly given *and pasted on the paper containing the effort.*

The conditions are jumbled in the following paragraph as an example. The correct order of the lines is given in line 10.

1 SHORT STORIES on or before *Monday,*
2 awarded to the readers whose solutions first
3 *JUMBLED STORY.*
4 Four Prizes—one of £5 and three of £1 each—are
5 *February 8th,* and envelopes must be marked
6 correct. In the event of a tie, the prizes will be
7 reach this office.
8 All attempts to be delivered at the offices of
9 offered to the readers whose keys are most nearly
10 4—9—6—2—7—8—1—5—3—12—11—13—10.
11 a sheet of paper the figures in the order they
12 Competitors in doing the story should write on
13 believe to be correct, thus:

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JUMBLED STORY No. 29.

H. BARS FAVORITE SEAT

See Page 179.

"An ice," said the girl scornfully. "An ice! when——?"

"When what?" said he.

"And yet at first you talked of eating ices."

"Yes, it wasn't very pleasant. I didn't enjoy it "in spite of the three years that I have been away in the county, and the dancers stood against the stairs that I have not forgotten yet. Would you care for an ice?"

"Oh, I don't know. When you are so cold and you must forgive me if I am still a little awkward." How can you talk of an ice in that calm way when—Don't you see we are stopping everyone."

"No," he said. "The dancing wasn't up to much. Then it becomes more cheerful, and that is how they talked about; what plans I laid before you?"

"But tell me," she said hastily, as was her wont, the part that I love best. Here, when we danced it in the Rockies. We were made for each other, but you dance with them if you didn't care to?"

"How horrible."

She laughed softly.

"Our steps agree, you see, as well as ever," fanning her softly. "Have you forgotten what I sounded when they brought me back again. This is this waltz. Every note of it is engraved on my house, reported that he distinctly heard this extra blushes that rose to her face. "Let us go up. I cried, as we swept the fields behind us, 'I will break soul to you. 'If you do not say you will marry me,'

"You are always so hasty," she said. "You mind. It's the tune the world goes round to. Softly whispered Cauthorpe, bending his handsome head, "There used to be a little nook away above the dance of death with savage bears."

"I have a partner down for this dance," said the the girl, "and now, of course, the music's stopping, you didn't have such dancing in the Rockies?"

"This waltz," he cried, "ah! you must remember that I braved the dangers of the seas, that I braved my neck over this hedge.' But you did not answer, did you want to kill your partners? And why did I care to dance with."

"Stay with me," cried Cauthorpe. "You musn't frame a 'no,' and then I dug my spurs deep in, and and we galloped on side by side, and that great groom close behind me, and I took my second horse, and sadly at first, and that is how the little waves looked at your lips, and they seemed to be trying to less prosaic topics.

"Yes, it is a catchy tune," she said. "I suppose distant I suppose." She laughed to hide the minute to decide in,' I roared. 'Is it yes or no?' I never gave me time. Even now you don't know nothing but what happened three years ago."

"It was for you," he cried. "It was all for you checking the fountains of his enthusiasm, "why tire yourself for the hunting to-morrow."

"Do you remember when we sat here together before, I looked at you, and my soul went out and and rode like wildfire to the station, and caught the seats, completely hidden with palms.

"And you broke your horse's neck," said the girl. My partners were usually a little bit rough. Once that I don't know quite what happened."

"Ah, that was a gallop to remember. The madness of it went to my brain, and I poured out my chance. The babel of many voices came up from the dangers of the mountains, that I danced the wall, and watched them with envious eyes as they met yours. Don't you remember that?"

"You will break it," she murmured. "Men are so careless."

"Oh, bears," she murmured. "How you frightened me. I thought you meant women."

Cauthorpe was dancing with the handsomest girl three years ago?" he said, taking her fan, and mourned for me when they took me away from you. Cauthorpe's heart beat as a sledge-hammer. "After they began to hug you, you felt as though all your hurt feelings. A thousand recollections came just as we are enjoying it. It always does."

Cauthorpe threw himself back in his chair, a stern stair and looked at his partner's face.

"Ah, the hunting. You remember the last gallop went smoothly round to the soft music of the band. Had she no pity?

"Well, I saw you pass me in safety and ride on, found the nook that he remembered so well—two leaped for eternity."

A despairing partner, wandering wildly over the hedge came nearer and nearer. 'You have half a ordinary sentence from behind a clump of palms:

"It wasn't 'no,' but I do not say that it was 'yes.'"

"Wha-at, wha-at," he whispered hoarsely. "Was it 'yes' or 'no'?"

"You are getting into it again beautifully," said whether I said 'yes' or 'no.'"

"Let's go out before the crowd," said Cauthorpe.

Cauthorpe's colour changed. He bit his lip hard. she always checked him in that way.

Cauthorpe led his partner up the broad stairs, and music of the waltz became faster.

Cauthorpe, peering about in every direction, bones were breaking. And then if you couldn't get train to town, and so to America and the Rockies."

Cauthorpe stopped with his foot on the bottom below. Then, very softly the band struck up a sweet, and took her fan from it.

Cauthorpe ground his teeth hopelessly. She was really minded whether they talked of ices or of her rejected suitor. And he wondered whether she wondered whether she was only playing with him as treating him as a cat treats a mouse.

He put out his hand, but she moved away a little, been three years ago.

He leant forward again eagerly, forgetful of his hold of your revolver you were a dead man."

This time she did not try to snub him. She had much. There is only one woman in the world that girl. "I think I ought to go."

When he showed symptoms of becoming passionate she had done three years ago, when he had rushed away. But now she wanted him to talk to her.

Below them they could hear people moving. The look flashing into his eyes. She never gave him his we had together? By-the-way, we seem to talk of and then I scrambled to my feet, and found my away to the Rockies rather than remain at home as strongly upon him that day. It was all as it had been thinking that he had improved since he went dreamy waltz.

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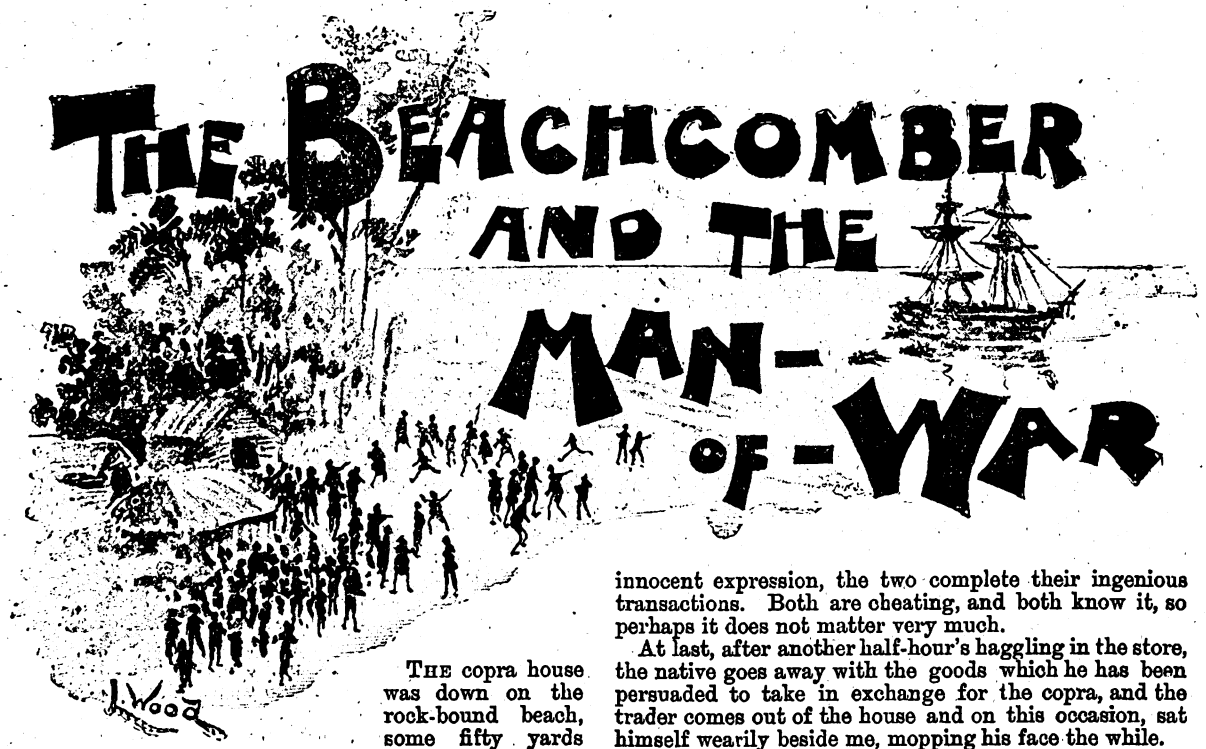
THE BEACHCOMBER AND THE MAN-OF-WAR



The copra house was down on the rock-bound beach, some fifty yards away from the shore, a stretch of uneven sandy soil, with grass patches here and there and great black rocks showing out from the surface, separating the two places where the trader did his business.

The copra house—the title is a misnomer, but it is always used in Samoa—was but a mere flimsy erection of rough boards, though iron-roofed and watertight. Further, the door was provided with a very substantial padlock, which the trader was at great pains to lock and unlock every time he visited the shed.

For the place held the only merchandise the country could produce—all that there was to trade for. The little bits of oily, brown, evil-smelling copra must be kept dry, or else they would rot long before the time came for shipping them to Europe. And they must be protected from theft.

Therefore, every time a Samoan came, perhaps with but a few baskets of the copra, the old trader, with a weary sigh, would take a key down from its accustomed nail, and plod down to the shed.

The first question that had to be decided was whether the copra was green, that is to say, whether it had been merely warmed in the sun, or whether it had been properly dried by several days' exposure. As the copra is bought by weight, it is, of course, to the native seller's interest to dry it as little as possible; whilst the trader, on the other hand, does not want to lose 20 or 30 per cent. by shrinkage.

At last the trader, grumbling somewhat, purchases the copra, for he knows if he does not, it will go to his rival close by. He is consoled by the reflection that his balances are twelve pounds out in every hundred. Also, he is an expert at weighing, and, by dexterously manipulating the scales can make the copra appear several pounds lighter than it really is.

And so, under the waving palms, by the side of the rippling lagoon, Nature smiling on them with her most innocent expression, the two complete their ingenious transactions. Both are cheating, and both know it, so perhaps it does not matter very much.

At last, after another half-hour's haggling in the store, the native goes away with the goods which he has been persuaded to take in exchange for the copra, and the trader comes out of the house and on this occasion, sat himself wearily beside me, mopping his face the while.

As usual he harked back to the old times.

"Things were different in those days," he said. "Then we could do as we liked with the natives: now they can do as they like with us. We have to cut things fine to make a living at all." And to console himself, he took a long drink of kava, emptying the cocoanut shell, which held about a pint, at one draught.

"The oil days were the times," he began, "before any one invented this copra, and we used to take oil from the natives in payment for everything. Why, even the missionaries used to have a big tank outside the church door and would take the collection in oil. It was gallons of oil instead of dollars then, but they got the money just the same in the end, and the church prospered."

His face clouded as he made this last remark. Perhaps he would have preferred the natives in their original barbaric state rather than civilised and christianised, and educated up to a standpoint of keen bargaining, which rendered it difficult for even the superior intellect of a white man to overreach them.

"I've made more money in a week then than I can do in a year now," he went on. "Forty years ago, when I was but a young fellow, I started trading on the southern side of Upolu. There was not a white man within twenty miles of me, and I could get any price I liked for an old uniform coat, especially if it had brass buttons on it. But a Tower musket, that was the thing.

"I had the place to myself for three years, and you may be sure I made a pretty good thing out of it. Wish I had some of the money left now. Then old Jack Wilkinson came along and settled down near me."

"But who was Jack Wilkinson?" I asked.

"Never heard of Jack Wilkinson—Old Jack as he was always called? Why, I thought everybody in Samoa knew of him. But he was getting to be an old man then, and he's been dead long since, and I suppose you young people have forgotten all about the old fogies.

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"When he got drunk."

"Well, I'll tell you about Jack. He was a hard case, one of the regular old style beachcombers. He had been I don't know how many years in the group, and had grown to be almost like a native. He used to wear a lava-lava instead of trousers, just like a Samoan, and he could go about bare foot anywhere, even on a coral reef, and that's a thing few white men can manage without cutting their feet to pieces.

"They did say," and he lowered his voice unconsciously, "that he was one of a party of convicts who had escaped from Australia when it was a penal settlement. They stole a boat, and somehow found their way here and made themselves at home amongst the natives. But the story was only whispered between white men, and it would have been as much as one's life was worth to even hint at the thing to Old Jack. He was a handy man with his knife, and there were no police about to call him to account for his actions.

"I got along well enough with Jack, though I must say he had ways of dealing with the natives which I hardly approved of. They were afraid of him, though, and fed him on the best the land could furnish.

"Jack never did anything for them in return; he spent his days lying on a mat in the shade of one of their big, cool houses, open all round so that the breeze could pass through, and Jack could see all that was going on without even moving. Sometimes, when he was particularly energetic, he would go fishing on the reef, at low tide, when coral showed up high above the water, and it was easy enough to spear malauli, with long, three-pronged native spears.

"Still, I soon found it was to my interest to keep in with Old Jack. He got twice as much oil as I could for the same amount of trade, and though he was always abusing and ill-treating the Samoans, strangely enough they would take their oil to him rather than to me.

"I own that I could never quite make it out to this day, and no man knows the crooks and twists of the Samoan character better than I do. I cannot understand what gave Jack his extraordinary influence over the people. Though, to be sure, in the end they killed him on Manono; but I'll tell you about that some other time.

"So it happened that Jack became a sort of sub-trader or assistant, and would buy the natives' oil, giving them, in return, orders on me for so much trade. I paid him a good commission and I could afford to do it, for so long as Jack was sober he was the best hand at bargaining with the Samoans I ever saw.

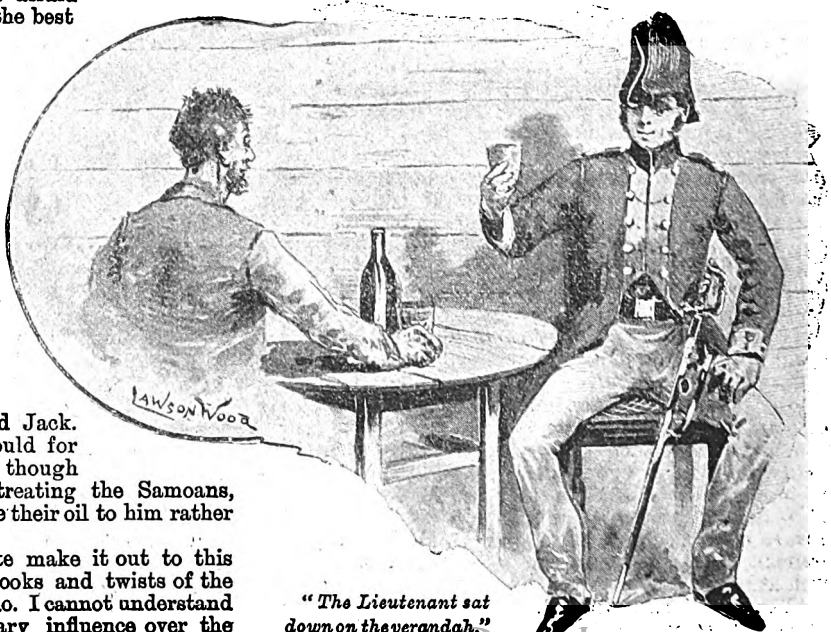
"But when he got drunk there was no holding him. I had to get a case of gin down from Apia now and again, or else Jack would never have stayed with me. Then he would go tearing wild for a week or two until it was all finished, and perhaps wind up by setting fire to a native house, or something like that. I had to pay for the damage, and then Jack sobered down and went along right enough for another month or two.

"It was this failing that had got the beachcomber into trouble at Tanuna, a village about twenty miles along the coast, where he had lived before coming to my place. The natives there had put up with him for a long time, but at last they got sick of the business, and the chiefs of the town turned dead against him, and gave him a week in which to clear out.

"For a long time Jack had been playing off an old beachcomber's bounce on the natives at Tanuna. Whenever they would turn a bit nasty he would threaten to bring a British man-of-war down on them, and have them well punished. This used to scare the people, for men-of-war were scarce in those days, and the Samoans had an almost superstitious awe of their guns.

"It's different now, for the natives have seen so much of modern war vessels that they've grown to despise them.

"They aren't afraid of being shelled either. Why, I've seen them over on Upolu when a man-of-war did actually fire on the rebels, sitting round smoking quite comfortable in the bush behind, whilst the shots were dropping into their villages, and doing no harm at all, except perhaps setting fire to a house or two. And



"The Lieutenant sat down on the verandah."

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when, by pure accident, a shell did fall into a cook house and kill five men, they said that the victims had been stealing the missionary's ducks, or else they would not have been killed. Shows the benefit of religious teaching, doesn't it?

"Well, to come back to Jack, the man-of-war game at last got played out, because no man-of-war came, and the natives would not believe him any longer. Then he had to clear, but at the very last, when he was leaving, he told them that he would soon come back, with a big war canoe, and make them pay a heavy fine in pigs.

"The Tanuna people only laughed at him, but as it turned out, strangely enough, Jack kept his word. He had been at Salua about six months, when a man-of-war actually did come, not after the natives, but after Jack himself.

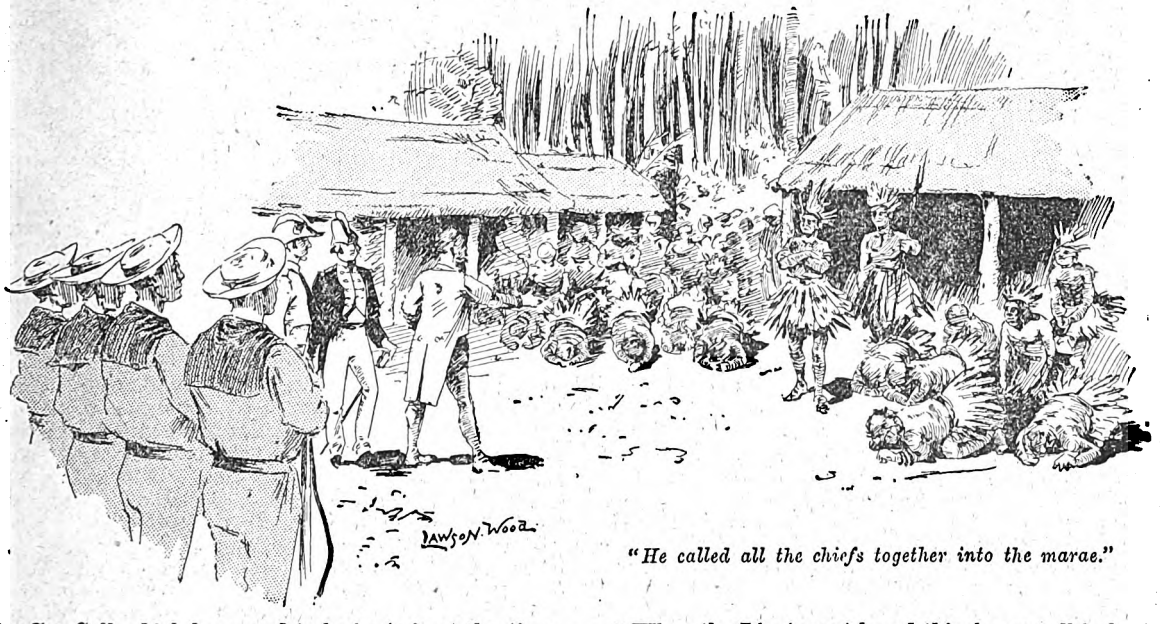
"The consul had, at last—for news travelled slowly then—heard of Jack's pranks at Tanuna, and had sent

"'Yessir,' said Jack, 'glad to meet you; step right in and make yourself at home.'

"So the Lieutenant sat down on the verandah, and Jack fetched out a bottle of gin, and they had two or three nobblers, quite sociable. The officer explained that he had come with a warrant for the arrest of John Wilkinson, whom the British Government wanted for murder, arson, and a whole host of other crimes.

"'Do I know the man?' says Jack. 'Why, he's the greatest scoundrel unhung, and he's ruining my trade by the lies he tells the natives. I only wish you would clear him out of Samoa.

"'Help you to catch him? Why, I should think I would, and so will every native in the town when they see the man-of-war here to back them up. The fellow was here last week, but he's gone to his old place, Tanuna, to try and get some pigs.'



"He called all the chiefs together into the marae."

the *Sea Gull*, which happened to be in Apia at the time, down to arrest him. It was a bad look-out for Jack, for there were enough crimes charged against him to hang a dozen men.

"I was out away in the bush, hunting wild cattle, when the *Sea Gull* arrived, and that saved Jack. That and his own smartness. The vessel dropped into the lagoon at Salua, early one morning, and anchored about a mile from the shore. Jack, from his own hut, saw her come in, and guessed what she was after.

"Presently she lowered a boat, and a lieutenant, all gold lace, came ashore in style. Of course, he went to my place, for it was the only papalangi house about, and I suppose they thought I would be able to tell them the whereabouts of Jack, having heard that he had been seen about Salua.

"When the Lieutenant opened the gate, there was Jack, as bold as brass, sitting on an easy chair upon the verandah, reading an old newspaper, and looking very much at home.

"'You are Mr. Williams, I suppose,' said the Lieutenant, as polite as possible, taking off his hat.

"When the Lieutenant heard this, he was all in haste to get away.

"'Don't be in too much of a hurry,' said Jack, 'you'd better go slow; it's a most dangerous passage, and the chances are ten to one you'll get stuck on a reef. But if you'll wait a minute while I close the store, I don't mind going with you and piloting you round—I'd do anything to get that wretch caught.'

"So, Jack, putting on my best coat, went off with the Lieutenant, and the Captain, knowing nothing of the coast, was very glad to accept him as pilot, and gave £5 for his services too.

"On the passage round Jack spun them a long yarn about the savage natives of Tanuna. They were terribly fierce, he said, always fighting, and Wilkinson would probably stir them up to attack the landing party, and so prevent his arrest. They ought to go ashore with a strong armed force, and, if possible, a field gun or two.

"The advice sounded reasonable enough to the Captain, and it was quite a little army which landed that afternoon. There was a whole barge-load of sailors and marines, all armed to the teeth, and a couple of small

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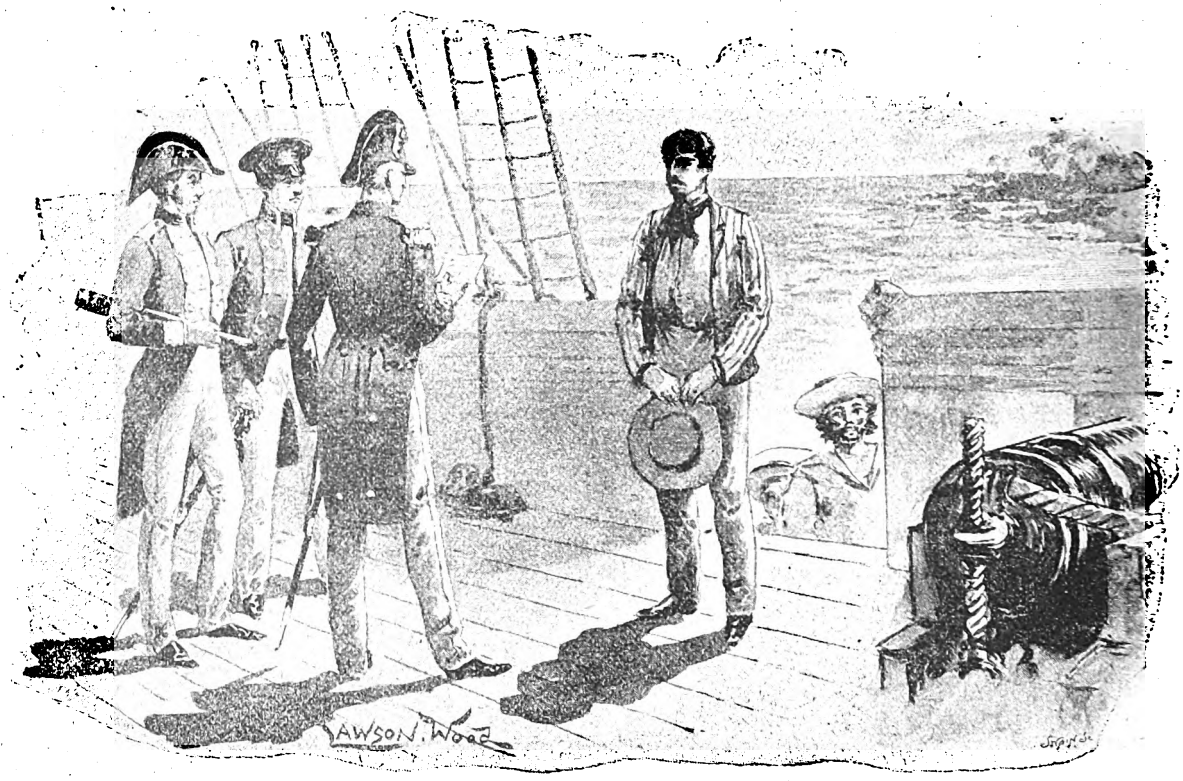

"I gave the Captain Jack's letter."

cannons, which they pointed at the big round chief's house in the centre of the village.

"It was Jack's turn now, and he made the most of it. He called all the chiefs together into the marae—that's the open space in the centre of the village where they always do their talking—and held a long fono. The Lieutenant stood by all the time, not understanding a word of what was going on.

"Jack told the trembling Samoans that the great Queen Victoria, in her palace over the big seas, had heard of the way in which one of her people had been treated, and had sent the man who was to blow the village into the air, to hang all the chiefs, and to carry off the rest of the people as slaves.

"Naturally, the chiefs, seeing all these soldiers with their guns, believed every word of the yarn, and grovelled before Jack, imploring him at least to save their lives.

"The rascally interpreter explained to the Lieutenant that the natives wished to pay homage to the Queen, and that they would take steps at once to find out where Wilkinson was hiding.

"On the other hand he told the chiefs that he had interceded for them, and that the officer had promised to spare their lives if they brought, next morning, a whole boat load of pigs and yams and taro and bananas, all the food they could raise.

"After some more talk, just to cover up his deceit, Jack informed the Lieutenant that the man they were after had gone to a place a few miles off in the bush, but that the natives would send after him and bring him back in the morning.

"So the officer, well satisfied, took his men and his guns on board again, and Jack stopped with the natives, being treated now with the greatest respect.

"Next day he had the large village war canoe loaded up with pigs and fresh provisions of all kinds, and went off to do some business with the *Sea Gull*. As they had had nothing but salt horse on board for a month, the purser was glad to buy the food, and Jack pocketed £20 by the transaction. He didn't give the natives a penny of it, but told them the man-of-war would let them off this time if they would promise to behave themselves in future.

"Then he informed the Captain he had learnt that Wilkinson had gone across the mountains to Salua, and that, if he liked, he would pilot him back there.

"On the way, Jack thought of a new dodge. He knew that, by this time, I would have returned from the cattle hunting expedition, and that, if he went ashore with the officer, they would find out who he was. So he persuaded the Captain it was no use going straight into Salua with the ship, for Wilkinson would only run away again as soon as he saw her coming.

"'You land me,' he said, 'at a point about a mile this side of town, and then stand out to sea for the night. I'll walk into Salua, and tell Wilkinson you've abandoned the search and gone away. I'll keep him there for the night, and the next morning you can slip in quietly and arrest him before he has time to get away.'

"The land to the westward of Salua juts out in a long point, so that a vessel coming from this direction, if she keeps well in shore, cannot be seen until she is right off the bay. The man-of-war lay to on the other side of this

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point, and Jack, who knew of a handy boat-passage through the reef, was put on shore.

"In the afternoon he walked into my house and found me wondering where he had got to, as I wanted him to help salt down a fine cow I had shot.

"'Never mind the blanked beef,' he shouted, 'get the gin quick, or else I shall die of laughing.'

"He just held his sides and screamed for about half-an-hour, and then when he had swallowed a couple of stiff nips he told me all about it.

"I couldn't help laughing, too, though I did not half like being personated by such an old scoundrel, and besides, I was afraid I might get into trouble when the captain found out the trick. He might think I had been helping Jack to deceive them, and perhaps arrest me instead.

"I told Jack this, but he only laughed the more. Then I got angry, told him to clear out at once, or else I would give him up when the ship came back. But he wouldn't go for a long time, not until he had finished the bottle.

"And before he left he wrote a letter to the captain. He wouldn't let me help him, though he was not much of a scholar, said he wanted to have the joke all to himself. I kept a copy of the letter as a curiosity. This is what he wrote:

"Dere Captain—This is to thank you for your kindness in takin me for a passage to Tanuna any times you want a pilet I shall be glad to be of servis ef you want any more pigs my friend williams will suppli them. I am goin back to the bush, ef you want me you must fetsh me from their.—Your grateful servint,

"J. Wilkinson.

"Then he went off into the thick bush which covered the mountains in the exterior of the island, where no white man could catch him.

"Next morning I had to bear my share of the joke. When the Lieutenant came on shore he found me sitting on the verandah, just where Wilkinson had been a couple of days before. He made sure he had got his man.

"It was no use my explaining, so I was arrested and taken to the man-of-war, and I gave the Captain Jack's letter. He was mad when he read it, but then, like a gentleman, he saw the joke, though it was against him.

"'We've been sold,' he said, 'most horribly sold,' and then he told his officers and they all laughed.

"They treated me well on board when they found that I was innocent, and I got them some Samoans to guide the party which went into the bush in pursuit of Jack. But it was no manner of use their trying to catch him, even if the natives had not taken care to lead them astray.

"So, after fooling about in the bush for a couple of days, climbing up and down mountains, and nearly falling over a precipice, they gave it up, and the man-of-war sailed away."

"And did Jack get off, after all?" I asked, for I could not help sympathising with the cunning scoundrel.

"Oh, Jack," concluded the stranger. "He came back to my place after a while, and hung round for a month or two. But Samoa, he could see, was getting too warm, so he took the first opportunity of escaping to Fiji."

J. F. Rose Soley.

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CHAPTER X.

The Verdict.

The secrets of the jury-room are little understood. Doubtless this is because all the more intellectual classes are exempted, by a beautiful provision of our law, from serving on juries, and the remainder have not yet produced a man competent to chronicle his experiences.

The Mynyddshire jurymen were very much like their brethren all over the country. They had sworn a solemn oath to well and truly try, and true deliverance make, between our Sovereign Lady the Queen and the prisoner at the bar, and they honestly tried to act up to their obligation.

Mr. Jenkins, the Queen Street stationer, was among them, and his first words, after the door was closed on them, were:

"Well, I don't know what you think, sir, but I couldn't make out whether he was for her or against her."

The person addressed was the foreman, a rich building contractor from a large seaport at the end of the county. He was a man of judicial mind, a model foreman, and wisely abstained from committing himself at this early stage. He turned round and asked his next neighbour, who happened to be the farmer from near Porthstone, whose remarks to Mr. Jenkins were given in the fourth chapter:

"How did it strike you, sir?"

"I thought he was against her," was the answer. "Didn't you hear him say: 'The prisoner must suffer by that line of defence?' And then he didn't say nothing about reasonable doubts."

"No; but the young barrister did—the one that prosecuted," observed a tall, thin man, a tailor by trade.

"He's got nothing to do with it," said the farmer. "I thought him a fool all along. I know his whole family, and they're all alike."

"What a terrible speech Mr. Tressamer made," ventured a fifth juryman, a short, stumpy watchmaker from Porthstone itself. "I believe he's her lover."

"What!" cried the foreman, losing his calm demeanour in the presence of this interesting revelation. "How d'ye know that?"

"Oh, it was common talk in Porthstone," was the answer. "They knew each other ever since they was children, and he used to come down every summer and go about with her. That's what made him so fierce against Mr. Lewis, you may depend."

"And did you know her?" "What was she like, really?" "What did you think of her?" broke from several voices as the whole jury clustered round the little man.

But he drew in his horns at once.

"Don't ask me anything," he said. "I've mended her watch, and I always thought she was all right up to this, but the Lord only knows whether she did it." He paused, and then, as if there were some vague connection in his mind between this charge and the general disposition towards acts of dishonesty, he added: "She always paid me regular."

Perhaps the jury scented an underlying distrust in this. At any rate one of them said:

"I watched the judge carefully all through, and I saw him frown at her several times. To my mind he meant us to say guilty."

The word came with a little shock to the men. They instinctively realised its terrible gravity as falling from their lips. The tall, thin tailor put in his word again:

"Anyhow, he said there was no evidence of motive."

"Except the jewels," corrected the farmer.

"Ah, but there was nothing came out about them."

"Phoo! that there was. Didn't you see how her counsel

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was fighting to keep it back? You may depend she knew all about them, and could tell us where they are now if she liked."

"You seem to have made up your mind," said another man, who had been talking aside to a little knot of three; "but for the life of me I couldn't make it out one way or the other. What did you think he meant about that latchkey?"

This was offensive. It was reminding them of their weak point. It threw the whole room into confusion. Eight or nine of the jury all began to speak at once, and four or five could find no listeners.

When the hubbub had a little subsided, the foreman said: "Gentlemen, it's no use talking it over in this way. We must argue it out one at a time. I propose that we all sit round the table, and the one that has anything to say stands up and says it properly."

This suggestion was well received, but it had a fatal effect on three of the jury, who were wholly unable to attempt anything so much like a set speech as this course involved.

As soon as all were seated the foreman commenced: "Gentlemen, this is a doubtful case, a very doubtful case. Talk of reasonable doubts, there's nothing but reasonable doubts, so far as I can see, from beginning to end. Now, it would have been a great help to us if the judge had showed us which way he thought we ought to go, but I confess I couldn't tell to which side he meant to lean. If any other gentleman thinks otherwise, we shall be glad to hear him."

But no other gentleman thought otherwise. The man who had thrown out the suggestion about the latchkey, and who was a fishing-boat proprietor from a seaside suburb of Abertaff, murmured from his seat: "I call it a shame. I should like to know what a judge is for. We might as well try the case ourselves as this."

"So we are trying it, aren't we?" rebuked the man who had been the first to blurt out the fatal word, and who was a farmer from near the same place.

"You may be, Mr. Rees," returned the boat proprietor, with what was intended for biting sarcasm.

"Come, gentlemen, gentlemen," said the foreman impressively, "let us remember that we are engaged on a case of life and death. We have got to come at the truth somehow, and we must do what we can by ourselves."

"They should have given us more evidence," objected Mr. Jenkins. "What did they want to make so much fuss about those jewels for?"

"Aye, and there was another thing," said the Porthstone farmer. "Did you notice that when Mr. Lewis wanted to say why he suspected her, the judge wouldn't let un?"

"Well, she's an orphan," said the tailor, "and her father was rector of Porthstone for thirty years, and I say we ought to let her off."

"For shame, John," said the watchmaker, who happened to be his next-door neighbour. "Don't you know we've got to decide according to the evidence?"

The tailor hung his head.

Then the foreman interposed again.

"Really, gentlemen, I think it will save time if we go round the table and let each man express his opinion in turn. Of course, I don't say his final opinion, but just any remarks that strike him on the evidence. Will you begin, sir?"

Mr. Jenkins rose from his seat on the foreman's right and cleared his throat.

"Mr. Foreman and gentlemen, I think this is, as our foreman has told us, a case of very great doubt. At the same time, it is our duty to punish the guilty, and not let the prisoner off simply because she is a woman, and good-looking, and that sort of thing." (Subdued applause. The foreman raises his hand for silence.) "Now, what I look at in this case is the motive, and that is, I take it, the jewels. I don't believe she would have done it simply on the chance of getting something under the will. I don't know whether you remember, but the judge said Miss Lewis might have parted with the jewels, because they weren't found after her death. Now, it seems to me that that points just the other way. I mean, it looks as if she had been murdered for the sake of them. It seems to me the only question is: Who murdered her? Was it Mr. Lewis or was it Miss Owen? That's my difficulty."

He sat down. The farmer, who sat next him, stood up in turn.

"I say what the judge said—let us decide according to the evidence. Now, what evidence is there against Mr. Lewis? Why, you say the judge didn't speak out clearly, but he did say there wasn't any evidence against him. All the evidence is against her, and we ought to act upon it."

The next speaker was a rather young man, who occupied a position of superintendence in a large millinery establishment, exclusively patronised by ladies. With such associations he was naturally disposed to be chivalrous. He said: "I know a lady when I see her. Miss Owen's a lady; anyone can see that with half an eye. As for Lewis, I didn't like the looks of him at all. You know they're a wild lot out in Australia. I heard that he came back for good reasons if the truth was known. Then look how he lost his temper in the witness-box! And then, as Mr. Tressamer said, the very night he got there the murder happened. That looks as if he did it. He said she didn't give him a latchkey, but I believe she very likely did, else why did the barrister ask him? And then look at the hand being cut off. No young lady would go and do such a thing as that, surely!"

The jury were impressed. The next man was of a shy and gentle disposition. He did not venture to get on his feet, but threw out a suggestion as he sat: "I suppose it must have been one of the two. There couldn't have been somebody else, could there?"

A withering look from eleven faces rewarded this disconcerting query. The foreman expressed the general feeling: "Really, sir, I can't think what ground you have for suggesting such a thing. The case is difficult enough as it is, without having fresh doubts raised."

"Ah, there ought to have been a London detective brought down," muttered another juryman, who had taken little part hitherto. "One of them would have puzzled it out, you may depend."

"Well, I don't see what more you would have," said the other farmer, Rees, rising in his turn. "Here is this young woman, sleeping in the next room, going out at night secretly, under some pretence of headaches—why didn't she tell other people about them beside that chemist?—and here you have her mistress murdered, and the blood found on the door of her own room the next morning. What more do you want?"

He sat down. It was now the tailor's turn.

"And how do you know Lewis didn't put the blood there?" he asked. "I believe it's Lewis myself. Anyway, one of them must have done it, that's clear."

But this was felt to be a weak defence, and the next two jurymen shook their heads, and professed themselves unable to throw any light upon the question. Then it was the turn of the boat proprietor.

"Look here," he said, "what's the good of our trying to come to a verdict when we're none of us sure which of them did it? Better give it up, and tell the judge we can't agree."

But the foreman would not hear of this.

"No, sir," he said, "we are here sworn to do justice between man and man, and mete out punishment to the guilty, and we must not shrink from our task. We have heard the case through, and if we are not competent to give a verdict on it, who is?"

This was felt to be unanswerable. Not only were the foreman's words worthy of attention in themselves, but he was a great man, the reputed possessor of twelve thousand a year; he wore a frock coat and a white waistcoat as well,

and his word was, therefore, practically equivalent to law.

There remained only the watchmaker. He felt a friendly feeling towards the prisoner, but he was troubled by real misgivings as to her innocence.

"The judge said we oughtn't to go against Mr. Lewis," he said, "and I stand by what the judge says. Besides, I look at what he said when he gave her in charge."

"What was that?" said the foreman eagerly.

"I'll tell you, sir. It was in the paper at the time, and I happened to keep it by me, and so when I was summoned as a juror, thinks I to myself: 'This may come in useful if I should happen to be on the jury that's to try her,' so I just cuts it out and brings it in my pocket."

The other men looked on keenly, as he slowly drew out his pocket-book and extracted a newspaper cutting, embracing some two and a half columns of the SOUTHERN DAILY NEWS. Everyone hoped that something of a decisive character would now be forthcoming.

The watchmaker ran his finger down the columns.

"Here it is!" he exclaimed, and read it aloud.

"'On reaching the police station, of which Constable Smithies was then in charge, Mr. Lewis said: "I charge Eleanor Owen with the murder of my aunt, Ann Elizabeth Lewis. I have made some money, and, please God, I'll spend every penny of it rather than my poor aunt shall remain unavenged."

"'Constable Smithies at once summoned Sergeant——' that's it," concluded the watchmaker, looking up from his extract.

A murmur and shaking of heads followed, and the foreman again felicitously voiced the general feeling:

"*That* doesn't sound like guilt," he said with emphasis. "May I see that paper? Perhaps it has some other things which we have forgotten."

"Certainly, sir. But I don't know whether we ought to be reading this," hazarded its owner, handing the slip across.

"Why not? We're only doing it to refresh our memory."

This reply was again felt to be worthy of its author. It had a fine flavour of legality about it, too, which gave confidence to the other jurymen. They realised that they were fortunate in their foreman.

That gentleman meanwhile proceeded to glance down the document before him. Presently he stopped, frowned, pursed up his lips, and breathed a stern sigh. The others watched with anxiety. He proceeded to enlighten them:

"Gentlemen, listen to this, and tell me what effect it has on your mind. Sergeant Evans said: 'I arrested the prisoner on the morning of the second. I told her she was charged with the wilful murder of Ann Elizabeth Lewis. She turned pale and said: "It is impossible." I cautioned her. She said nothing more, and *shed no tears*.' Gentlemen, is that like innocence?"

He laid down the paper. The prisoner's doom was sealed. The waverers among the jury went over at once, and even the friends of the prisoner no longer dared to hold out. The tailor would have resisted if he had dared, but his sense of social inferiority was too much for him. What was he, a humble little tradesman, to set himself against eleven men, headed by a wealthy contractor who wore three spade guineas on his watch-chain.

Then a solemn awe settled down over the faces of the twelve men. They did not hesitate in doing what they believed was their duty, but they felt some natural horror of the result. At last the foreman said:

"Gentlemen, are we all agreed?"

And, as there was no reply, he led them back into court.

They had not been out quite an hour, but the interval seemed terribly long to those they left behind.

When they came in one by one, with drooping heads and set faces, the verdict was read before it was heard. Only the prisoner still held out, with that obstinate unbelief in the worst which is a part of strong natures. Only the prisoner and the prisoner's counsel. He manifested no sorrow and no surprise. Prescott put his stoical calmness down to over-exhaustion, others of the Bar attributed it to his confidence in the point reserved. The public hardly noticed him. Their eyes were fixed upon the dock.

The Clerk of Arraigns stood up, and went as best he could through the tedious process of calling each juryman by name. Then followed the routine question, followed by the awful word, heavy with issues of death, pealing forth through the hushed, agitated hall.

"*Guilty!*"

The prisoner neither moved nor answered, as the Clerk formally summoned her to declare if there were any reasons why sentence should not be passed upon her. Some of the women whispered that she had gone mad, or that she was going to faint. The judge covered his wig with the sombre square of silk.

Suddenly she looked up, cast her eyes rapidly round the court, and fixing them full on Prescott, who was attentively watching her, she exclaimed:

"I am *not* guilty."

"Eleanor Margaret Owen, the jury, after a long and patient hearing, and after taking time for careful deliberation, have found you guilty of the crime of wilful murder. What motive inspired you to commit such a crime I cannot say, and it may, perhaps, never be known. It only remains for me to discharge my very painful duty, which I do by declaring that the sentence of the court upon you is——"

The details followed. The words are too familiar to need setting forth. They sounded in unconscious ears. Eleanor Owen had fainted at last, and was carried helpless and lifeless away from the scene of her long martyrdom.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRISONER'S STATEMENT.

THE day after the trial Tressamer went with confident mien to the prison for the purpose of having an interview with Eleanor as to the appeal of which he had given notice.

The governor at first hesitated about permitting this. The prison regulations forbid intercourse with a convict, except under certain rigorous limitations; but the name and function of counsel prevailed, and a warder was sent to fetch the prisoner.

Presently he returned alone, with the startling message that Eleanor positively refused to hold any communication whatever with her late advocate. Tressamer left the gaol with the air of a beaten man.

In his dismay he bethought himself of Prescott, and hurried to the court-house to find him and get his advice. He was there, but he was busy in a case then before the Nisi Prius Court, and it was not till late in the afternoon that Tressamer could get a word with him.

The case had been decided in favour of Prescott's client, and he strode into the robing-room with a little natural elation. But no sooner did he catch sight of his friend, who was waiting for him there, than his whole manner changed, and a stern expression settled round the corners of his mouth.

It was their first meeting since the result of Eleanor's trial. They were alone in the room, and Prescott at once addressed the other:

"Tressamer, what have you to say for yourself? I told you yesterday that I should hold you responsible. You disobeyed my advice, and that of everybody else. You set the judge and jury against you, and the result is what you were told it would be. I gave you fair warning, and I tell you now that, unless you have some reason for your conduct of which I know nothing, I cannot look upon you as a friend."

Tressamer pinched in his lips hard as he listened to this.

"I might have expected it," he said. "We all know that love is stronger than friendship. The first woman that likes can break up the strongest attachments of some men."

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"Silence!" cried Prescott. "I am not going to bandy retorts with you. Ever since we were boys I have liked you and befriended you, and borne with your waywardness. You have outraged all your other friends long ago, but I bore with everything till now. But this is too much. Where a life is at stake, to indulge in your freaks of eccentricity! It is murder morally. What are you better than the man who killed that wretched woman?"

Tressamer shook with anger.

"Be careful, Prescott! I will stand a great deal from you, but you are going too far now. You know as well as I do that her life is in no danger. What is old Buller's opinion worth on a criminal case? Wiseman is worth ten of him, and he is in our favour. The C.C.R. will save her."

"Wretched man! Have you no heart, no moral sense, that you talk like that? As if a mere escape on a technical point could give any comfort to a woman like her! One would think you were wanting in some ingredient of human nature. What does Eleanor herself say?"

"I haven't seen her," was the muttered reply.

"Haven't seen her! Then go at once, and get her authority to appear."

"I have been to the prison, but she won't see me. I suppose she is ill."

A look of positive pleasure crossed the face of the elder man.

Eleanor Owen had fainted at last.

"Ill—no, but innocent!" he exclaimed. "I can understand her refusing to see you. You have played with her life for the prize of infamy, and you deserve that she should discard you. This is the best thing I have heard yet. Why, I could almost forgive you now for telling me. I will go this instant and offer my services: they will be those of a plain, honest man."

And, flinging off his wig and gown, he rushed out of the place in a very unwonted state of excitement.

Tressamer was left, bewildered and enraged, to curse his own folly in betraying his defeat to a rival.

* * * * *

When Eleanor was summoned by the gaoler to see Mr. Prescott, she at first thought there must be some mistake.

"Are you sure you don't mean Mr. Tressamer?" she asked.

"No; he said Prescott."

A faint smile rose in her face. She eagerly assented to the interview, and in a couple of minutes the two were closeted together.

At first there was a brief, awkward silence. Then Prescott broke it by speaking in calm, precise words:

"It is nearly five years since we met, Miss Owen, but I hope you have not quite forgotten me."

"No, indeed," she answered; "but you should have forgotten me. I know I ought to thank you for this visit, and for dealing so leniently with the case yesterday, but I cannot find the right words. It is all so strange—so terrible and so strange."

Prescott was afraid to look at her, lest the tears should come into his eyes.

"Don't thank me, please. I wish I could forgive myself for taking that wretched brief at all. I can only say I did so for fear it might fall into the hands of some abler and bitterer prosecutor. The solicitors were your enemies."

"Yes; I refused their services. I have wondered since if I was wise. It was Mr. Tressamer who advised me."

"And why? Why did you trust yourself so entirely to that man? But I forgot. I believe you are or were engaged."

Eleanor raised her eyes, and looked long and searchingly at her questioner. Suddenly she said:

"Before I tell you, why did you come here—for any special object, I mean?"

"Yes. I came, hearing you had refused—and in my opinion rightly refused—to see Mr. Tressamer. I came, taking the privilege of an old friend of your father's and your own, to ask if I might appear for you in the court to which your case is being taken."

"Ah, then there is a Providence. I am not quite deserted!"

She spoke in half irony, and then all at once broke down and began sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Miss Owen!—don't, Eleanor!" cried her friend in alarm and distress. "Do try and be calm. All will end happily yet, believe me. I swear to you I will never rest till your innocence is established by the discovery of the real criminal, and the stain removed from your character!"

For some time she wept on without replying. At last the sobs grew feebler, and she lifted her head.

"Oh, if you knew," she said, "what I have gone through these last two months—no, I ought to say these last two years, since my father died, and that you are the first to speak to me in tones that I can trust, you would not wonder that I weep. Sometimes I have felt it too much to bear, and I have actually thought before now of writing to you to tell you all my troubles."

"To me! Why, do you—are you——"

She checked him gently.

"To you, as to my oldest friend, whose memory I could recall with trust and confidence. I am speaking now of a time that has passed. Now I shall never consent to claim anyone as my friend—if I live—until this horrible stain has been wiped off my name."

"I will wipe it off. Only trust me fully meanwhile, and if you won't claim my friendship, at least so far rely on it as to unburden yourself to me freely. Tell me all, because I feel that you may hold in some way the clue to this mystery. I cannot think that all the circumstances piled up against you were purely accidental, and I must know everything before I can see my way clearly."

She shook her head doubtfully.

"I am afraid that my story will not throw much light on the murder. Indeed, I fear I am abusing your kindness in troubling you with my affairs. It is a father-confessor I want, not a lawyer." And she smiled faintly.

But Prescott was in earnest, and at length he persuaded her to speak. Making allowance for some repetitions and some slips of memory, her story was something like this:

"When my father died I was only seventeen. In spite

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of his being rector, we had lived a very retired life and seen few visitors. The only people I knew at all intimately were Miss Lewis and the Tressamers.

"Miss Lewis had been in the habit of inviting me to her house ever since I can remember. She used to give me valuable presents too. In fact, she treated me more like a niece or some near relation than a mere acquaintance. I can never forget her kindness—never, never!"

She had to stop a moment or two to overcome her emotion.

"I dare say you remember as much about the Tressamers as I could tell you. You know that I was constantly at their house. George Tressamer and I were always friends, and he showed me great kindness when I was a mere child. I remember I used to look forward to his coming home for the holidays. Neither of us had any brothers or sisters, and so we were more ready to seek each other's company, I suppose.

"But I never quite understood him. I could see, even at an early age, that there was something in his feeling towards me quite different from ordinary friendship. And yet it was only friendship that I felt for him—yes, even to the very last, I assure you. I never felt for him any warmer feeling than gratitude and affection.

"When my dear father died, I was at first in despair. Only two people would I listen to—my aunt Lewis, as she liked me to call her, and George. My own relations were all far away. I had never seen them, and they were too poor to do anything for me. So when Miss Lewis offered me a home I had no choice but to accept. And I was very, very grateful for it.

"But in the meantime George had shown me a great deal of kindness. He came down from London on purpose, directly he heard of my father's death. He made all the arrangements for the funeral, and wound up all my father's affairs. I believe he must have paid some money out of his own pocket, as I know my poor father always spent every penny of his income, and was often hard pressed for money. But there were no demands ever made on me. All the things I expressed a wish for were saved, and after the rest were sold, and all debts settled, George brought me a sum of two hundred pounds, which he said was mine."

Prescott frowned thoughtfully, and drummed with the toe of his boot on the floor.

"I suppose he didn't give you any accounts?" he said.

"No; I never asked for any. I felt sure that my father couldn't really have left me so much as that, and I told Miss Lewis I thought so. But she seemed to think it was all right, and I really was too distressed at his death to think much about money matters, one way or the other.

"Well, that wasn't all. Not only did he see to these business affairs for me, but he did everything he could to console me besides. He brought me books to read, he persuaded me to go for walks, and, in fact, he succeeded in making me get over my first grief sooner than I had thought it possible. The result was that I came to rely on him very much. I looked for him constantly, and felt a disappointment if a day passed without bringing him to see me.

"This was in the vacation time. At last he had to go up to London, and left me feeling very lonely. He offered to write to me, and I was glad to accept. We corresponded the whole term, nearly every week, and at Christmas he came down again.

"By this time some months had gone by since my father's loss, and I was beginning to recover my ordinary spirits. George saw this; he gave me more of his company than ever, and finally, before the Christmas holidays were over, he told me that he loved me.

"You will think I ought to have been prepared for this. Perhaps another girl would have been, but I can only say that it took me completely by surprise. You see, I had never known any other young man at all intimately, and George I had looked upon more as a brother than anything else. When he spoke of love, my first feeling was one of annoyance and fear. I shrank from answering, and when he pressed me I asked him to let me have time to think it over. He wisely dropped the subject, and before we got home he was chatting to me as familiarly as ever.

"The result was that I began to think that the love which he offered me was nothing very deep, but only a warm friendship like what I felt for him. Then I reflected on my own position, as an orphan, dependent on one who was no relation and might cast me adrift at any moment. I realised what a loss it would be to be deprived of George's friendship. I had never really felt anything that I could call love for anyone else, and, in short, I reconciled myself by degrees to the idea. At Easter of that year I accepted him.

"In all this I had made one great mistake. I thought George's feeling towards me was a mild one. The moment we were engaged I found the very opposite.

"When I first uttered the words which gave him the right to do so, he clasped me to him with a transport which frightened me. It was actually fierce in its intensity. He lost all that studied control which he had maintained for so long, and fairly gave himself up to the intoxication of his passion. Had I dreamed what his state of feeling really was, I don't believe that I should ever have promised myself to him. But it was too late to draw back. He had obtained a power over me, from which I shrank, but of which I had no right to complain. I became in a sense his slave, and he did with me what he chose.

"From that moment, unhappily, my own feelings towards him underwent a rapid change. I ceased to look forward to his coming. I got in time to actually dread it. Instead of taking pleasure in his society, I feared him. I disliked the little tokens of proprietorship which are common in the case of an engaged couple. I did not even tell Miss Lewis that we were engaged, though I believe she looked upon it as an understood thing. In fact, I suppose it would not have done for me to see so much of George otherwise. Neither did I dare to tell her of the aversion which had begun to replace my former feelings towards him. To tell the truth, I was ashamed of it. In common gratitude, after all George had done for me, I ought not to have allowed myself to feel so. I did try to check it. I told myself of all his good qualities; I recalled how long I had known him, and how friendly we had always been. But it was no use.

"Sometimes he seemed to realise that I was alienated by his passionate displays. Then he would return for awhile to his old manner, and be cheerful and cynical with me. Then my confidence in him returned, and I enjoyed his company. But this would not last long. When I was least expecting it, he would break into a chain of what I can only call love-frenzy, and disturb me more than ever.

"It was impossible for me to hide what was going on in my mind from him always. He began to find out that I avoided him. Instead of openly coming and calling for me to go out with him, he took to lying in wait, as it were, and joining me when I was out by myself. Of course, nothing was said between us. I did not complain of his stratagems, and he did not complain of my excuses; but I think we understood each other.

"Then he managed to get Miss Lewis on his side. He used to come into the room where we both were and give me an invitation for a walk or sail or other excursion in his company, and if I tried to get out of it, he appealed to Miss Lewis to give me leave, and, of course, she then urged me to go. The way in which he went to work inspired me with a queer sort of admiration for him. I thought that he showed powers of intrigue that would have made him a great man if he had been able to apply them on some vast stage."

"Yes, yes," said Prescott, as she paused a few moments for breath; "he has great ability, strange powers in many things, but——"

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He shrugged his shoulders, and turned a pitying eye on Eleanor. He had known Tressamer well enough to be able to understand her experience.

She went on again:

"Strange to say, you were the cause of our first open quarrel, about six months ago."

"I? How?"

"You know you had not been to Rivermouth for some four years or more. But I remembered you perfectly, and used always to ask George about you when he came down from London. At last, on this occasion, he happened to say he had a recent photograph of you. I got him to show it to me, and then I wanted to keep it. He objected; I persisted, and finally his jealousy was aroused.

"'You always liked Prescott better than me,' he said.

"'I haven't even seen him for five years,' I said. 'I remember him as an old friend, and I don't see why you should mind my taking an interest in him.'

"'Taking an interest!' he scoffed back. 'I wish you would take an interest in me. You have never asked me for my photograph, that I recollect.'

"But I needn't tell you all that we said. It ended in his accusing me of not loving him, and in my saying that he was at liberty to find someone else, if he was dissatisfied with me.

"But he—he would not take the release. He altered his tone all at once, and fell at my feet, protesting that he loved me above all others, and that nothing should ever separate us.

"So things went on, he alternately courting me and threatening me, I turning from coldness and dislike, and from dislike to detestation. But I hadn't the courage to break my bondage, intolerable as I sometimes felt it. Perhaps I should never have shaken myself free but for his own action in bringing things to a crisis. Our letters had been friendly for some time, and, at last, in the month of May, he threw out a suggestion in one that it was time to think of our marriage.

"I took no notice of this. He repeated it more distinctly. Then I wrote, objecting that I was far too young to think of such a thing for some time to come. He took the alarm, came down by the next train, and sought me out. We went together to a lonely part of the shore, and there we came to a full explanation.

"Don't ask me what passed between us. He may be able to tell you. I never can. Enough, that after four hours' agonised entreaty and storm on his part, and agonised endurance on mine, we parted. I told him I could never hold intercourse with him again on any footing, and left him apparently resigned. That was just two days before my friend was murdered.

"He left the place next day, and I did not see him again till after I had been lodged in prison.

"There he came to me, asking no return to the old relations, but simply the privilege of befriending and defending me in my fearful trouble. I was crushed by his generosity, and freely gave myself to his guidance.

"But even in that first interview he threw out a suggestion which shocked and repelled me. He seemed to take it for granted that the jury would convict me, and to rely upon getting me off on a law point. I told him that life would not be worth anything to me under such conditions, and in reply he hinted that his devotion would still be mine, if I cared for it.

"Since then you have seen how it has happened exactly as he foretold. Now, it seems a dreadful thing to say, but the suspicion has forced itself into my mind, and I cannot get rid of it, that he wished all along that I might be blighted in my reputation, and just be saved at the last from actual condemnation, so that I might be driven to take refuge with him."

She spoke these last sentences in a whisper, as if afraid to hear such suggestions even from her own lips.

Prescott gave a groan.

"Would to Heaven I could contradict you!" he said, "but I believe it myself."

And he related to her what had passed between his friend of old and himself. Then he went on to ask:

"By the way, can you tell me anything more about that night than what came out in court? It was you who went out the first time, I take it?"

"Yes, I had been quite unwell for some time, owing to my trouble with George Tressamer. After our final meeting I had a terrible headache, and could not sleep at all. I went out each night about the same hour, but I haven't the faintest idea where I wandered to or how long I was gone. I got a little sleep after I came in, towards the morning."

"And what do you think yourself of this man, Lewis?"

"I can hardly say. He has shown himself my enemy, and, of course, I cannot like him."

"But as to suspecting him?"

"Oh, dear no. I suspect no one."

"Not one of the servants—Rebecca for instance?"

"No. I haven't any inkling whatever as to who committed the crime."

"Well, I suppose I must leave you. I will do whatever is in my power for your deliverance, not merely from danger, but from disgrace, and if I fail I will never venture in your sight again."

(To be continued.)

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N.B.—Please do not confuse me with any of these **so-called manufacturers.** I do **not give rubbish,** but my watches are warranted for 5 years, and are Sterling Silver, not partly silver, or as is known in the trade as 800 silver, and the chains are the **best made,** and of Pure Silver. Money returned if dissatisfied. Send at once, and address:

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White, Cream, Ecru, and 12 Art Shades. CURTAINS, frilled two sides and bottom, 3yd. long, 58in. wide, 6/9 per pair; 3½yd., 7/9 per pair. **May also be had by the yard, 58in. wide, frilled both sides, 11½d. per yard.** Sample Book of Plain & Figured Muslins sent on approval. ROLLER-BLINDS, edged with Lace or Fringe, from 5/6. Sample Book of Materials on approval. CRETONNES, TAPESTRIES, PLUSHETTES, ART SERGES, etc. Patterns on approval. Table Covers, Cushion Squares and Mantel Borders. Picture Book of Lace Curtains, Lace Blinds, Post Free.

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On receipt of stamped envelope, a lady who cured herself of Deafness and Noises in the Head, after fifteen years of suffering, will send to all afflicted free particulars of the Remedy, which is simple, safe, sure and inexpensive. Address—Mrs. C. E. AUSTIN, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London, S.E.

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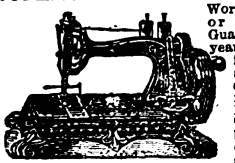

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with *full, perfect, natural Bust,* obtained by a simple, inexpensive self-treatment. Success guaranteed. Highly approved and recommended by the Medical Profession. For testimonials, press opinions, and free particulars, send stamped envelope in confidence to Madame "B. J." Oriental Toilet Co., 57, Strand, London.

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A Marvellous Remedy for Coughs, whether arising from Consumption, Bronchitis, or Asthma. Its efficacy is testified to by Eminent Physicians. Of all Chemists, 2s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 11s. per bottle. Post free, 2s. 9d., 4s. 9d., and 11s. 6d.—J. HOWARD & Co., 20 and 21, Queenhithe, LONDON, E.C. One Trial will prove its Efficacy.

IT WAS NOT THE CLIMATE.

"I have been well as to my general health"—so wrote the late Dr. O. W. Holmes a short time before his death—"but have had a good deal of asthma. The climate is cold and rough, but I have found much that is delightful about my residence in Boston (America). Perhaps, after all, the fault is not so much in latitude 42 *as in age* 82."

That was it. The wise thinker did not deceive himself. He knew that it is the wasting muscles that complain of the steepness of the hills, and the thinning blood that fancies the winters are colder than they used to be.

And it was not because Mrs. Amy Harvey had lost interest in her domestic affairs that she was led to say everything was a trouble and a burden. No; it was because she had lost her strength. Whether a duty is a burden or not depends on the back which has to carry it. Ah, dear me, how constantly experience enforces that lesson upon us. *Then* what keen concern we feel in the answer to the question: What will strengthen the quivering limbs? What will restore the vigour of the mind?

"All my life," says Mrs. Harvey, "I have suffered off and on from indigestion and weakness. I felt low and languid, with a disagreeable sinking sensation after taking my meals. I had no energy; everything *was a trouble and a burden*. As soon as I had partaken of food, no matter how light, I felt a fulness and a gnawing pain at my chest, as if something were tearing it.

"I also suffered much from nervous headache, and was often dizzy. My breathing was short, and if I exerted myself I was quite out of breath. As time went on I got extremely weak and could not attend to my work.

"I saw doctor after doctor, and was told by them that my ailment was owing to my food not digesting."

[The doctors were right. That was the trouble, and the only one. Yet instead of being a comparative trifle, as many shallow persons say, it is the most serious of all diseases. Of course, *some* of her food digested more or less fully; otherwise she could not have lived a fortnight. But the nourishment was never enough for the wants of the body. Hence the nervous headaches, the asthma, the sinking sensation, the dizziness, the gnawing pain, and the disabling weakness. The body under these conditions is like a house abandoned to decay. All goes to rack and ruin.]

"I took the doctors' medicines," continues this lady's plain account, "but my case was an obstinate one, and none of them seemed of any avail.

"In May, 1891, a neighbour told me of the benefit she had derived from Mother Seigel's Syrup. I got a bottle from Messrs. W. Fox and Son, Chemists, Bethnal Green, and when I had taken it two days I felt much relief. I continued taking it, and could eat and enjoy my food without having pain. I now gained strength and *felt brighter than I had ever done in my life.*

"Since then I have kept well, taking a dose or two of Mother Seigel's Syrup when I need it; and I find it always puts me right. You can publish this statement if you think fit. (Signed) (Mrs.) Amy Harvey, 19, 'J' Block, Dufferin Street, Bunhill Row, London, June 26th, 1896."

"In March, 1894," writes another, "I had a severe attack of influenza which left me extremely weak. I was troubled with indigestion and want of appetite. Having read of the wonderful cures made by Mother Seigel's Syrup I decided to try it. I got a bottle from Mr. Wm. Hy. Jones, the chemist in Caledonian Road. In two days I felt great benefit. I could eat, and food agreed with me, causing no pain. *In a few days I was completely cured and well as ever.*

"Since that time I have kept Mother Seigel's Syrup in the house as a family medicine, and it always relieves when any of us suffer from indigestion, etc. I have pleasure in making this statement, and you can publish it if you wish. (Signed) Geo. H. Barker, 44, Montpelier Road, Kentish Town, London, N.W., June 9th, 1896."

These excellent letters call for no explanation. Their sincerity and truth is plain on the surface. And when we remember that what the writers affirm of Mother Seigel's Syrup is also declared by thousands of others, the value of this remedy is established beyond question.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 424. FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 13TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

AH! AH! THE MILDNESS OF THE SEASON HAS DONE THIS.

100,000 LADIES' LUXURIOUSLY HANDSOME, RICH DARK BROWN

OPOSSUM FUR NECKLETS.

The SHORT STORIES SPECIAL NECKLET COUPON. 13/2/97. On receipt of this Coupon and P.O.O. or stamps for amount, we guarantee to send goods as above (carriage free this week only) to your address in any part of the United Kingdom. Cash returned in full if not satisfied. (Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.

REDUCED Sale Price 3/6 each. Worth Double.

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1897 PROCLAMATION.

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REMARKS.—A lady customer writes complaining that we send out too large a Carpet for the money. Be this so or not, we send out no Carpet measuring less than 6ft. by 9ft.—even for 2s. 11d. TEST THEM. THEY WILL SURPRISE YOU.

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(*Registered*). GUARANTEED GENUINE BARGAINS.

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Can be obtained for 6d., plus a pound or two of Sugar and a little Yeast.

THE FINEST BEVERAGE IN THE WORLD.

Inventors and Manufacturers:

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If unable to obtain it in your neighbourhood, send 9 stamps for sample bottle; or samples of both Wine Essence and Extract of Herbs, post free for 15 stamps.

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10/6

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NEW SEASON DRESS FABRICS.

Rich in colourings and designs. Serges (260 varieties), Homespuns, Tweeds, Velveteens, etc. A box containing 1,000 Patterns sent free. Ladies should send a post-card for JOHN NOBLE'S Latest Catalogue of Costumes, Linens, Dress Goods, etc.

GENUINE BARGAINS.

All purchasers during the next few weeks will be presented with a Special Art Souvenir, designed by Raphael Tuck & Sons, The Queen's Art Publishers.

COLOURS.—Black, Brown, Navy, Bronze, Ruby, Cinnamon, Myrtle, Petunia, Fawn, or Grey.

SIZES IN STOCK are 34in., 36in., and 38in., round bust (under arms). Skirts being 38in., 40in., and 42in. long in front. Larger or Special sizes made to measure, 1/6 extra.

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FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,

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Disordered Liver & Female Ailments.

ANNUAL SALE SIX MILLION BOXES.

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THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

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SULPHOLINE LOTION,

For clearing the skin from Spots, Blemishes, Redness, Roughness, giving a Beautiful Complexion and pleasing appearance.

SHILLING BOTTLES.

HAIR DESTROYED.

On receipt of stamped addressed envelope a lady will send to those afflicted with Superfluous Hairs, free particulars of a simple remedy which *permanently* removed a large growth from her sister's face without injuring the skin. Address, in confidence, Miss E. R. DALE, 26, Belvedere Rd., Lambeth, London.

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On receipt of stamped envelope, a lady who cured herself of Deafness and Noises in the Head, after fifteen years of suffering, will send to all afflicted free particulars of the Remedy, which is simple, safe, sure and inexpensive. Address—Mrs. C. E. AUSTIN, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London, S.E.

CORPULENCY CURED

By a simple inexpensive self-treatment, effecting a rapid and permanent reduction without change in diet. Particulars free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to Dr. G. A. BOYD, 14, York Buildings, Charing Cross, London.

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HARMLESS COMPLEXION WAFERS

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Of course you can! Why not then emboss your Notepaper, etc., with a pretty Monogram? using the

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Every Initial and Monogram kept in stock. Monograms of one or two letters, 9d. each, post free. Apply—

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THEIR DISEASES

CURED WITHOUT OPERATION

NEW TREATMENT.—For Cataract and all Diseases of the Eye; Deafness in all its forms; Noises in the Head and Ears; Discharges from the Ears; Deafness from Influenza and Catarrh cured. Nine cases out of ten cured without personal interview. The special remedies forwarded to any part. Hundreds of letters in testimony. Bleeding, Blistering, and all other obsolete and violent treatment avoided. No "Ear-Drums," "Ear-Cornets," or painful instruments employed. Write for Testimonials and Printed Form of Questions to answer; forwarded free.—Mr. T. ISON, Eye and Ear Dispensary, Leeds. [Estab. 1871.]

WHY SUFFER FROM CORNS, BUNIONS, OR ENLARGED TOE JOINTS, when a packet of **Thompson's Celebrated French Corn Plasters** will cure you? It is thin as silk, and can be worn with tightest boot. Post free for 14 stamps from M. F. THOMPSON, Homœopathic Chemist, 17, Gordon St., Glasgow. *Thompson's Guide to Health* post free

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SOUND DISCS

Completely overcome DEAFNESS and HEAD NOISES, no matter of how long standing. Are the same to the ears as glasses are to the eyes. Invisible. Comfortable. Worn months without removal. Explanatory Pamphlet Free.

The L. R. WALES CO., 62 & 63, New Bond St., London, W.

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No. 424.—One Penny. February 13, 1897.

SHORT STORIES

THE SNAKE-BITE.

The midday train was hurrying onward as though, like a high-bred horse, the locomotive felt in its iron frame a fresh impulsion from the frosty air. The passengers themselves seemed inclined to enjoy the sunshiny February day, rather than to grumble at the cold. And there was one of their number that attracted a certain amount of attention from the gay exuberance of his spirits. He appeared to be literally overflowing with happiness, like a man who is nearing the fruition of a hope long cherished and long delayed, and at last on the point of realisation. He was too restless to sit still, or even to keep silent. He was a tall, lithe, sharp-featured man of about forty years of age, naturally of a fair complexion, but with his skin tanned of that peculiar mahogany-brown which betrays the parching of a tropical sun.

From that deeply bronzed visage a pair of bright blue eyes looked forth upon the world with a cheery sparkle in their depths. Of genial aspect and eager to talk, he found no difficulty in entering into conversation with his next neighbour, who was also communicative, a kindly-looking country doctor, who was returning home from a visit to town, where he had been laying in a stock of scarce drugs and had been picking up some of the latest ideas in medical science. A remark of the doctor's concerning a deep, white scar on the side of one of his travelling companion's sinewy hands furnished the latter with a pretext for talking, of which he was not slow to avail himself.

"It isn't pretty to look at," he remarked, holding up his hand as he spoke, to afford a good view of the livid-looking triangular-shaped mark, "and it was anything but pleasant in the making; for, at first, the place was cut out with a sharp knife, and then the wound was cauterised with a red-hot iron. But for all that the pain was worth enduring, for it saved my life."

"The bite of a mad dog, I suppose?" said the doctor.

"Not a bit of it. It wasn't anything one could take the chances on like that. It was a snake-bite, and the fellow that set his fangs into me was the handsomest-marked reptile you ever saw—all yellow and black, and striped like a tiger. It was out in South Africa that it happened. I had gone to the Kimberley Mines to do a stroke of business, and went off prospecting a bit on my own account. I had studied geology in my odd moments, and I had a theory as to the whereabouts of some of the big stones. So I took a trip into the interior, with a single Zulu for my guide. And one evening, while getting some sticks together for the camp fire, I was fool enough to run my hand into a tall patch of weeds; and I pulled it back fast enough, I promise you, with a tiger-snake hanging to it by his fangs."

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"And what did you do?"

"First I killed the snake. Then I cut the place out as deep as I could manage with my very sharp hunting-knife. Next I put the blade of a smaller knife that I had with me into the fire, and as soon as it got red hot I cauterised the wound thoroughly. I was weak and sickish for two days afterwards, but it came all right at last. My Zulu Jack said it was the only time he had ever known of a person bitten by a tiger-snake to recover. I've brought home the skin and the venom from the snake's poison-bag. Jack showed me how to prepare them, and I'm going to forward them to the Zoological Society as soon as I get settled at home."

"And how did you fare in your search for diamonds?"

The traveller laughed gleefully.

"Badly enough at first," he replied. "I had just telegraphed to my poor little wife that I was dead broke and that I was coming home a good deal worse off than I went away, when a great stroke of luck—No, I'll not give you any of the details. It's a thing that might happen a second time if the person that knew about it were wise and could hold his tongue. At all events, it happened once to me; and I've come home with £20,000 to my credit, all safe and sound in the bank. So here I am, on my way to the girl I left two years ago with just enough money to keep our little house going; and I shall walk in and say:

"'See here, Kate! Ruined, am I? Just put on your bonnet and we'll be off to London this blessed minute. No need to pack your trunk. Plenty of fine clothes to be bought in London. Or, if not there, we'll e'en push on as far as Paris to buy some.' And then I'll throw this little sparkler in her lap, just to prove that I'm telling the truth."

As he spoke he took from his waistcoat-pocket a large diamond, set clumsily, but not ineffectively, in a massive ring. He held it up so that the bright sunlight might show off its rainbow lustre.

"Pretty, isn't it?" he remarked, slipping the ring for better security into an inner pocket in the breast of his coat. "Kate's eyes will shine brighter than that diamond when she first gets a sight of me. For, you see, I have planned my home-coming to be a great surprise. And I've been the only friend and comforter that my sweet little wife has ever had. It's just five years since she came with a variety show to Pineyford. A poor, half-starved, sickly little thing she was, and soon broke down in the dance and song act she used to do. She felt ill—typhoid fever, nothing less—and the manager went off with his troupe and left her to die or to recover, as Providence might decide. There was just one thing to

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do: I had her doctored up and fed up, when she began to get better; and I married her as soon as she was strong enough to stand up at my side and to say, 'I will!' Rather too dainty and delicate a creature for a poor man's wife, though always gay and merry and amusing. And now that we are rich——"

"Westbrook Station! Change here for Pineyford!" shouted the guard, in stentorian tones, while the train slackened speed preparatory to coming to a full stop.

"Here's my jumping-off place, I declare! Good-bye, doctor. Think I've most talked you blind, but you'll excuse a man that's just brimming over with happiness for being something over-talkative. And if you ever come to Pineyford and will ask for Joel Denton and his wife, and we happen to be at home, you'll find a hearty welcome waiting for you—that's all!"

And picking up his bag, and pulling his soft travelling cap well over his eyes, the joyous traveller swung himself down from the platform just as the train gave symptoms of moving on.

The sunshine of the winter's day had departed, and the sky showed, amid the faint rose-flush overspreading it, no luminary more dazzling than a slender-curved thread of gold, with a single planet sparkling just beyond it.

Mr. Denton was not exactly in a mood to enjoy the beauty of the evening, for, greatly to his disgust, he found that the Pineyford train—the only one that the evening hours afforded—did not depart till nine o'clock. To the gleeful anticipations of the homeward bound traveller this delay was most vexatious. However, there was no help for it; so, after comforting himself as well as he could with a good dinner, he lit a cigar, and started off for a stroll down the line, to pass away the time, and to meditate over the coming meeting with his idolised wife.

On he walked, plunged in pleasant meditations. He had gone quite a distance, and was in the act of turning to retrace his steps to the station, when in spite of the gathering shades of twilight, he caught sight of a woman standing at the top of the embankment, opposite to the one on which he found himself. She was leaning forward and listening intently. Just then the noise of a coming train became audible. She sprang down the side of the way, and, crouching on the lines, she buried her face in her hands, and remained motionless, waiting for the death that would be so surely dealt to her by those terrible, hurrying wheels, the sound of whose coming had already swelled into approaching thunder.

Joel Denton was as quick-witted as he was athletic, and without a moment's delay he swung himself down the bank, caught the kneeling woman in his arms, and literally swept her from her perilous position into a place of safety. His aid came none too soon. As he staggered back against the bank, still grasping the rescued woman, the train rushed past with a shriek as though of fury in being balked of its prey, so close that the fiery breath of the engine fairly scorched his hands.

As the last carriage vanished round the curve, Denton released the struggling woman, and half pulled, half led her to the top of the embankment. She was very weak from the shock, and inclined to be hysterical; but Joel Denton had no sympathy with what, in his own mind, he denominated as "deuced foolishness." So when she had sunk down exhausted on the comfortless seat afforded by a big, flat stone, he looked at her severely and remarked:

"Now, what did you do that for? We might both have been killed, and if I hadn't come along at the nick of time, you surely would have been."

She looked up, showing a pale, wan countenance, set in a mass of black ruffled hair, and a pair of great, wild, dark eyes blazing with a feverish lustre.

"I wish I were! Oh, I wish I were!" she moaned, rocking herself to and fro, as if in an agony of intolerable suffering. "Why didn't you let me be? It would have been all over by this time, and now I've just got to begin again."

"And what's the reason you want so badly to kill yourself? Just tell me your story and what it is that troubles you," said Denton, his kindly heart softening before the youth and piteous words and the despairing woe of the speaker. "Mayhap I can help you to find some way out of it all."

She shook her head hopelessly.

"There is only one way out of my misery for me, and that is death."

"Anyhow, won't you tell me what is the matter?"

"Desolation!—desertion!—heartbreak!" she cried. "Look you: I had but one person to love in all the world, and that was my husband. Both my parents are dead, and I never had a child, and I loved him—no, it was more than love that I felt for him—it was idolatry! I knew he wasn't the kind of man I ought to have married. He was a gambler and a hard drinker; but he was handsome, and just as fascinating as a serpent to all women. I ran away from home to become his wife, and I do believe that the misery and disgrace of my elopement broke my poor mother's heart. I've never been happy with him, never; but just so long as I could be with him, and try to coax him back to something like what he was when we were first married, I got along, for I always hoped that some day my love and my patience would win him back to me. You may have heard of him, perhaps—the professional gambler, Martin Jackson. He is quite a celebrity in sporting circles, they say."

Joel Denton shook his head and took a furtive glance at his watch. Only a little after eight. How slowly the time lagged, when he was longing to be hurrying onward towards Kate, and the perfect bliss of their reunion.

"I might have suspected something when he decided to settle down at such a dull town as Pineyford for the winter, but I never dreamt of the real attraction of the place. It seems that there was a woman there that he had known and fancied some years before. He had tried acting for a while, and she was a member at that time of the same company with himself, and they got to be very fond of one another, I've been told. To be sure, she had married and settled down, but she wrote to him, while we were in London, to tell him that her husband had deserted her, and that she was very unhappy, and longed to see him once more.

"He came on at once to Pineyford, and we stayed there for months; and at last there came a telegram from the woman's husband saying that he was totally ruined, and that he was coming back as fast as possible. It seems that he had never deserted his wife at all, but he had gone away to try and make money, in some new enterprise or other, and when all his hopes failed he sent word that he meant to return. Why do you look at me like that? Do you think I am not telling the truth? Here are all the letters that creature wrote my husband. I found them in his room after he went away. For he and she have run off together. They would not wait until the man they had both wronged got back to face them. They have gone to London, and on Saturday they are to sail for America."

"Her name—the woman's name?"

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So hoarse and broken was the whisper in which this question was uttered, that the hearer failed to comprehend it until it was once more repeated.

"She used to be known on the stage by the name of Kitty Forrest. Her husband's name is Joel Denton. And now you can understand why it was that I wanted to kill myself, for I have nothing on earth left to live for."

"You have."

"And what is that?"

"Revenge!"

She laughed drearily.

"And how could I avenge myself, I should like to know? I, a feeble, friendless woman. Who would help me to secure that last sweetness life has still to offer?"

"I will."

"And why? What are Martin Jackson and Kitty Forrest to you?"

"The former, nothing; the latter, all the world. I am Joel Denton!"

* * * * *

The manager and the cashier of the Hotel de Tours in Liverpool—a small tavern not far from the quay, where the steamers take their departure—were somewhat puzzled by the aspect and the movements of a man who came thither to take a room on Thursday morning. He had a wild look about his eyes, and seemed strangely absent-minded; moreover, he had no luggage, except one small bag; but as he paid in advance for three days' board and lodging, and was not too particular about the position of his room, he was accepted without question as an inmate.

As he asked for the direction of a maker of surgical instruments, he was set down as a physician, somewhat dazed with overwork, and then nobody thought any more about him. He went to the shop indicated, but his purchases were unimportant. He merely bought two small lancets, being extremely particular about the fineness of the steel and the sharpness of the blades. Having selected and paid for the little instruments, he returned to the hotel, went to his bedchamber, rang the bell, and ordered—not the inevitable whisky and water—but a jug of hot water, which, after a short delay, was brought to him by an attendant.

Then, had any spy upon his movements been peering through the keyhole, he might have witnessed a curious process. Drawing from the inner recesses of his coat a large pocket-book, the inmate of the room proceeded to take from one of its compartments a folded paper, from which he extracted a long band of scaly skin, speckled and striped with black and yellow, in hues dulled by drying, and a second very small folded paper, from which he shook upon the table two little discs of what looked like thin, semi-pellucid horn.

Then he took from the washstand a tumbler, which he turned upside down, and in the shallow hollow of its base he placed the two discs, dropping on them, with infinite precaution, a few drops of hot water. When they were nearly dissolved, he carefully anointed with the thick, viscous liquid thus produced the point and one-third of the length of the blade of each of the lancets he had just bought. After thoroughly washing the bottom of the tumbler with warm water, he calmly proceeded to smash it to pieces on the hearth, gathered up the fragments, and wrapped them in a piece of newspaper, afterwards ringing the bell, announcing the breakage, and asking that the broken glass should be taken away.

* * * * *

Two days later the steamship *Perseverance* lay at her wharf, her engines throbbing with the suppressed energy of approaching departure. There was the usual bustle and animation on the dock, as well as on the deck of the great ship. Passengers were hurrying to and fro with their wraps and handbags; porters were toiling along under weight of state-room trunks and steamer chairs; messengers were arriving with bouquets and devices in hot-house flowers, and with baskets of choice fruit, and all was pleasurable stir and excitement.

Among the latest arrivals came a pair that attracted universal attention by reason of their personal comeliness. The man, tall, broad-shouldered, black-moustached and dark-eyed, was decidedly handsome, though in a coarse, dissipated style, while his companion—a laughing, dimpled blonde, with the bluest of eyes, and the yellowest of locks, was, as a bystander audibly remarked, "as pretty as a pink." No friends or acquaintances of the striking-looking couple had come down to the wharf to see them off, but, absorbed as they were in each other, they did not seem to need or to care for the presence of anybody else.

"All aboard!" came the warning cry. There was a rush towards the gangway, and a certain degree of crowding and confusion ensued, in the midst of which the pretty blonde uttered a sudden cry.

"What's the matter?" queried her companion.

"Just look how something has scratched me!" she answered, holding up one slender, ungloved hand, across the back of which a long, deep scratch, or rather cut, formed a scarlet line.

"By Jove! You have scratched yourself. And see here! There is just such another mark on my wrist. I wonder what could have caused it! or could anyone——"

And he glared round with wrathful eyes, but, failing to fix the outrage on any person in the crowd, he contented himself with remarking: "A pin in some one's sleeve, I suppose; it's not much after all." And in a moment more the throng of departing travellers were safe and sound on board, the gangway was withdrawn, and the mighty screw bore away the huge steamship on the first stage of her voyage.

The trip was a swift and prosperous one, lasting just eight days from shore to shore. It was saddened, however, by a tragic and inexplicable incident. Two of the passengers, Martin Jackson and the charming woman who had passed as his wife, both died within a few hours of each other during the early morning of the second day out. The ship's surgeon could only conjecture the cause of the mysterious and fatal event. He suggested suicide by poison, or a peculiarly malignant type of blood-poisoning, this last supposition being warranted by the irritated and inflamed condition of a scratch on the lady's hand, and one on the wrist of her companion. But the science of the young doctor failed to discover the reason of the simultaneous development of such a condition of the blood in the veins of two different persons. However, neither of the deceased were of sufficient importance to make much fuss about.

The solemn ceremonial of a burial at sea afforded a mild, if dismal, distraction to the surviving passengers. And Joel Denton, when the cable dispatch of the *Perseverance's* arrival came with the additional tidings of the two deaths that had taken place on board, looked grimly down on the deep, white scar on the side of his hand and muttered between his teeth:

"It was worth while the danger and suffering, and all, to have brought home with me the death-dealing venom of the tiger-snake!"

L. H. H.

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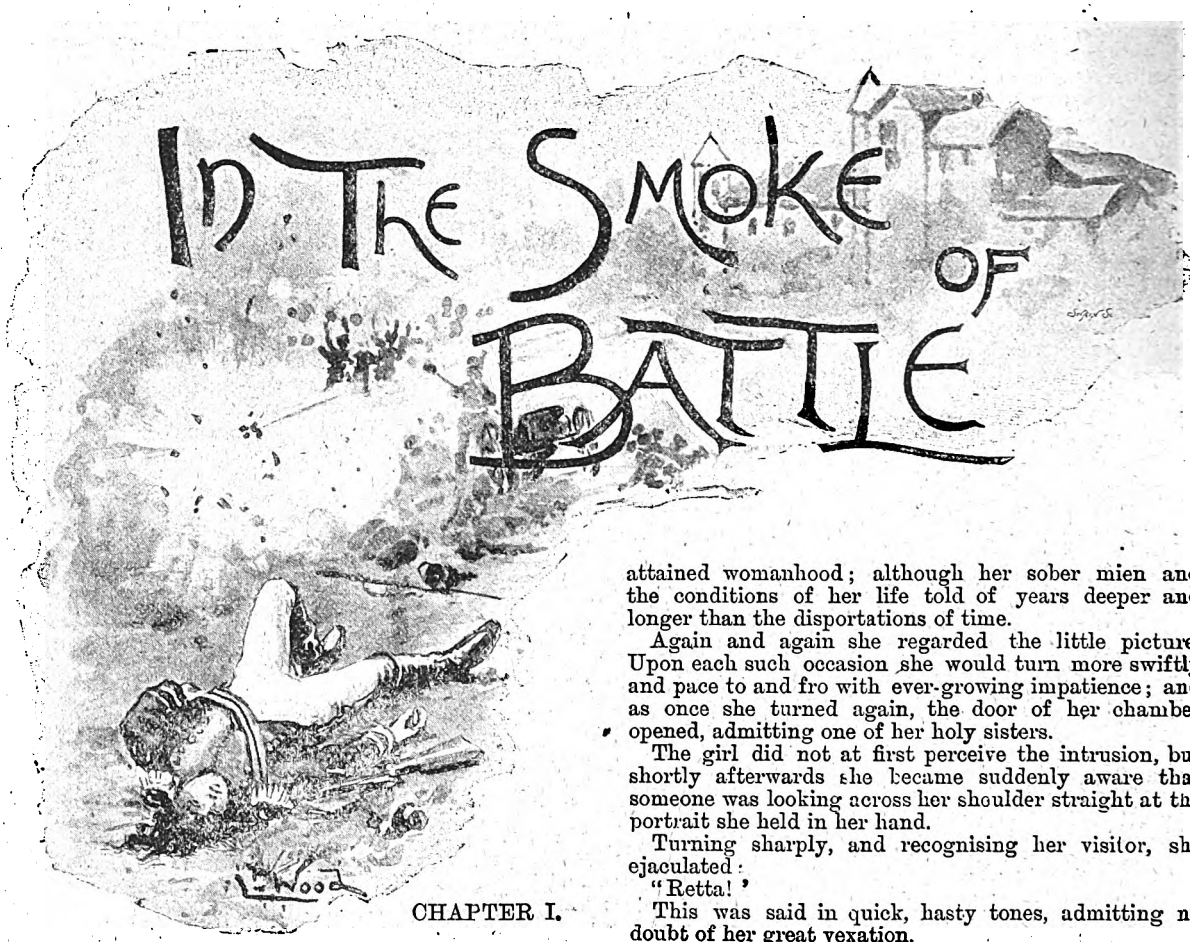
IN THE SMOKE OF BATTLE



CHAPTER I.

CLOSE beneath the southern border of the Pyrenees, overlooking the memorial field of a present century war, lay the Convent of St. Ursula.

It crouched like a thing decrepit with age. It reared its black towers fearfully towards the sky, as if pleading for light and help, or forgetfulness of the scenes it had witnessed.

From the time of Corunna, down past the memories of Vigo, Lugo, and Lisbon, down to the end of Vittoria, it had watched the dispatch of human life. The woe of Napoleon, the requiems after Moore, the wild, triumphant cries, as laurels showered upon Wellington, were all known to the heart of St. Ursula.

One eventide, in the heart of this eventful time, a lovely girl paced to and fro within her lonely chamber.

From her bearing one might have seen how unaccustomed she was to the confinement of those shambling walls, and how little the old quaint hangings impressed her. Essentially she was as indifferent to the cold, half mystic fascination of convent life as to the antique beauties elaborating her room.

She walked with a firm, hurried tread that bespoke impatience; yet about it there was a hesitation proclaiming something of womanly indecision, and a consideration for those her restlessness might disturb. One or twice she faltered in her passage, stopping to draw from her vest the photograph of a man.

Judging by appearances, she could not yet have attained womanhood; although her sober mien and the conditions of her life told of years deeper and longer than the disportations of time.

Again and again she regarded the little picture. Upon each such occasion she would turn more swiftly and pace to and fro with ever-growing impatience; and as once she turned again, the door of her chamber opened, admitting one of her holy sisters.

The girl did not at first perceive the intrusion, but shortly afterwards she became suddenly aware that someone was looking across her shoulder straight at the portrait she held in her hand.

Turning sharply, and recognising her visitor, she ejaculated:

"Retta!"

This was said in quick, hasty tones, admitting no doubt of her great vexation.

"Ah, my sweet child!" the other returned gently. "Don't speak so hastily to me. Do I not love you—are we not sisters? Lalage, tell me you love me, that you want me, that I may sit by your side and talk!"

"Yes, yes," the girl hurried to reply. "I want you, I love you, but there are times ——"

She stopped, and as she bowed her head her long black hair drooped over her face, concealing the look of angry impatience in her eyes. Her foot beat noiselessly on the floor with significant jerks.

Retta spoke again.

"There ought to be no times, sister Lalage, when I should be excluded from your presence. You would not be happy here unless I were with you. You have no other to love you, dear, but me."

Lalage bent her head still lower, half in shame, half in anger, endeavouring at the same time to conceal the miniature she held.

Retta continued:

"We have been friends and sisters—think of that! Ah, you turn from me hastily again. Lalage! Lalage! Look at me—look and listen!

"Throughout our lives we have been fondly drawn together—you the child and I the woman. Hitherto we have lived in peace, loving one another very, very deeply, but now—now when I am hourly expecting the news of his terrible sentence being fulfilled, in this time of perfect pain, you turn from me and are cold. Oh, child,

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you don't know the agony, the barrenness of wasted years—when love is plucked from the life, like the scent from a rose. You don't know how hard it is to live—how hard to avoid self-destruction; and were it not for you—*you*, my darling sister—my Lalage, my life would long since have flown. Think of it, Lalage, and love me!"

Her golden hair escaping the coil, here fell upon the black tresses of the wayward girl, and the two commingling might easily have suggested the contrast in their respective natures: Gold amongst dust — sunshine amongst darkness—life amongst death.

"Retta!" exclaimed the girl, suddenly raising her head, and stroking the other's hand almost fiercely, "am I unkind to you—*very* unkind? Tell me that, Retta?"

"No, darling—not unkind, but sometimes inconsiderate. You are young—very young, and consequently a little wayward; that is all."

"But you forgive that, don't you, Retta? I *am* a child to you, am I not?"

"Yes, Lalage!" said the other earnestly.

"You spoil me," continued the girl. "You indulge me, there is nothing you have not done, or would not do for me, is there, Retta?"

"Nothing, my Lalage, for you are all I have to live for now."

"Supposing," the girl continued, with a strange heat glowing about her face, "supposing your Victor—your own true Victor—was pardoned and became a free man again. Supposing he sought and found you in your retreat here, where you are mourning his loss. Would you leave me alone here and return to him? Do you love him so much and me little enough for that, Retta? Would you do that?"

Retta hesitated. A world hung at her heart upon this issue, and it was in scarcely audible tones she replied:

"No! I must remember my vow."

Lalage sprang up, and, in her excitement, let the photograph fall unheeded to the floor.

At this moment Retta's eyes, wandering from her companion, chanced upon the photograph at her feet.

She stooped and secured it.

A short, sharp exclamation of surprise escaped her as she turned the face uppermost.

"What, Lalage, what is this?" she asked at length.

The girl sprang towards her, wresting the photograph from her grasp.

In so doing the picture was damaged, seeing which Lalage laughed hysterically, almost madly.

"This!" she cried, holding the picture above her. "This is the portrait of *your* Victor—*yours!* I was keeping it for the time when you regretted your vow, so that you might have one little token of your discarded love, one little token to console you. I will keep it still!"

"What made you do it!" Retta breathlessly inquired. Then, as if struck with a sudden fear:

"Lalage—Lalage—Lalage! Surely you cannot mean—you dare not mean."

"I mean nothing! I dare everything for—for your sake, Retta."

Saying this, the girl fell suddenly calm, and, after a short struggle, Retta decided she must have been mistaken in her fearful conjecture.

"I thought you could not have meant anything, Lalage," she said, with a low, nervous flutter in her voice.

"No, no, Retta," returned the girl. "I mean nothing, only that I love you, and would do anything for you. You should not suspect me."

Then after a pause:

"Retta, you are beautiful. You are beautiful in your soul, beautiful in your body, beautiful in your whole being. How I envy you!"

"Envy, Lalage?"

"Yes, I envy you. Why not, Retta? What have I to be proud of? I have no beauty such as yours; I have no love such as yours; I am not even loved as you are. I am a child—a mere child—a useless, powerless child."

"Lalage, don't talk so. You will have womanhood and its blessings before long."

"What is womanhood without beauty, without love?" the girl questioned fiercely.

Then suddenly falling again into her strange, calm state, she playfully continued:

"Retta, you might be loved for the golden glory of your hair. Perhaps you are. Supposing now—only in play, mind—supposing, like the woman in the Bible, by whom Sampson was shorn of his locks and his strength

Someone was looking across her shoulder.

at the same time, I was to cut off *your* hair? What then?"

"Lalage! Lalage!" the other interposed, "you must not say these things."

"I'm only in play, Retta—only in play, remember that. And then supposing, like Jael, I was to strike the nail into Sisera's temple—*you* being for the time Sisera."

"No more, Lalage; my blood runs nearly cold to hear a child talk so."

"But"—Lalage laughed in return—"I am only in play. It struck me that, shorn of your hair, you might not be worth the loving; and, on the other hand, shorn of your life you could not love so freely and well, if at all. But it was only in play I said it, Retta; that was all." Then she kissed her.

A d**p s*****e e****d, a*d R***a, f******g s*e k**w h*r c****e f***y, a*d b*******g w**t s*e s**d, q*****y d********d h*r i*********n at t*e g****s w**d w***s. In t*e i******l L****e g**w r*******s, a*d a q***k o******r m***t h**e d********d an e*********n u**n h*r l****y f**e, in f**t, a s*******g a***t h*r w***e m**n, i*******g a s*****r of i**********e f**r.

Her cheeks pulsed and pulsed again. Her fingers

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worked spitefully, and some hidden passion, becoming at last so utterly uncontrollable, impelled her to seize a veil lying close beside her and savagely rend it into strips.

By that time Retta had unconsciously fallen into a gentle sleep.

With a vacant, far-off look in her deep black eyes, Lalage knotted the strips of veiling and twisted them into a species of thong.

With intuitive stealth she attached an end to each wrist of the slumbering woman.

Then she deftly withdrew herself, and an instant later was rapidly binding the astonished Retta fast to the chair. Her actions spoke of a strength bordering upon the strength of madness. A pent-up fury burst like a cyclone in one sudden impulse, and she panted like a hound.

Fixing her victim beneath her own weight, kneeling on her, thrusting her roughly into position, she tied the thongs with cruel swiftness, and a few minutes later her guardian angel—now her victim—was at the mercy of her merciless heart.

Thoroughly awakened to the girl's malignant fury, Retta struggled and writhed; but her efforts were all of no avail. So dexterous and certain was the power of the girl's wrath, that Retta felt the trammels were fastened upon her like the grip of death.

Try as she might, she found it impossible to escape. Hope and fear alternated in the possession of her mind. She tried to fancy her captivity as the result of a mere girlish freak, but upon each recurrence of this thought her eyes wandered towards her captor, and she visibly trembled.

She could utter no word; she could neither think nor plead. Agonising grief, rather than anger, filled her heart at the merciless ingratitude of her deeply loved Lalage.

Then Lalage placed her arms akimbo and spoke:

"Retta, you are beautiful. Your virtue is rewarded with martyrdom. Go still farther and deny your love for Victor. Say your vows and your love for me exclude all thoughts of him."

Approaching her victim she laved her hands in the bath of tresses, and, withdrawing them, she smiled as she saw some of the burning threads entwined about her fingers.

"Lalage—Lalage," Retta complained in low tones, broken by the weight of her suffering, "I cannot deny Victor. I have been mistaken in my vows. He is dear, very dear, to me, and I have made a promise I could never fulfil were he but to return."

"You say that?" mockingly questioned Lalage. "Then you are a wicked woman. Why don't you deny him and be eased of your pain?" Saying which she drew the tensioned knots still tighter.

The tortured woman groaned, but even then her heart was full of forgiveness, and she would utter no cry lest it apprised the other inmates of her loved one's treachery.

"Deny him, deny him! Even *say* you deny him!" urged the girl maliciously.

"I cannot. Release me, Lalage, release me, and I will kiss you—I will kiss you now!" And her beautiful face looked upwards in expectant hope.

Lalage kissed her fiercely, and then echoed a shrill, hard laugh.

The kiss so stung Retta that she perceptibly winced. The girl laughed again—this time more harshly.

"Deny your love for Victor and you are free!" she said with a strange commingling of entreaty and spite.

"Never, Lalage, never! I cannot!"

Again the hands sought the captive tresses, and again the fingers withdrew intertwined with the golden threads.

Great scalding tears—more of grief than of pain—rolled down the beautiful face, but still the tongue was silent.

"If I had a knife," mused Lalage deliberately, her tones more terrible for being suppressed. "I would rob you of your hair—your life—your all."

"Lalage!"

This one short cry sped from the martyr's heart like the cry of an angel in the clutch of fiends. To her reticence in blaming her torturer, may be attributed the other's steadily developing fury.

Raising her clenched hand, she savagely struck her victim across the eyes.

A cry of agony followed the act, but not for an instant did Lalage waver in her deadly purpose.

As Retta's eyes, shot with blood, slowly opened in a long, appealing look Lalage snatched the photograph again, kissing it passionately. Then tearing it into a hundred pieces, she showered them upon the agonised woman; and at last, losing all mortal restraint, advanced and struck her—struck her several furious blows upon the body.

A resounding shriek rang loudly.

In an instant all the inmates of the convent were awake and flocking to the scene.

Retta by this time was quite unconscious, and might have been taken for dead, save for a troubled heaving of the bosom.

With merciful, womanly instinct, a few sprang to the captive's release.

The remainder, forgetting their sanctity, fell like furies upon Lalage; but she, with marvellous dexterity, struck her way fiercely through the crowd, and, without a look behind, made hasty escape.

Dashing through the corridors, she came to a window overlooking the convent wall.

Flinging it open, she took the plunge, and by the help of that inscrutable Providence, ever guardful of abandoned sinners, landed safely on the summit of the wall.

Another leap and she was lost to sight.

The pale faces, looking out from their shrouds behind her, sickened and turned away.

CHAPTER II.

A few months after the above event, the roar of battle broke thunderously over the Convent of St. Ursula.

Musket shot pelted like leaden dust about the shambling walls.

Smoke and fire panted from the muzzles of cannon—thick steaming crimson sparkled on every sword—the very horses seemed charged with inflammable hate. Ever and anon a black enveloped cloud swept by with a whirr and a rush, telling of a deadly charge.

This and more was watched by the pale-faced sisters of St. Ursula. Foremost amongst them, with divine pity gleaming in her eyes, was Retta.

Throughout the day—far into the night—she listened to the terrible uproar, and each woeful cry found echo in her heart.

At length, after long dragging hours of conflict, a wild hurrah! swelled mightily upon her ear, and the atmosphere, hitherto so heavy, seemed to become suddenly lighter. Crisp, sharp shouts, some of rage,

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some of victory, resounded from the field in different tongues, and the heaving fire of iron stomachs grew less frequent. Horses gulped and snorted in terror, stumbling as they flew, spurred and goaded by the conquered.

Again, and with super-added power, the hurrahs fell quickly upon the thickening gloom; and, looking forth, Retta saw a green-coated, white-breasted, star-bangled column of cavalry flying directly towards the convent.

At this juncture a yellow-faced moon mounted the sky, shining clemently down upon the retreating line.

Immediately in the centre Retta descried two figures keeping steadily together.

Why these two so forcibly attracted her attention she could not then say; but no matter where she looked, or how general a conception she tried to get of the situation, her glance immediately reverted to this particular pair.

Moving to a more convenient position, she peered forth, scrutinising them intently. On they came, their swinging pace gathering impetus with every stride—their flying horses neighing with terror, their manes entangled, and their flanks bleeding from the deeply-driven spurs.

With each thud of hoofs the two horsemen became ever more prominent, and at length Retta was able in some degree to distinguish their faces.

One appeared to be a black-haired youth, whose helmet had been lost in the conflict. His figure was exceedingly slim and effeminate, and he rode with an easy lightness most unusual in a soldier.

The other sat like a soldier; he *was* a soldier; there could be no doubt about that.

By reason of his wearing a helmet the eager woman behind the casement was not able to discern his features, any more than to feel they were handsome and perfectly fearless.

"But where," she asked herself abruptly, "where had she seen before that figure sitting with imperial stateliness upon the gaunt black horse? How was it every action of the arm, every movement of the muscle, seemed familiar to her?"

Two figures keeping steadily together.

The cavalcadé by this time was very near. Resolutely tensioning her nerves she looked again.

The figure, with its embodiment of stately power, swept on and on; the other, that of the slim, effeminate youth, struggling to keep up.

So sure as the former applied the spurs and lashed his charger, the other did likewise. Each extra effort was followed in a similar, though more brutal manner, by the youth; and by dint of this, the pair eventually headed the column by an appreciable distance.

Faster and faster they flew, leaving a veil of dust in their wake, and very shortly were hard upon the convent.

Approaching a little closer, they wheeled suddenly round to the quarter where the wall was within leaping distance of the corridor window.

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Retta flew as Lalage had done, arriving just in time to see the horsemen rein in their foaming steeds and dismount.

Clattering behind, she could hear the column, apparently making for the pass, and at an increasing distance the shouts of the victorious pursuing redcoats.

Hastily unfastening the window, she flung it open. Simultaneously the figure, which had so strangely arrested her eyes and thoughts, turned full towards her.

The face turned upwards, and she recognised the man who was truly the sole and only hope of her life.

Having eyes for nothing and nobody, having no fear, forgetting for the moment even her sympathy with the sufferers, she beckoned him frantically.

He saw her, and a moment later had mounted the convent wall. He was preparing to spring, when a rifle shot rang sharply behind him, and staggering, he lost balance, falling back again to the base of the wall.

Retta just had time to see the youth's rifle descend from firing position when the thunderous cavalcade dashed passed.

Instantly the youth was prostrated beneath the flying tread of the escaping horsemen, and a thousand steel-clad hoofs pressed and crushed the life from his fragile form.

Mad with desperation, Retta leapt from her coign to the wall, and a second later was breathlessly kneeling by the body of her lover.

Falling back again to the base of the wall.

Raising his head so that it might rest upon her arm she found the wound was comparatively slight, and that the bullet had nowhere lodged itself.

Almost unconsciously Retta breathed her lover's name, and, glorious with love and reverence, the soldier's eyes opened, drinking in the radiant beauty of his guardian angel.

"Victor—Victor!" she whispered passionately.

"Retta!" said the soldier lover. "I live, and am free—free! Rescued on the eve of war, I came and fought my hardest. Providence in the shape of a youth has preserved me from many a shot and sword thrust—but," raising his glance inquiringly, "but where is he? He was close beside me awhile ago."

Retta's tears flowed still faster as she answered:

"He lies yonder, trampled to death by the flying line of cavalry."

"Poor Lal!" exclaimed the soldier, slowly rising. "I must go to him."

"Lal?" repeated Retta, with a sudden twitching at her heart strings.

"Yes," returned the man. "We called him Lal because he was so girlish. It was my pet name for him."

Something prevented Retta from telling her lover how she had seen the youth's rifle raised in menace against him, and a nervous fear gnawed at her heart, as she supported him towards the body.

Somehow she was prepared for what she saw. The black wealth of hair was not to be mistaken, and the contour of the lovely figure had at one time been too dear to her to escape recognition, even in its present marred state.

No start shook her as she gazed upon the pallid face, although her thoughts were very, very heavy and sorrowful.

She had seen and loved that which then lay stark and cold before her.

Her thoughts went momentarily back to the incident of the lonely chamber when this poor, mangled body had towered above her in ungovernable fury.

She stooped and kissed the lifeless face and, lingering for a moment, prayed.

Then turning the sods, they heaped them tenderly upon the body.

Dunstan Denn.

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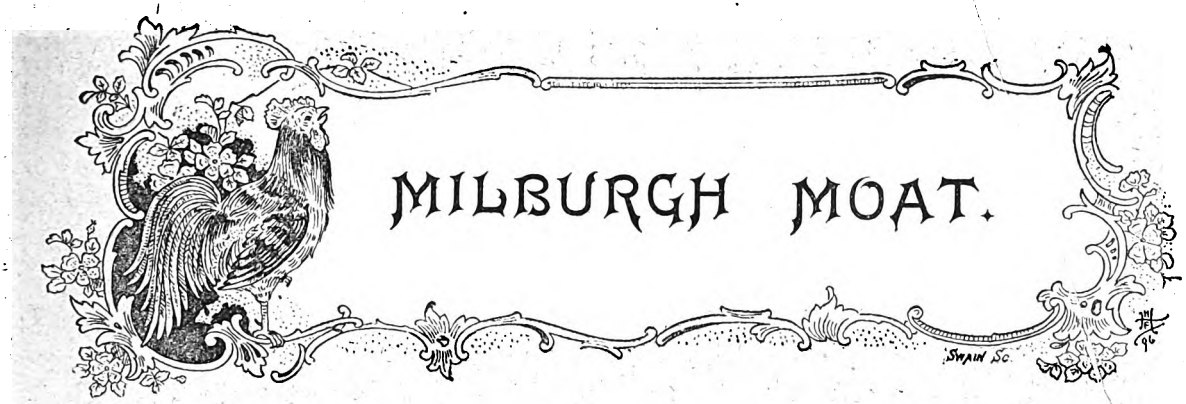

MILBURGH MOAT.

I have been asked to tell a ghost story. But I don't believe in ghost stories, so how can I tell a story without conviction? Besides, old sceptic as I am, if I knew—I do know *one*—a well-authentic story, I should never have any real faith in it. I should always imagine some hocus-pocus, some modern magic was at the back of it.

What has one to say who has firmly disbelieved and as firmly scoffed at the supernatural all his life, when he is brought face to face with a fact for which he can vouch soberly and truthfully, and of which he can give no solution.

It is one of the spiteful idiosyncrasies of those feebly-constituted ghosts, who are so little satisfied with spirit worlds that they must return to this, always to hanker after the most picturesque of human habitations.

Milburgh Moat is a perfectly-appointed house in Kent, of the time of Henry VIII., grey with age, except where green ivy or orange lichens had draped its walls with colours. The elms and beeches which hid it from the high road had served to shade the Druids; and the very rooks as they cawed seemed to choke with awe for the antiquity of their branches.

The moat itself, which gave its name to Milburgh home, being supplied with springs, was always full in some parts and known to be very deep. Yellow and white water lilies starred its surface, and elderly carp, which history said had been placed there by Anne Boleyn, were seen to solemnly follow each other round and round when flies were giddy enough to flit there.

Nothing could be more attractive to an artist's eye than the Tudor towers, with their crenulated walls; the bridge without a parapet which crossed, with its broad causeway, to the stone gateway where once drawbridge and portcullis had effectually forbidden an entrance; and the massed ivy that entirely concealed many of the turrets, or threw a shadow over the casements beneath.

Within, the carved oak, which adorned beam and joist, staircase and balustrade alike, gave an antique and ghostly look to every room except to those in the added wing which was beautiful as art could make it, in style and furniture as modern as a mansion in Belgravia or Fifth Avenue. The two drawing-rooms, which opened into each other, flanked by a long conservatory of Persian tiles and Bohemian glass, were so nineteenth century in comfort and attractive luxury that no one who sat there on the brocaded ottomans, or flirted among the blossoming orchids, could imagine that a ghost would have the supreme bad taste to intrude where it was not wanted.

But that Milburgh Moat was haunted was a popular legend, not only to the yokels round, who hated being caught by darkness in its neighbourhood, but to the family of Lord Carwinkle, all the members of which had heard noises and seen sights quite inexplicable to the modern conjuror.

The present inhabitants of the Moat were all sensible people, and hospitable to a degree.

Lord Carwinkle was a young man of thirty, having only succeeded to the title since his father's death, two years previously, just after his own marriage to as sweet a girl as can be found in a month of British Sundays.

She had a boy a few months old, bright and beautiful, and the idol of his father. Lord Carwinkle's three sisters were staying at the Moat, and two or three eligible young men on the army list, a bachelor lordling and the parson made up the guests I had been asked to meet.

There was lots of sport in the neighbourhood, a fair pack of hounds, and of an evening all the charms of pleasant conversation with accomplished women or cultivated men.

But the subject of ghosts so often introduced at Christmas was tabooed. If any man verged on the brink of ghost land he was profoundly shut up by a chill response, or the conversation as abruptly changed to something more congenial by our host.

Though I had met Lord and Lady Carwinkle often in their London house, this was my first visit to Milburgh Moat. I had, however, heard something about some mysterious warning that was supposed to be connected with deaths in the family, and I had naturally avoided anything that might hurt the susceptibilities of such amiable friends.

I had no belief in supernatural admonitions, and certainly I little expected to be a medium between the spirit world and my host.

It was Christmas Eve: after the most charming evening in Lady Carwinkle's drawing-room; after the dear old English games, without which no Christmas is complete; and after a country dance for which the old hall was used, and at which, I remember, the shadows thrown by the yule-log seemed to fill the roof with the shades of fantastic ancestors; that having bid good-night and a merry Christmas to visitors, guests and family, the few men who finished their day with a weed in the billiard-room came together without their host.

The fact was that his baby-boy had been taken suddenly with something like croup, and both father and mother were anxious and restless. I recall the fact that Lady Carwinkle bade us good-night, leaning over the gallery that ran round the beautiful hall.

It was Tom Calliber, of the Hussars, who spoke:

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"I never saw such a place faw galleries, by Jove! I adore old oak carvings somehow. Must have been a monastery once, don't you know."

"Yes," added Charlie Freake, "and the nuns came into the galleries to throw pillows at the monks, I dare say."

"By-the-way, Captain Rattler, you're in the blue room, I think?" said young Lord D'Oonuthen, the bachelor lordling who was expected to carry off one of the sisters.

"Well, I was only put in there to-day. There seems to be something wrong with the roof of the room where I have been, and Carwinkle asked me if I should mind changing for a night. Knowing he felt more intimate with me, as I'm an old traveller, of course, I made no objections, but I have not been into the—what do you call—blue-room, yet."

"Hum," muttered the parson. "I don't envy you."

"By Jove!" broke in Charlie Freake. "There's a carved oak gallery there that would delight South Kensington."

"My bedroom large enough to support a gallery?"

"A regular organ loft, my boy; only no one knows how to get into it without a ladder."

"Perhaps no one wants to get into it," suggested Tom Calliber. And then the conversation drifted into generalities.

A pool was made up, and as there were enough present to reach spot brown I had plenty of time to indulge the parson by answering all his questions. Among others he asked me if I had any fixed belief in the supernatural.

To my diplomatic "why?" he answered that the family was averse to sleeping in the blue-room, as something disagreeable was supposed to follow.

"Oh! dear no! Only the family!" he added. "I have slept there in summer and was never annoyed; but then, I belong to the church, and may be respected."

To which I replied: "That, though no churchman, I trusted that phantoms would respect my slumbers, if they did not me."

The game finished, we all found our way to our rooms, my old friend, the parson, bidding me good-night at the door of my bedroom with a sort of compassionate tenderness in his voice that surprised me.

Apologetically he informed me before we parted that the room I now occupied was the oldest in the building, and was supposed to have some mysterious communication with the moat.

"But our good host," he allowed, "would not ask you to rest in any uncomfortable room, so I wish you a very good-night and pleasant dreams."

I opened the door and went in. My candle was not blown out by a chill gust; nor did bats fly round the apartment, and no uncanny life seemed to be present even in the form of moths or crickets.

But the room was far too large for a bedroom. There was a fire burning briskly; an excellent four-post bed; a dressing-table, on which all a man could want was carefully laid out; a sofa; books on a small table; logs of old oak to throw on the fire; comforts of the snuggest kind in the cosy boudoir, but only making this immense room look friendless and dreary by comparison. The ceiling was of darkest oak, and only here and there, where the firelight caught the colour of an armorial bearing, could its existence be perceived. The walls were hung with fine specimens of Arras tapestries, while at intervals sombre full-length portraits of ancestors frowned from their ebony frames.

At one end of the room was a carved oak gallery which, at an elevation of about twelve feet from the floor, ran across the entire room. Two doors opened apparently on to this—one in the wall, at right angles; the other at the end of the gallery and parallel with it. From the location of my room I had fancied this wall, in which was this second door, was the outer wall of the castle, but evidently I was wrong.

I lighted two candles in massive silver sticks on the mantel-piece and two more on my toilet-table. But their united illumination only made the ancestors glare more fitfully, and just throw out the twisted colonettes of the gallery balustrade in a sort of bluish mist. All beyond was darkness. Somehow or other—strong tea I suppose, did it—I did not feel sleepy in the least. But the loneliness of that big, dark place was intense. I would have given anything for a chum to talk over old times, or a wife to quarrel with.

Faute de mieux, I mixed myself a weak grog, and taking up a book (I remember well it was Mrs. Crowe's "Night Side of Nature") I was well immersed in some tale of a Paris murder and its supernatural revelation, when I was rather astonished at being interrupted by the distant tones of an organ.

There was nothing surprising in the fact of organ-playing in Milburgh Moat, for there was a chapel attached to the house, as in many old Catholic family castles, but at such an hour it seemed scarcely probable that any one of the ladies who had gone to rest would get up after midnight to practise an *introit* in such a locality.

The music was sad and fitful: the notes moaned like a departed organist's spirit, and seemed to harmonise with a wailing wind which was sighing outside.

My ears were painfully on the alert, and all my senses seemed to be at abnormal tension. I had used my last logs on the fire, and a bluish flame had taken the place of a yellow blaze.

I heard a door slam, apparently in the distance, and then my nostrils were offended by a mouldy smell, as of damp, upturned earth.

I looked round at first without moving anything but my eyes. Something seemed to tell me I should see what I did not want to see.

The far end of the room was invisible; in absolute darkness. Nearer, the blue hangings of the great bed loomed like the trappings on some catafalque. On the glasses on my table, on the mirror's silver frame, the blue frame was reflected and danced like wisp-lights over a grave.

In spite of a strong will, my head now turned towards the gallery, and as I turned I became instinctively conscious of a presence there.

As my eyes pierced the darkness, I could see that a figure was sitting at the balustrade, with both elbows on the rail, two long, white hands pushing back the hair that hung, dead and grizzled, over the forehead.

The blue flames of the log began to multiply. By the ghastly light I could distinguish a greenish-yellow face, drawn as to the skin over prominent cheekbones, looking straight at me with dull, staring eyes. The stare was that of a galvanised corpse; horrible but fascinating.

My mouth dried up. I felt that awful shiver, that fear of the supernatural seems to give to the body, beginning with a chill in the ankles and rising up till it seizes the roots of your hair. If I could have spoken I would have addressed the thing, but my tongue refused, and only clung classically to my jaws. "*Vox faucibus hoesit.*"

The fingers long, and, oh, so thin! brushed the hair back spasmodically; the wizened lips drew back and up across the yellow teeth in a diabolical grin that would

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have chilled a gravedigger. The laugh was there, but no sound except the moaning diapason of the distant organ.

Then the figure rose, spreading her arms and tossing the tangled dead hair over her meagre shoulders.

With a movement like the vapour that rises from a marsh at night, the vision passed on along the gallery, turning three times to fix that stony stare and hideous smile on my scarcely beating heart; when, with a scream like a night hawk, she opened the door in the wall, and, still looking at me, walked out into the rays of the moon, when the door seemed to close of itself behind her.

No sooner had the presence disappeared, than with a violent shake I recollected myself. It must be some mad woman, some family skeleton, broken from confinement. Follow her I must or there might be some dreadful tragedy before the morning.

But how? I had no knowledge of the moat's topography, and I could not wake all the household at such an hour. Necessity is the mother of invention. Dragging rapidly the tables and chairs on to the top of a walnut cabinet I managed to get a firm grip of the balustrade, and without much difficulty succeeded in getting over the oak into the gallery. The planks were rotten and thick with dust, and even gaped ominously beneath my feet. How the maniac could have passed as she did was incomprehensible. It was only by striding across chasms in the broken floor that I reached the far end.

When I arrived there the door was locked.

What was I to do?

But no. The key was inside. It could not be locked at all.

Seizing the twisted iron handle of the door, I prepared to wrench the key, when lock and all came off in my hands, rusted with age from out the rotten wood. The door swung slowly open, and as the moonbeams struck me I saw that the door in the wall opened on to an abyss!

At forty feet below was the still waters of the moat without a ripple, reflecting the bridge that crossed it in the winter brightness of the full moon.

Horrible! The wretched creature had been drowned!

Closing the door, and climbing swiftly back to my room, I seized my light, and, putting on my dressing-jacket, rushed off to Carwinkle's room, feeling some step must be taken ere it was too late.

As luck would have it, as I got into the corridor leading to his room, he came out and, seeing me, put his finger on his lip, saying:

"My poor baby is worse. I cannot sleep."

"So sorry, my dear Carwinkle; but there is worse than that."

"What can possibly be worse?" he said, with a tremulous lip.

"Some woman has drowned herself in the moat."

"Woman? Drowned herself?" said Lord Carwinkle.

"Yes. I saw her pass along my gallery."

"Good Heavens! Then you *have* seen her? My poor babe will die."

* * * * *

The baby-boy did not die; but a day or two after I left Milburgh Moat I heard that Carwinkle's beautiful wife had stepped over the causeway of the bridge, and met death by drowning just beneath the blue-room door.

How do they account for it? JOHN PORLEY.

The Way It Came About.

BLANCHE BARTON walked over to the window before she answered. She seemed to be counting the tops of the trees in the park.

"You are in love, my dear boy," she said at last without turning—"infatuated, and naturally you think her all you say. You may be right, of course; there is always a chance of that——"

"You are jesting," he said stiffly. "I had hoped, at least, to have your serious attention in this matter, considering our long-standing friendship——"

"My dear boy!"

"Or perhaps it didn't amount to *friendship*, after all?"

"Why, of course it did, George. How can you be so childish?" she said, coming towards him with outstretched hands. "Dear friend, it is only because I am anxious for your happiness that you have mistaken my little bit of misplaced pessimism. I am sure she is all you think her. I know her so slightly that I cannot possibly be expected to do anything but agree with you, which I do. Everyone knows, of course, how beautiful she is——"

"I sometimes wish she weren't," he said, half sighing; "it gives a man like me such a very poor chance. You see, her people expect her to make a brilliant marriage, so how can I dare——?"

"But you must. 'Faint heart,' you know; and, besides, if she is all you think her—and I'm sure you are right—you are doing her a great injustice in supposing she would ever marry just for the sake of making a *brilliant* marriage. You say you have reason to believe that she has somewhat singled you out, and that were you not so poor a man you would have dared some time ago. Don't you think you are giving your money-powerful rivals a very good start if you avoid her, and are afraid to go near her, and won't show how you feel and won't speak? You aren't behaving like a man in love, even if you believe you are acting unselfishly and honourably, and she may think so too. Besides, don't you think you are just a little selfish in all this?"

"Selfish?"

"Yes! You say you are afraid to think it, but you dare to hope she cares for you. If that is the case, and she is the woman you believe her to be, her only hope of happiness in life will be with you. It isn't necessary to

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dwell upon whether money would make up for the lack of sympathy and love, is it? If you are mistaken as regards her feelings towards you—oh, I am only saying if—why, at all events, you will have been chivalrous enough to have sacrificed—shall we say your vanity?—in the chance that you may be doing what she most wants in the world."

"You are right, you are right, you are always right," he exclaimed, pressing both her hands earnestly.

"I think I'm right—I don't know why; I only *feel*—and I'm a woman," she supplemented softly as she wiped a tear from her cheek, and smiled through others that gathered in her eyes and threatened to follow.

"You are an angel." He said it tenderly.

"Go, there is a dear boy, and do what I say—no, don't mind about my foolish tears; they'll be over in a minute—and George!" she called after him as he was closing the door, "come back here as soon as you can—I want to congratulate you, you know."

"Yes," he said. "God bless you, Blanche," and he was gone.

Then she put her hand to her throat, to try and stop the lump that was rising there, and called "George, George, come back!" but he was beyond the sound of her voice by then. She buried her face in the cushions of a settee, and cried out all her poor, lonely, breaking heart. Then she pulled herself together, straightened her dress, and went to a glass.

"Ugh," she said, smoothing her hair, "a pretty picture, truly! And he will be coming back, but not for a time, a very long time. I ought not to have made him promise to, poor boy, but he will forget, with *her*—Oh! my hateful red eyes—I'm going off, I'm losing my looks—no wonder he comes to me for advice about his love for another woman. I *hate* him," she cried fiercely. "Ugh! I *hate* him!" and she stamped her foot passionately, and cried a little more.

"I'll burn his letters," she said, going over to an escritoire, and unlocking it with a key hidden in the folds of her dress. "I'll burn his letters, and his photograph, and everything that reminds me of him. I'll not be at home if he comes back. I'll never be at home to him again——

"*His* letters!" and she laughed bitterly, and a little wildly, at the packet held at arm's length with his photograph on the outside, all so carefully tied with pale blue ribbon. "His letters! Only friendly little notes, kind and all that, but not a word that signifies love, and yet I always fancied I read it between the lines. What an imaginative fool I was! I'll open the packet and pick one out just haphazard, and see if I can find a meaning between the lines to-day."

She burst into a peal of laughter, and tore the sheet of paper into shreds; then she read another, and another, tearing them up as she read.

"What a splendid blaze these will make!" she mused, with a bitter laugh, looking at the heap in her lap. "Still, the very chilliness of them would, I should think, damp the ardour of the fire. Now for the photograph!" and she scrutinised it carefully, critically, and coldly. "Poor thing! and I have wasted my life for you! This is the first day I have seen you just as you are. Good eyes—yes, the eyes are good—irritable nose, weak chin, cruel mouth—— Heavens! is that the bell?" and, eventually realising the situation, she prepared for a rapid exit, lifting her dress as she went to prevent the torn letters and photograph from falling to the floor. But before she accomplished her flight the door opened quickly, and George Cranstoun was there.

"Oh!" she cried, horror-stricken at the sight of his face, and forgetting the general absurdness of her appearance. "How white you are—— George! she hasn't——" but he had sunk on the settee and buried his face in his hands. "Dear boy!. I wish I could comfort you," and she sat beside him, forgetting all about the miserable letters in her lap. "George!" she said softly and soothingly, "George, dear!" and she knelt before him, letting the bits of paper and photograph and everything scatter about the floor.

He moved his hands from his face and looked at her helplessly, scarcely noticing the litter about him which she was trying, with little hysterical laughs, to pick up, or cover up, or hide in some way.

"George, dear, don't look; I mean, tell me about everything," and, in her excitement, she put her two little hands over his eyes; but before she had done this, he saw, to his bewilderment, his own face staring at him from the carpet.

She put her knee on it, and said coaxingly:

"Now dear, dear George, don't be unhappy! I will comfort you, console you, help you! Let me try. We won't talk about *her* any more," and she still kept her hands over his eyes.

"She's engaged to old Ingram—she's preferred a peer to a pauper!—small shame to her! You don't care now, do you, now you know she has no heart?"

He didn't answer, but he moved her hands gently from his eyes, and kissed them, and tried to raise her; but she laughed hysterically:

"Please don't, George, I'd rather stay here," and she looked anxiously round at some far-off bits. But he put his arms about her and lifted her up beside him, and she sat staring down at the murder which was out.

"Now I will pick up this *débris*," he said quietly, "and my poor self, who has been so ignominiously trampled in the dust. And my letters, too, I see—I can't help seeing."

He piled the fragments in a heap and laid the photograph upon it. "We can hardly have the funeral pyre in here!" he said laughing. "Where shall it be?"

But she only stared helplessly at the heap with wide, red-lidded eyes.

"Blanche," he said softly, taking both her hands, and looking into her face very steadily, "Blanche, you said just now that you would comfort me, console me, help me. I know you said it, hardly knowing what words you used in your desire to hide this," pointing to the heap on the floor. "Was it the more sincere because of that? Tell me, Blanche, tell me!"

"Why do you want to humiliate me more?" she answered, turning her face away.

"I don't want to humiliate you, dear, but everything in the world now depends, for me, upon whether you meant those words or not. Tell me, Blanche."

"We will have the funeral pyre first," she answered, "before I tell you." And she cried a little more, and he tried to comfort her, and they had the funeral pyre, and she told him.

Mary Keegan.

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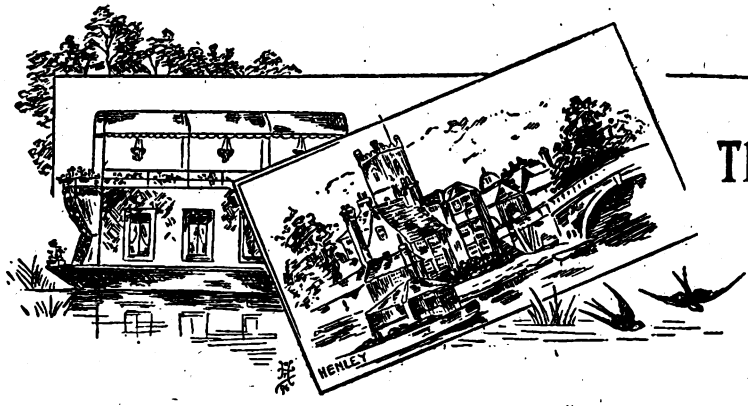

The Ransom of Wealth.

It was a glorious Sunday in June. Boulter's Lock was full—so full that it was a matter for wonderment how the boats could all have got in. Launches, punts, canoes, and rowing-boats jostled one another unceremoniously, while the sun smote down upon the confused, hot, struggling humanity who occupied the various crafts.

There was but one house-boat in the lock—a gorgeous floating palace, resplendent with gold paint and luxurious hangings: on board a collection of ladies and their knights, lolling at ease in deck-chairs beneath an awning as white as the clouds that chased each other across the summer sky.

The owner of the boat—a wealthy stockbroker, by name Tester—sat in the middle of his guests, by his side a girl, clad in some soft, white, clinging material, that only heightened the delicate beauty of her face.

Her eyes rove round over the mass of boats below her. Suddenly a faint colour rose to her face as she bowed smilingly towards a Canadian canoe where two men lay, comfortably enough, amid all the turmoil of the lock.

One of the men raised his hat. The other looked curiously at the house-boat and the girl who sat there enthroned upon it.

"Who is it, Dick?" he muttered.

"Lady Evelyn Tremayne," answered his companion curtly. "Look out, man; the gates are opening;" and in a few minutes the canoe had shot out into the sunlit river, while the house-boat swept on behind the fussy little launch, its tug.

Dick Harwood followed the craft with his eye until a bend of the river hid it from view. He had grown very silent all of a sudden—so silent that at last his brother officer, Captain Peterson, of the 43rd Dragoon Guards, felt constrained to fathom the mystery of his quietude.

"Stunning sort of girl Lady Evelyn Tremayne looks!" he remarked. "I never knew you were a pal of hers. Daughter of the Earl of Purdock, isn't she?"

"Yes," answered Harwood shortly. He didn't seem communicatively inclined, but Peterson was determined not to be thus put off.

"Where did you meet her?" he went on. "Come, let me into the secret! I'll be as dark as the grave."

"I met her first at a soirée, at the Earl's house. My father and he—the Earl—were old college chums; I have been round there three or four times since. That chap sitting next to her was Tester, one of the richest men in London. Old Purdock is jolly hard up, and I believe that he wants to recoup himself by selling his daughter to him! Ah, it makes me sick!"

Peterson whistled softly. "By Jove, Dick!" he said, "I never knew you had an affair. I thought you were above such things. Never mind, old chap——"

"It's all over now," broke in the other savagely. "Thank goodness we're ordered off to India on Wednesday. Perhaps Jubbulpore and the station life will knock it out of me! Anyhow, I don't mean to think of her any more."

And so the matter ended for the present, but it was with an aching heart that Dick Harwood leant over the taffrail of the outward bound troopship, a few days later, reviling the fate that kept him from England and the side of the girl who held his heart, who was as far away from him then as he was from Tester's riches.

James Tester himself was one of a class by no means uncommon. The son of a country lawyer, he had, by means of a clear, though by no means unscrupulous brain, pushed himself into the front rank of the army of the *nouveaux riches*.

Gold, he had found, was the "Open Sesame" to many an otherwise unattainable end. Gold brought luxury, luxury begat friends, among them the Earl of Purdock, who, in the rich stockbroker, saw at length a means whereby his slender purse-strings might be enlarged.

A mansion in Park Lane, a shooting-box in the Highlands, a steam-yacht. These and more did Tester own. Neither was he, like so many of his class, a blatant, overbearing Crœsus. Indeed, he was possessed of a certain amount of good looks, could speak the Queen's English, was in every way an ideal son-in-law. Yes, for Harwood was right. The Earl had chosen him as the future husband of Lady Evelyn.

Poor Lady Evelyn! Poor Dick Harwood! Love had entered their lives from the first moment they had met. Yet Dick was poor, poor at least among those in whose society he moved. The 43rd was an expensive regiment, and now he had gone to India. He had seen her, perhaps, for the last time, and she was to marry James Tester, though hope still lingered in Dick's heart.

And so six months rolled away. Tester had declared his love, and had been accepted. The Earl was jubilant, and everyone congratulated Lady Evelyn to her face, and sneered at her behind her back.

The wedding-day was fixed. Then came the first bolt from the blue, in the form of an impassioned letter from Harwood, telling Evelyn that his love had grown to such dimensions that he felt he must write to her, bidding her try and wait for him, to at least write and assure him of her love. A mad, hopeless letter, which was never

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answered, though the reading of it brought a blinding mist of tears into the girl's eyes, as the full truth of what this marriage of hers was dawned upon her.

But she thrust the letter away among her most cherished possessions. It was only a dream, only a sweet, sad, hopeless dream.

The marriage was a most gorgeous affair. The presents were numerous and costly. Everyone was loud in praise of the bride's beauty, envious, too, of the thousands that would now be hers.

The honeymoon was to be spent in Scotland, at Tester's own Highland seat. And now came the second blow to Mrs. Tester's happiness, that happiness so well assumed, and, therefore, by so much the more a cruel mockery.

She had bade adieu to her father, who, flushed with champagne and heartfelt relief at the end to his own straitened circumstances, had kissed her with more than usual warmth. Suddenly a cablegram was brought to her. Outwardly calm, she took it and thrust it into the pocket of her travelling-dress. What could it mean? Dick! It must be Dick! What could it mean?

On the first opportunity she opened it. And as she read it, she realised to the full what it meant. Her heart seemed to stop still within her. Merciful heavens! It was too cruel! For these are the words she saw, and they seemed to burn into her brain till they were stamped upon it in letters of liquid fire:

Uncle dead—Left me fortune—Coming home—No need to wait now.—Dick.

"Too late! Too late! Oh, Dick! Dick! What will you say? What will you say?"

* * * * *

October had come. The Scotch moors were glorious with purple heather, the hills beyond golden and red with the tints of autumn, and at Glenarchy—such was the name of Tester's mansion—was assembled a goodly company of "lords and ladies gay" come thither to assist in the slaughter of Tester's grouse.

And among the guests was Dick Harwood, late of the 43rd. It had been a tremendous blow to him, this marriage of Lady Evelyn. He had left Bombay in a fever of joyous anticipation, chafing at the weary miles of ocean that still lay between him and his love.

In the blindness of his devotion all thoughts of Tester had fled. *His* Evelyn would never have been coerced into marrying the stockbroker, Crœsus though he were. No, no. Speed on, good ship, speed on to home and happiness!

Tester had been profuse in his invitation.

"My wife and I will be only too charmed to see you," he had written. "I can offer you good shooting, and I don't think you will be bored, at least, not if Evelyn and I can help it."

And so he had accepted Tester's cordiality; he felt he must see Evelyn—though it could but mean pain for them both—must feast his eyes for a few short weeks upon her face. Then it would be good-bye to his hopes. He was rich now—pah! what good were his riches?—and he would be off away into the world, he and Tammil, there to try and forget the one real passion of his life.

Tammil would make an excellent companion—an Indian whose life Harwood had saved in a hill raid, and who had from that event followed his master like a dog, sworn to serve him till the death.

The pallor seemed to have deepened on Evelyn's face, and in Harwood's eyes she was more lovely, therefore, than ever she had been before. He longed to see her alone, to speak to her for a few moments unobserved, to tell her she had wrecked his life, but for days no chance was given him.

At last, one evening, the opportunity came. It was a lovely night, warm as it sometimes is in October, and Harwood had asked Evelyn if she would care for a short stroll in the garden that flanked the house.

She had looked up at him piteously and then, with a forced smile, consented.

Harwood lit a cigar, and together they paced the trim walks that ran between the shrubs and bushes dotted here and there. For a while neither spoke.

"Dick!" It was Evelyn who first broke the silence. "Dick, forgive me. I——"

But the next moment her voice died away, for she was in Harwood's arms, and he was kissing her madly, breathing out the while heartbroken words of love, the love pent up within him now so long.

But presently she broke away from him. The tears were streaming down her face. "Dick! Dick!" she murmured. "This is wrong, wrong! You forget——"

"Forget," broke in the man, his voice trembling with his passion, "I wish to heaven I did! Forget! Is it forgetfulness to hunger for you for years, to think only of you, to make you more than anything else in heaven or earth? Ah, you can't understand. It is all one to you whether a man's life is blighted or not so long as you have your every whim gratified. But what—forgive me, forgive me! I am a brute—worse than a brute! Don't cry, Evelyn, don't cry, or you will drive me mad."

There was a gentle rustling sound in the bushes behind them. But neither heard the noise, nor did they see the little dusky figure that stole away, to be swallowed up in the gloom.

* * * * *

It was an ideal day for the grouse. And the birds were plentiful, and every one of the men were keen sportsmen. Luncheon was to be in the woods that decked the hills behind Glenarchy; there the ladies were to wait the coming of the men.

They were nearly at the appointed place, when suddenly Dick Harwood, mounted on a sturdy Highland pony, dashed up to them, his face white with horror, his eyes only for one, the woman he loved.

"Mrs. Tester, I must speak to you for a moment, in private; ladies excuse me!" There was a ring of authority in his voice that was not to be withstood. He led Evelyn apart: "You know Tammil, my servant; he has shot Mr. Tester—killed him; and he has himself committed suicide. On my honour I had no hand in the affair. But he is an Oriental! He acted according to his lights! He must have overheard——" But Evelyn had swooned away.

* * * * *

The following is from the *Times* some sixteen months later.

"At St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, by the Right Rev. the Bishop of London, assisted by the Rev. John Jones, Evelyn, only daughter of the Earl of Purdock, to Richard Gordon, eldest son of the late General Harwood, K.C.B."

J. le B. Martin.

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PASSING ACQUAINTANCES.

When I was about thirty years old, I went fishing one day on the banks of the Cher, near Saint-Avertin. It was in the autumn, a little warm, but quite pleasant near the water. I had installed myself in an excellent place. At my feet the brownish-green water wound tranquilly in and out between grassy banks, daisies and field-flowers grew on either side close to the water's edge. I had a long day before me, and no unpleasant neighbours to disturb me in my enjoyable occupation.

I had unhappily reckoned without my host. About three o'clock I saw appear, behind the poplars, a couple who placed themselves on the other side of my rod about ten feet distant.

They were a middle-aged man, and a lady young and very pretty. The gentleman, clean shaven, clothed entirely in black, had a very correct air and a very severe countenance; the lady, in a grey dress and straw capote trimmed with blue ribbons, was blonde, plump, and very lively. They carried a fishing-rod, and the husband made his wife sit down while he adjusted the rod and arranged the bait.

Without appearing to watch them, I soon perceived that they were novices in the art.

"Good!" thought I. "They are amateurs and will not trouble me unless they frighten away the fish with their chattering."

They caught nothing. On the other hand, in less than an hour I had my basket half-full. My neighbours were still unsuccessful. Finally, the young woman, disgusted, threw down her rod and slowly strolled towards me. At the moment she reached me, I landed a large perch, and I took a mean pleasure in leaving him flopping about on the grass before putting him into my basket.

"Oh," cried the young woman, "what a beautiful fish!"

Then, in an insinuating voice, she added:

"Monsieur, how do you catch so many fish while we have not been able to get even a bite?"

I was young then, and, though I was always timid in the presence of women, I was not insensible to a pretty face. I replied, therefore, as gallantly as I could:

"Oh, madam, it is only that you do not understand. To fish with a line is a more difficult art than one thinks. But if you will follow my advice I will show you how to fish. Here, seat yourself, and I will prepare your hook."

I showed my pupil the tricks of the rod, of which she seemed to be entirely ignorant. After a few instructions she did fairly well. The spot was a good one, and the fish allowed themselves to be taken.

At each lucky pull of the line, the little lady laughed like a child, turned towards her husband, who, gravely smiling, seemed very happy in his wife's joy and thanked me with ceremonious politeness.

At last the afternoon waned. About six o'clock we stopped fishing, and I was about to take leave of my companions, when the young woman ran to her husband and whispered to him. He listened with a thoughtful air, evidently a little startled. After a moment I saw them coming towards me, but it was the lady who said to me:

"Monsieur, you have been so kind to us that we cannot leave you in this way. It is owing to your goodness that we have caught these fish, and it is but right that we should eat them in company. Will you give us the pleasure of dining with us?"

The gentleman added his invitation to that of his wife. They urged me in such a cordial way that I accepted, and we went to Saint-Avertin.

At the "Three Pigeons" the husband asked for a private room and ordered dinner. We were pleasantly served in a room where windows opened wide upon a garden filled with flowers.

The fresh air had sharpened our appetites. Besides our fish we had roast fowl, asparagus, a tart, and Vouvray wine. I was seated at the right of the pretty lady, who laughed constantly, and she did not leave my plate or glass empty for a moment.

The husband was less jovial; he wore a constrained smile, and even the wine did not have the effect of loosening his tongue. At certain moments he seemed almost embarrassed. I had taken upon myself the duty of carving the fowl, and sharpening my knife, I cried gaily:

"Pass the fowl to me, I know how to carve, and I can cut off heads in great style."

I was astonished at the small success of my pleasantry. The husband reddened to his eyes, his wife turned pale, and a dead silence reigned in the room.

They were very reserved about their affairs. I had put adroit questions, because I was anxious to know with whom I had dined, but they answered in a very evasive way. All that I could learn was that they were staying at Tours, and that they lived at Orleans.

When we had taken our coffee, night had fallen and it was time to depart. I had done justice to the repast, and was very gay. Before leaving I thanked them warmly for their hospitality, and declared that I had never enjoyed myself better than in their society. That made the young woman smile, and I cordially extended my hand to her husband, who, after a moment's hesitation, gave me his. I shall never forgot the strange sensation I experienced when I grasped that icy hand.

"I hope that we may meet again," I said, "when I may have the pleasure of returning your hospitality."

"I do not believe that," he said, with a singular accent. "We leave Tours to-morrow. Adieu, monsieur."

In fact, I never did meet them again at Saint-Avertin, although I went every Sunday. I often thought with pleasure of the good dinner which I had eaten at the "Three Pigeons."

* * * * *

Three months passed. One day I was exceedingly busy at my desk in the office, when someone entered and presented at the wicket a cheque. In those days we frequently had cheques presented for payment for public services. I took the paper, without looking at the person who handed it in, to my chief to sign. Returning I was curious enough to read it.

It was an order for three hundred francs to be paid to the bearer M. Bleiger, "High Executioner."

What was my horror when I reached the wicket to recognise in the "high executioner" my host at the "Three Pigeons" and the husband of the pretty lady.

I then remembered that an execution had taken place at Tours the day before my fishing excursion.

I had dined with the *headsman!*

A. D.

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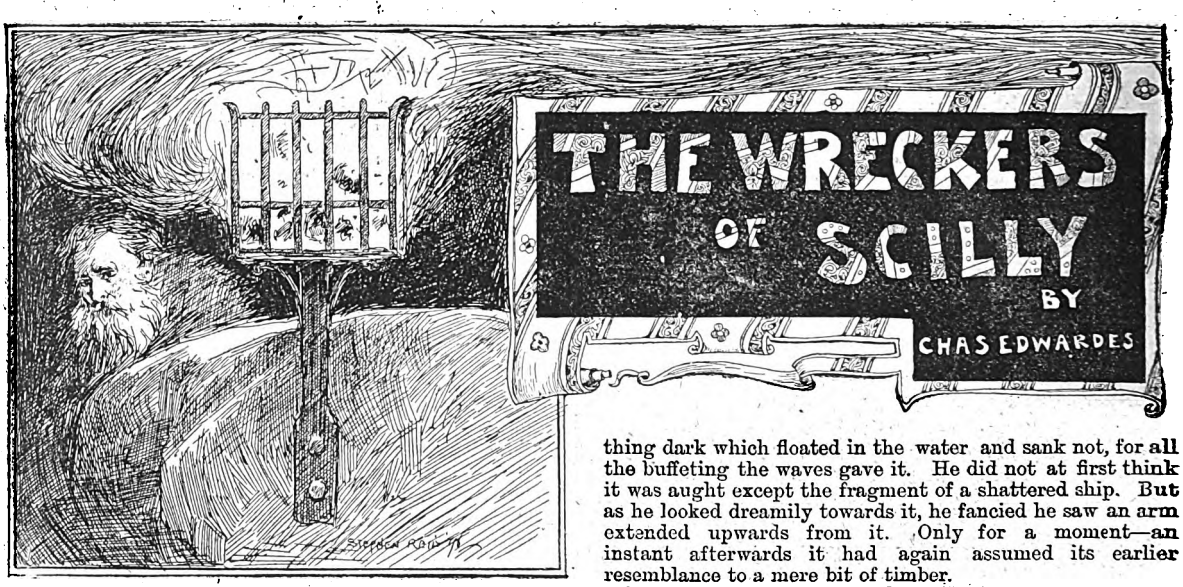

SUMMARY.

The scene is laid at St. Agnes, one of the Scilly Islands. The inhabitants live by the booty obtained from vessels wilfully led to destruction by false beacons. The only two exceptions are Nigel Prideaux and Damaris Nance, his sweetheart. Manuel Nance, Damaris' father, is Nigel's greatest enemy. The *King Hal*, a warship laden with Spanish plunder, is lured to destruction, and wrecked off Troy Town.

CHAPTER V.

Cast Up by the Sea.

From high ground above St. Warna's Bay, Nigel had seen how his fellow-islanders treated the miserable castaways from the wrecked ship.

He watched them with gasping breath, and his hands clutched as if he were trying to hold something hard against opposing forces.

Over and over again he ejaculated the words: "By St. Nicholas!" or, "By St. Martin!" and made as if he would leap down the rocks and join the others. It was his uncle who had taught him to think highly of the saint that was held in such great esteem in the French town of Tours.

There was something almost frightful in the expression of his young face, as he looked down upon all this bloodshed in the pale morning radiance. His brows were ribbed like an old man's, and when he was not muttering to himself the words that seemed able to relieve and restrain him, his lips closed tightly with the firmness of one who held mighty duties which he meant to fulfil.

Yet what could he do? Nothing, simply nothing. He had to acknowledge as much to himself; and so, with a sigh, he turned away from the sickening scene, and let his eyes range over such of the sea and the coast-line as was within his vision.

"I will not dwell longer in this accursed isle," he murmured. "If only we twain, and none others, could get from here, then, for aught I should pine about it, the Almighty might overwhelm St. Agnes from Priglis Bay to the end of the Gugh, even as he did Sodom and Gomorrah. And I misdoubt me if Sodom and Gomorrah at their worst did such deeds as these I have seen this day—with womenfolk and children gazing the while too, as if it were a revel. Troth! There must be a sorry reckoning against Manuel Nance in the books of the Archangel—may his daughter's innocence stand in abatement of his eternal doom!"

Thus letting his eyes roam here and there over the surf in the coves, it chanced that anon they were held by something dark which floated in the water and sank not, for all the buffeting the waves gave it. He did not at first think it was aught except the fragment of a shattered ship. But as he looked dreamily towards it, he fancied he saw an arm extended upwards from it. Only for a moment—an instant afterwards it had again assumed its earlier resemblance to a mere bit of timber.

But this one instant sufficed for Nigel.

"If I may this day save one poor soul from the fate of those others, I will account myself happy, and St. Agnes less sinful," he said impetuously to himself, as he hastened down to the inlet towards which the object was little by little being impelled.

Happily this inlet was quite sheltered from notice by the islanders in the larger bay. The whole headland of Troy Town intervened as a screen.

Nigel's joy was much intensified when, after watching for several minutes, he again saw the thing, this time but a few yards out. He bared his legs quickly that he might rush to it, and wrest it from the water ere another receding wave should delay its landing. Fortune favoured him. A stupendous inrush of the sea lifted the thing high towards the beach; and, at manifest peril to himself, the youth leapt forward, caught it in his arms, and, even thus burdened, resisted the backward sucking of the wave.

It was a man bound to a slab of cork.

There was a recess hard by, just above high-water mark; and thither Nigel carried his booty.

There he laid the body on the stones and examined it. At first he did not doubt the life had gone from it. The lifting of the arm in the water was probably the last effort against the doom that seemed inevitable. The face was so pallid that it argued of death almost as eloquently as a fleshless skeleton.

But Nigel knew better than to be convinced by tokens, even so strong as these. He hastily stripped off the wet doublet from the man's body, careless of the fine lace with which the velvet was fringed. Then he took off his own jacket, and, having stretched the man on the ground where it was smoothest, he alternately gave him what warmth his own warm body could afford by contact, and did his utmost to excite the lungs to revive their operations.

A violent spasm in the man was the first sign of returning vitality. Then Nigel waited with an incredible pleasure. He continued his exertions, and was more delighted than ever when, after a recurrence of these convulsions, the man vomited some sea water, and thus gave his lungs the moving space they demanded.

For half-an-hour the youth did not relax his efforts. By that time Sir Francis Seymour—for it was he—could sit up and ask questions in a weak voice. But Nigel discouraged him from this by at first refusing to answer, and signalling him to be quiet.

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After, however, he saw that the life was again growing vigorous in him, he told him briefly and as softly as possible that his eventual safety depended entirely upon his prudence. If he would rest content to obliterate himself for a while, means should be found to transfer him to the island of St. Mary's, if not to Cornwall. Otherwise, he (Nigel) would not answer for his security one hour.

"And the others, good youth?" whispered Sir Francis.

"Are with their Maker, fair sir, or elsewhere."

"Then how—by what chance——"

But here Nigel interposed. Having at length persuaded Sir Francis to his own profit, he drew him yet farther into the inlet, where a small cave ran at right angles to the passage.

"Rest here, in faith, sir, and unless I be impeded I will speedily return with the wherewithal to aid the strength in you."

"I am content," was Sir Francis' reply.

It was, however, no easy task that Nigel Prideaux had undertaken. When he returned to the village he found the men and women in a tumult of excitement. Already an iron-banded box had been cast up by the waves, and the bursting of it had declared the gold pieces with which it was stuffed as tight as the hair in a firm cushion. Moreover, the box had the number "5" painted roughly upon it, which argued an unparalleled amount of plunder eventually for the islanders.

Manuel Nance was issuing orders and restrictions in a sharp tone.

"There must be no idling this morning, good friends. Every man of you has his appointed task. Ha! And thou too, shuffler that thou art, Nigel Prideaux!" he added, catching sight of our friend. "By all the saints, we shall none of us lack money in our purses as long as we live, if we act stoutly."

The men were meantime collecting as much rope as they could accumulate from their houses, and splicing one piece to another. As for the women, they seemed to have forgotten the scenes of an hour or two ago. They were rinsing their dishes or cutting up potherbs, or feeding their poultry, as if sticking knives in the hearts of shipwrecked men were an everyday affair with their relations. But while they attended to these domestic labours, their tongues wagged loudly about the good things all this gold would bring.

To hear them you would have looked to find in a month or two all their cottages transformed into palaces like that of Westminster, and they themselves clad in silks and lace, with ropes of pearls round their bronzed necks, and each with a jewelled watch pendant from her waist.

"Come, lend thy hand, Nigel," said one of the men, passing a rope towards another. "'Tis time thou hadst work of some sort on thee."

He laid the body on the stones and examined it.

"Good James," whispered our friend, "spare me for a while. I will be with thee in a trice."

"Go, then, and see what the Captain will say. I dare thee do it."

Nigel himself saw that he was in some difficulty. In spite of the argosy that had come upon St. Agnes, he could mark the animosity of Nance's look towards him. Perhaps it was heightened by a sort of envy of the youth, that he alone of the men had no share in the remorse for the bloodshedding that would some day, if not now, be their portion. More like it was but the old hatred which a bad man at his worst can hardly help feeling for one whose deeds and disposition are good rather than evil.

But the thought of the poor fellow in the cave, doubting what his fate was to be, emboldened him.

"I shall hazard it, come what may," he said to the other, and he passed on towards his own dwelling.

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The strident voice of Manuel Nance was, however, upon him ere he had made five steps from the workers.

"Didst hear my words, sirrah, or hast peas in thine ears? Get thee to work."

"I will not evade the task, Master Nance," replied Nigel. "I do but desire a bite of bread."

"Then be quick, thou guzzler. By my faith, we have borne with thine airs and reservances too long. Thou art a very crow among a set of eagles. Gramercy for it."

At this there was a laugh. But Nigel cared not. He entered his cottage at once, and called Ban "the idiot boy."

"For Mistress Nance, Ban, you understand," he said as he took a leaf from a tablet book that was on the shelf, and wrote some words on it.

The lad's dull eyes acquired a gleam of cunning intelligence, as he nodded his head and pushed the tablet under the folds of his doublet.

"Yes, thou catchest my meaning perfectly," added Nigel in response to an inquiring look in the boy's face. "Be shy of Dame Cochran chiefly, and speed thee by the yard door."

Having thus done what he could in aid of Sir Francis, Nigel rejoined the other islanders with as ready an air of goodwill as he could assume. It mattered little that he did what he was able to bring the treasures of the wrecked ship to land. That, at any rate, was no wrong to his conscience.

But it was a difficult business, even with the calming of the sea, as the day drew on towards eventide. Their aim at first had been to tether the ship, to prevent, or at least obstruct, its removal by the tide when this was strongly on the ebb.

This design, however, they abandoned when, from the overhanging rocks, they could see how little of the framework of the vessel remained in its place. The hull had been torn to pieces, and only the forepart still clung entire to the rocks which had impaled it.

After many trials, however, a cable was made fast between the shore and the ship, to be used as a thoroughfare for the adventurers who dared to get on board the wreck. These, thanks to the subsidence of the wind and tide, were able to descend into the hold, and, after much stumbling and risk they came upon what they held to be the ship's treasure chamber. There were swelling bales of mercery, half or more spoiled by the sea, but still worth removing. Also cases of seeds, and packed leaves which none of them knew for tobacco. But best of all were the boxes of Spanish loot, church ornaments of gold and silver gilt, patens, chalices, and monstrances, some studded with jewels, ill cut, but precious. And with these, in a chamber, in a closet adjacent, were distorted figures of men and monsters, some as tall as an arm, and of solid silver, with coarse streaks of paint on them. Sacks of feather-worked dresses, and shields, spears, bows, arrows, and knives, also decorated with feathers of different colours, were further witness that the *King Hal*, in transhipping the booty of the *Santa Trinidad*, did but deprive the Spaniard of much that she had no claim to except by the right of conquest.

All these valuables were hauled ashore by the cable, and as they were deposited and opened, the women folk greeted them with cries and babblings of delight.

But it was not until evening that more of the gold pieces, which were of the best the *King Hal* could offer to her spoilers, came ashore. With the return of the tide two other boxes showed themselves. These, added to the first, made a barrel full of the coins.

Of the more miscellaneous articles washed up there seemed no end, from empty casks and spars to such trifles as the leathern purses in which the soldiers aboard had kept their silver pieces.

Of corpses, too, there were not a few. These were at once buried in another grave dug by the side of the greater one. It was left open, too, for the sea was not likely to give up all its dead in an hour or two.

The evening of this eventful day closed so fair and serene that it might have seemed as if nature meant to mock the skeleton of the *King Hal*, swaying faintly on the rock that had killed it.

The sea lay like a silver pool, and the black teeth of the islets set in it were like tourmalines embedded in the silver. The sun descended in a coral flush, and for long after its disappearance the lovely twilight lingered over the islands and the silent water.

The plaintive lowing of the St. Agnes kine, and the songs of birds, gave the crowning touch to a scene that appeared all idyllic and innocent.

But the islanders themselves held a carouse when the stars were out that was not wholly in keeping with their fair surroundings.

It was felt by all but two or three that such unexampled good fortune, and such arduous and memorable labours to secure it, deserved to be exceptionally celebrated.

The women folk greeted them with cries of .... delight.

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CHAPTER VI.

The Comedy in the Cave.

Meantime, little Damaris had been entertaining Sir Francis in the cave under the headland of Troy Town.

When the milking of Mary and Nell had been done, and the cream of the previous day had been set aside for shaking, the girl's thoughts turned afresh to her lover. She had not seen him since they had parted after the salute he had pressed upon her.

Then, as it happened, word ran up to the village of the finding of the gold and other treasures.

Dame Cochran's joy now almost exceeded the bounds of decorum. She ran to and fro, singing snatches of song, and telling briefly how so rare a day's sport recalled the time of her youth, when on one night a whole fleet was wrecked between the Gugh and Annet, and gold was so common that the children played chuck-farthing with the pieces.

"Go to thy chest, wench," she cried, "and get forth thy richest bravery. If ever there was a white-silk day in the calendar, this is one."

Damaris was about to make objection when she saw the idiot boy, Ban, prowling about the fence of wrecked timber which parted the fowl-yard from the garden, in which the potherbs and roots were grown. The old woman also espied him.

"First," she added, "send that loon yelling with a box on the ear. By my troth, 'tis an evil hour when his fool's face was licensed to show where it lists. He and his master are a pair, and a wise man were needed to say which of them is the greater ninny."

"Of that, nurse," said Damaris hotly, "methinks thou art no efficient judge. Even were Nigel Prideaux the fool you term him, 'tis said none but the wise may judge of a fool."

"Saucy thing, go to——"

Damaris needed no further bidding. For she had a thought that Ban might, as at other times, have come with a message for her.

In effect the message was soon and deftly delivered. Though short of wit, the idiot had craft enough. And making a pretence of stooping to see to the hens in their house, the girl read Nigel's lines, and learnt his bidding.

"Of thy courtesy and love, sweetheart, hie thee to the cave with a bend on the Annet side of Troy Town, and take with thee milk and meat for him thou shalt find there. He is, or I am deceived, a man of rank. Thy Nigel was happy enough to save him, but thy father has put it out of my power to do what is still needful for him. Thy Nigel."

With the echo of this injunction in her mind, Damaris now, with maiden eagerness, undid the chest in which her finery was wrapped.

"A white-silk day, thou saidst, sweet nurse! I would not foil thy wishes, and so it shall be a white-silk day."

"Marry, and thou art strangely obedient. It half inclines me to make thee keep to thy stuffs. After all, thou wast not in the making of the day, and it does not beseem thee to flourish as if thou, too, hadst cut men's throats."

"I pray you, nurse, speak not of such deeds. I care not how I be tired."

"A plague on thee, girl. Was ever such a gad-about! Dress thee as I said thou shouldst, and let's have an end on't."

Even the cross, ill-bred old woman could not stay her tongue from admiration when Damaris had duly put on the white silk gown she had taken from the chest. It was puffed at the sleeves with crimson satin, and embroidered in front and across the bosom with silver lace. The girl's heightened colour did but add to her loveliness.

"Well-a-day, well-a-day," sighed the dame. "That Nance should be dad to such a daisy! Get thee gone, child, or I shall be envious of thee. But be shrewd not to mire thy finery."

"That I will, sweet nurse," answered Damaris cheerily.

He trod towards her with parted lips.

She tripped into the dairy on her way out, and hid under the old mantle she threw over her shoulders a pot of new milk and a small cake. Further, she took with her the breast of a capon and a flask of French wine, of which her father had good store.

Then, as fleet of foot as a St. Agnes sheep, she bounded up the slope behind the house, and by a devious path reached the cave.

Here her heart began to beat within her. He was a stranger, and she was a veritable house-bird. What should she say to him; and in what way should she conduct herself to a man of rank? Once, she minded, the steward of the isles had rowed over to St. Agnes, and she had been bidden curtesy low to him, and offer him a posy of flowers from her garden. But that was when she was a barelegged little lass, but twice as old as young Obadiah. She would not curtesy now to any man—except perhaps to Nigel, and that more in merry mockery than from reverence and awe.

But while she stood thus questioning herself near the cave, Sir Francis had set eyes on her.

"Queen of Heaven, what's here?" he ejaculated, and he trod towards her with parted lips.

When she turned to go to him therefore she met his gaze.

"I give you good-day, sir," murmured the girl; "and I have been bidden bring you that which shall keep you from hunger."

"And right welcome it is, fair damsel," said Sir Francis. "Yet the sight of such as thou in such a place is even more abundantly gladdening. I entreat thee—who art

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thou? Has Scilly also its Virgin to whom men's knees should bow? By my soul, had I but known it, the worthy ship need not have thus gone to the bottom with all her gold. Thou wouldst have made intercession for us, or I read not mercy and sweet compassion in thine eyes."

Damaris moved away with a short curtesy.

"What wouldst have me do, sir?" asked Damaris, looking at the knight with flushed face. She did not entirely comprehend his flatteries, but her maiden instinct bade her be on the alert.

"Art thou of Scilly?"

"Surely, since both my father and I were born here on St. Agnes."

"Is this then the horrid isle of St. Agnes, where the men live by misdeeds, too foul for thy coral-tipped ears to hear tell of?"

Damaris drew herself up, and looked at the knight. For all his stately air and the spoilt splendour of his dress, she would not hear her birthplace spoken ill of, much though it might deserve it.

"Thou thyself, sir," she said, with panting bosom, "art a witness of our doings. Hadst thou lived to say such things if a St. Agnes youth had not saved thee from the sea that desired thee? There is none nobler nor more comely in all the world than Nigel, and it sits ill with such magnificence as thine to abase us who are thine hosts."

"I cry you mercy, lady," rejoined Sir Francis, now more than ever astonished.

But Damaris interrupted him.

"I am no lady, sir. My father is plain Manuel Nance, of St. Agnes, and I am his daughter. It was sorrily done of you to be so ungracious to our Nigel."

"Marry, and how could I have known what wrath I was exciting, pretty wench?"

"How now, sir? I may not be a lady, but neither am I 'pretty wench' for such as thou. My nurse, when she is sour, may call me that; but I know not you, sir—save that Nigel desired me to tend you."

With a shrug of the shoulders, Sir Francis extended his palms, as if to show the jewelled rings upon his fingers.

"Damsel of St. Agnes, I know not what to say to give thee pleasure. I would fain not show myself ill-bred; but me thinks young Nigel—be he whom he may—has absorbed all the kindness from thy tender heart. For this meat, I give thee cordial thanks; the hands that bore it have sauced it as no French master-cook could. And now, of your charity, maiden, admonish me, if thou canst, how I may arrive at Plymouth. Tell me, too, of my shipmates and men. Are all lost but I? Heaven was under no great compulsion to be so hard to them and kind to me. Enlighten me, that I may have somewhat to think upon in this my melancholy dwelling-place."

The knight's attitude while he spoke had so touching a semblance of distress in it that Damaris's eyes filled with tears.

"Pardon me, fair sir," she replied tremulously. "I am simple-bred and cannot talk aright with gallants. Nigel shall come anon and give thee news. I know not what may happen, but from what they tell me it would be unwisdom in thee to appear without word from Nigel. And even then"—and she sighed—"I doubt if he could save thee; for between Nigel and the rest there is but scant goodwill, and all because he is of nobler make than they. As touching the other voyagers, I know not, fair sir, save that they lie buried in rows where the grass is saltest."

"May their souls rest in Paradise!" observed Sir Francis mechanically.

"And ours follow them," added the girl. "And now, I pray you, excuse me, sir, and may you break your fast with appetite."

Damaris moved away with a short curtesy. Something in the expression of Sir Francis' face made her feel ill at ease.

But the knight detained her. Even the irksomeness of his temporary confinement in the cave seemed to him as nothing compared to the pleasure the sight of Damaris's beautiful young face and form gave him. An hour ago he was in the humour to throw himself into the Atlantic, and see if a second time he might trifle successfully with it. But now he had forgotten his misfortune. There was that in his heart which told him that Cupid (a divinity with whom he was on good terms) was again domiciled within him. And he welcomed the visitation. For Sir Francis was one of the multitude of men who, surpassingly bold in war, are of very inflammable affections. He was therefore not at all disposed to lose sight of Damaris all at once, and perhaps for ever.

"I entreat you one moment," he replied, making as if he would half bar the entrance. "Tell me if I may look to be gladdened again by your coming."

"I do not doubt, sir, that Nigel will attend to the needs of thy body," replied Damaris, with a little scorn.

"You misread my meaning. It is thyself I would see again. Thy fair eyes, sweet lips, dear heart, have stricken me to the soul. I could endure the lack of these (pointing to the milk and eatables), but without sight of thy angel face methinks I must surely starve, though Nigel spread me a table daily as fat as the one let down from Heaven for the feeding of the Apostles. Dost take my meaning, beauty?"

The girl had listened with heaving bosom.

"I am not so dull, sir, but I understand something of all thou hast said. Fair sir, be advised. I know not why I should interpose my weak body (though there are weaker ones) behind thee and danger, for thou art stout of arm. But I tell thee if Nigel comes and catches thee saying words like these into mine ear, he will be tempted to befriend thee no more. And what thou wouldst do without him I trow not. For thou surmisest aright, fair sir: they are cutters of gullets and men of stony hearts on this island, and they

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allow no tale-bearers to wander where heed may be given to what they say. And so, for thy profit, I conjure thee to look not at me with such eyes, and be less honied in thy language."

"Marry, my pearl, I love thee the better for this homily," exclaimed Sir Francis. "But since thou lovest Nigel, I may e'en put on sackcloth."

"Troth and you may, and say no more about it. But I'll bide no longer, and so farewell."

This time the knight made no offer to detain her, though he followed her with eyes of undisguised admiration.

Nevertheless, he was not to lose her that moment. She reappeared in the cave, with a finger across her lips:

"'Tis Nigel himself," she whispered. "I know his manner of striding by the sound. Beware how thou conductest thyself."

"Incomparable creature——" began the knight, but the youth's coming put a period to the ardent compliment that began to break from his lips.

"Ah! I find you so. It is well," Nigel exclaimed. "And I have this to say, that if thou'rt willing, as doubtless thou art, this very night, two hours after sunset, I will row thee to St. Mary's."

"Thy hand, my bonny Nigel," and to his surprise the knight drew from one of his fingers a sapphire ring, which he put upon the youth's hand. "By the token of this blue stone, know that Sir Francis Seymour will never fail thee and thine at a pinch. Let it be done to-night, in the name of heaven. I weary of this cave. Moreover, worse may come of it, I fear, and of that I'd make confession in the presence of this fair maid who loves thee so."

"I said not that I did," broke in Damaris, with a show of indignation.

"It recks not. 'Tis a matter in which the eyes speak for the heart. But hear me out. I, too, would fain be out of reach of so much beauty, for I come of a hot-blooded race. Dost catch my meaning, good Nigel? I see thou dost. And

To moor his boat.

so all things conspire to urge thee to get me off thy island without delay. I tremble to think of what might happen didst thou hide me here a week, and daily send me such a victualler. There, I've eased my mind."

Nigel had listened impatiently to this rigmarole, and his discomfort was increased by the smile on the knight's face, and the gradual brightening of the countenance of Damaris. But when the girl turned her gaze upon him he was won to humour the man in his strange speech.

"I am glad, fair sir, to hear thee speak thy mind so candidly," he said. "For the ring I thank thee, though I need it not."

"And I," added Damaris blithely, with an arch look that renewed the knight's passion, "rejoice to think thou art not what I took thee for. There be they, as Scripture tells us, which vaunt of doing right, and go straight and sin; but there be also others who make a pretence of foolishness, and lo! act wisely after all. Your magnificence is not among the fools."

"Come, come, Damaris; they will look for thee at home," interposed Nigel. "Nor was it needful, sweetheart," he added in a whisper, as they went together towards the mouth of the cave, "to deck thyself like a queen for such a ministration."

"It was to do thy bidding, Nigel," she replied, with a proud look that made her match her apparel.

"So then, noble sir, be ready," exhorted the youth, returning to Sir Francis, who had watched this brief confabulation with a touch of bitterness at the heart. "I will not fail thee, except all things be against me."

"And as I live, get me to England, and thou'lt find no surer friend at Court or elsewhere, within his ability, than Sir Francis Seymour."

"I give Sir Francis Seymour generous thanks," said Nigel with a bow. "But if thou hadst been Sir Francis Seymour's scullion, I would not have ventured less than I have to save thy life."

This said, Nigel dallied no longer, but went away to moor his boat somewhat nearer the cave.

(To be continued.)

NEXT WEEK

will appear the opening chapters of a new serial story, entitled,

THE SHADOW HAND,

By Louis Tracy,

author of *"The Final War," "An American Emperor," etc., etc.*

A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.

£10 in Prizes.

On page 214 four sketches are given in their proper order. £5 is offered to the reader who sends us the most appropriate wording to go under each sketch, the whole to form a story descriptive of the illustrations, and £1 will be given to each of the senders of the next best five attempts.

It is not necessary for competitors to have any literary ability. If you have a good idea, surely there should be no difficulty in putting it down in words. The whole of the story is limited to one hundred words, which may be distributed under the sketches according to the judgment of the competitor.

All that you have to do is to write in the order of the sketches the wording that you think most appropriate, enclose your attempt in an envelope (which should be marked "Picture Story"), and forward it to this office before Monday, February 15th.

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A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.—No. 3.

See page 213.

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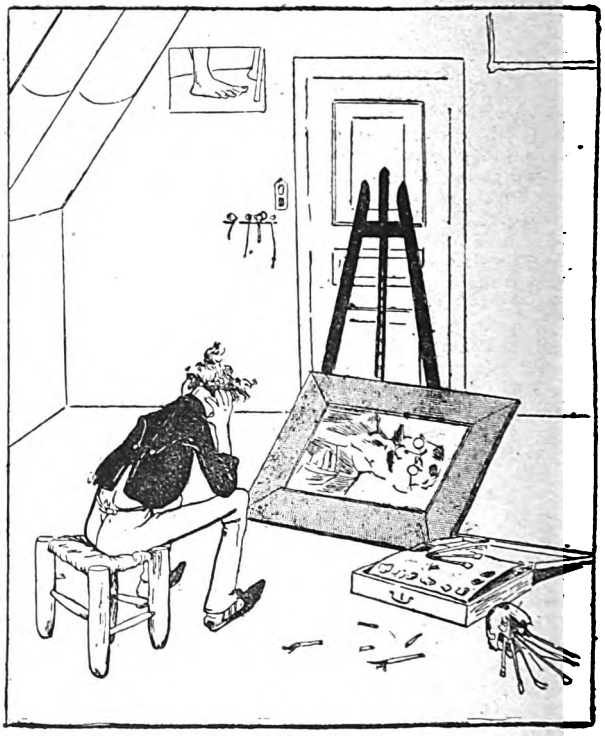

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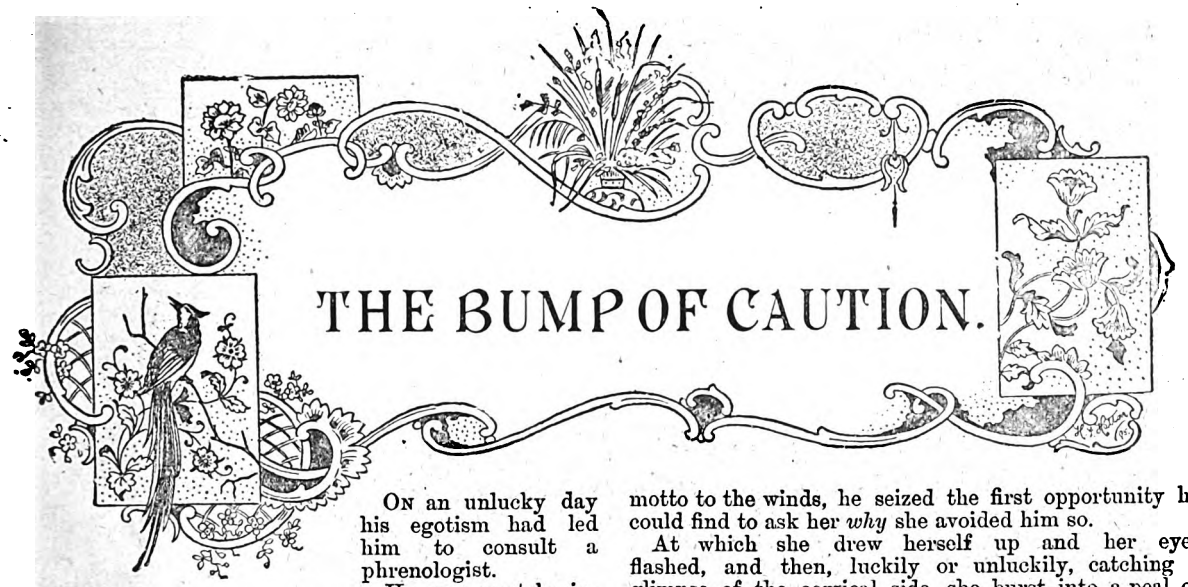

THE BUMP OF CAUTION.

On an unlucky day his egotism had led him to consult a phrenologist.

He was acutely interested in what he heard, although he thought he had known it all before.

One thing, however, astonished him much—he lacked caution.

Now, caution was a quality he had many times despised in others. Caution and cowardice he used to think fairly synonymous when he had considered the subject at all, which was seldom. Had anyone hinted to him that he was cautious, he would have been highly indignant.

However, when the phrenologist suggested the absence of it, it was as if cold water had been suddenly and unexpectedly thrown over him.

Evidently, from his tone, the phrenologist looked upon the absence of the quality as a serious want.

"Humph!" he ejaculated moodily as he walked home. "Humph!" he ejaculated again in the midst of solitude and tobacco smoke.

Now, he was a very good fellow, there was no question about that, and he was as open-hearted, open-handed a man as ever lived.

It could not be said that no one spoke ill of him, for he had his slanderers, but they were few. His friends were many, and some of them loved him.

"Caution!" he muttered as he threw away the end of a cigar and proceeded to pick out another. "Caution!"

It must be explained to his credit, or discredit, that he was in love—very seriously in love indeed—but he had not yet asked the all-important question which was expected and awaited with unseemly impatience.

"Suppose she only means to make me ridiculous, and a topic for afternoon tea—the sort of thing she's done to poor old ——" he thought in the middle of a big puff. "By Jove, I'll not run the risk of that! Forewarned is forearmed. Henceforward 'Caution' will be my motto."

The next time they met his manner struck her as being distinctly chilling, and she froze accordingly.

For days, even weeks, she avoided him pointedly. She flirted desperately with another fellow, to that poor fellow's undoing. At last our would-be cautious friend could stand it no longer, and, throwing his self-imposed motto to the winds, he seized the first opportunity he could find to ask her *why* she avoided him so.

At which she drew herself up and her eyes flashed, and then, luckily or unluckily, catching a glimpse of the comical side, she burst into a peal of irresistible laughter and left him feeling very small indeed.

However, she avoided him less, and her smile for him had more warmth about it.

He was a man and therefore weak, and his attentions became more marked than ever again.

One evening he came upon her alone in the conservatory, sobbing her very heart out. Forgetting everything he rushed to console her, and, in seeming to fail to do so, he was just on the verge of pouring out his whole heart at her feet when, in his agitation, he grasped his head, unwittingly, but much after the fashion of the operatic tenor. Alas and alack! quick as lightning his brain ran. Head! Bump! Caution! Good Heavens! What a narrow escape!

He rushed and got her a glass of iced water. He meant to tell her one day, of course, for he loved her very dearly, but he wanted to be quite sure about things first. He didn't know what he meant, but that was what he thought. And so, lest he should run into the mouth of danger again, he decided to go away and think it over.

* * * * *

She wondered what had become of him; she neither saw him nor heard from him.

Then someone told her he had gone away, but no one knew where.

He was never seen in any of those eminently civilised quarters of the globe where people go. Where could he be, and why, *why* had he behaved like this, she thought as the weary months dragged themselves, oh, so slowly away.

What was it? — *why* was it? Her woman's instinct had told her so plainly that he loved her. There were prettier girls than she was she knew, but most of them had no brains. He had liked clever women—and then she could boast of being attractive as well. Surely, surely he had not gone away after some mere physical beauty. If so, he would come back to her in the end, she thought. But, oh, how the months dragged! Each one seemed like a year, and as such seemed to add so many years to her age.

She was beginning to look quite old, she thought,

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going off dreadfully. Oh, what a blessing! Her brains, at least, were left her.

Then she began feverishly to write a little, then a little more. At last the feverishness subsided somewhat as she began to be more interested and put it into her work.

It soothed her marvellously.

* * * * *

Meanwhile he was spending the months in a little out-of-the-way Breton fishing village, alone, and getting more and more morose each day.

Perhaps she was married, he thought. Oh, very likely. She had probably never cared for him, but was not averse to a little flirtation with a fellow who was not a bad sort of a chap after all. And he drew himself up to his full height and thumped his chest and smiled in a satisfied way.

He was not a prig, oh, dear no! but Caution had brought him to this. A poor, badly used, good fellow he thought himself as he puffed away at his pipe in the seclusion of his bare little tile-floored room in the village inn.

He snapped at people in the most inconsequent way, and the children about were half afraid of him. He had a dog, though, a faithful fellow whom he looked upon as his only friend, and in whose long, expressive, silky ears he unburdened himself from time to time.

After about eleven months had crawled themselves away, and the spring had come round again, his old self began to stir once more.

"We'll go back again to civilisation, old fellow," he said, as "old fellow" yawned very widely up in his face and licked his hand; "we'll go back to town and see what the world looks like. What do you say, eh?"

And "old fellow" wagged his tail and pricked up his ears, and that very day they were off.

The journey seemed interminable. He was all suspense and anxiety mingled. Put her out of his mind he could not, think ill of her he could not; but his gladness at the thought of seeing her, his fear lest—— Great Scott! would the journey never end? Why, in Heaven's name, had he come away so far? Why, *why* had he stayed so long?

He paced up and down the floor of his carriage, reviled the slowness of the train, roared at the guard in very bad French, and behaved generally like a savage.

However, there is an end to everything, material at least, so he arrived in London.

He drove like a madman to his chambers, where he had wired his return, changed his clothes, blackguarded his man, and though it was then late in the afternoon, our once so cautious friend rushed off like a fond schoolboy to the object of his first affections.

The chilling "not at home" had the effect of a bucket of cold water, and he went down the steps very much like "old fellow" would have done after a sound chastisement.

This frame of mind did not last long, however. When he got back to his rooms he raved at his man again, and behaved in a manner so extraordinary and unusual that his Solomon-like and forbearing servant humbly suggested he might be hungry, and behold! like mists before the sun, suspicion and bad temper vanished. A-a-h, yes. He would dine.

Then he wrote and asked her when he might call.

At last her answer came.

* * * * *

She met him without the least change of colour, and her slim hand was held out with a friendly good-fellowship air about it.

He had expected her to be different somehow. He had pictured her blushing under his look and a general sort of tremulous, shy gladness at his return after so long.

From her manner they might have parted yesterday.

He was far more disconcerted. She was certainly prettier, though, he thought.

She was politely inquisitive as to what he had done. His hand trembled so that he could hardly hold his cup.

She chatted away about people they both knew, and laughed merrily now and then. He tried very hard to laugh, but somehow he could not. Something seemed to be gripping his throat. He became conscious that he must be staying a very long time. He had made up his mind to speak, but, somehow, nothing seemed in any way to lead up to it, and she was so dreadfully matter-of-fact.

But he could not bear the suspense any longer.

"Do you—do you——" he stammered.

She held out her hand for his cup. "Do I mind giving you another cup of tea?" she smiled, affecting to help him out.

"Do you care for me at all?" he blurted out desperately.

"Care for you!" she echoed, her eyes and voice expressing blank surprise.

"I love you so much!"

She raised her eyebrows incredulously. His desperation and the awful suspense made him blind to these telling details.

"Yes, I love you, and I have loved you so long. If you knew how I am suffering, you would not keep me in this suspense." He would have taken her in his arms, but she waved him slowly back.

He was frozen.

"I will not keep you in suspense," she answered in a low voice. "I do not love you—I loved you once," she continued, growing more earnest and speaking rapidly, "loved you as I think never to love again, and you—well," with a bitter little laugh, "you didn't appreciate it, to say the least; so after a good deal of trouble I've cured myself, and nothing in the world will ever bring it back—no, not even your thoughtfulness in returning to me after a year!"

Her eyes were blazing scornfully now. "Do you see these papers?" with a little wave of the hand. "I am beginning to work! I am in love with *that* now, and have no room for any other. I am sorry," she added, her tone softening as she caught sight of an expression of awful pain in his face. "I am sorry if you are suffering, for you have made me suffer, and I have known what it is to feel for many months what you are feeling now. You were forgiven some time ago. Will you forgive me now?"

"Yes," he said brokenly, "for, God help me, I have brought it on myself."

"Work," she said to him earnestly, "and you will find what I have found—peace—the best of all."

When she was alone a lump came into her throat and she could work no more that day. M. K.

ASTERISK LETTER COMPETITION.

On page 197 will be found a sentence in which the central letters of each word have been dropped, and an asterisk substituted.

Two guineas will be given to the reader who sends in on the back of a post-card the paragraph which most closely resembles the original. All attempts must reach this office by Monday, February 15th.

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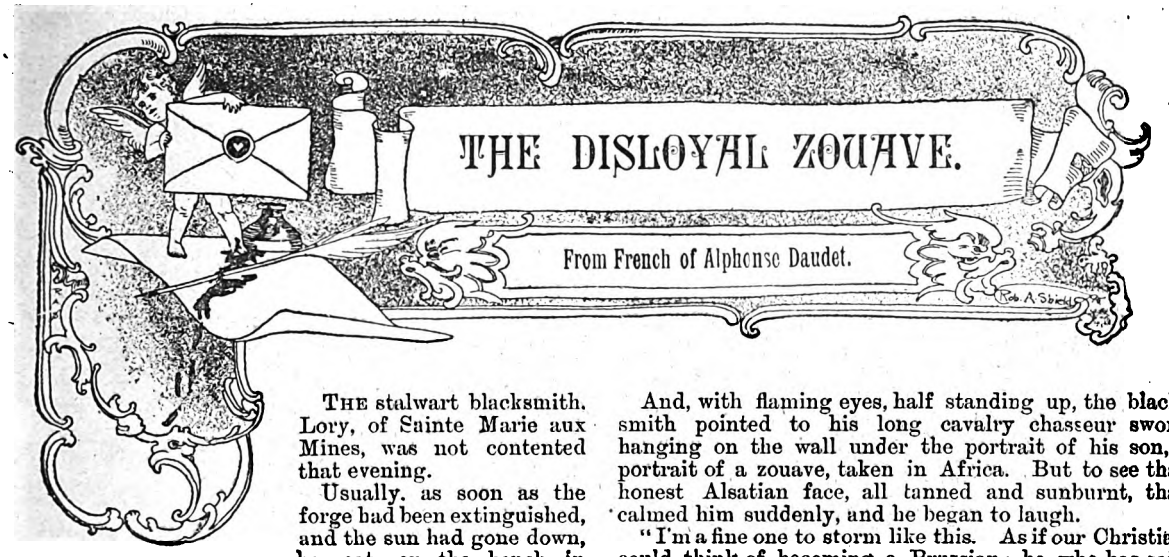

THE DISLOYAL ZOUAVE.

From French of Alphonse Daudet.

THE stalwart blacksmith, Lory, of Sainte Marie aux Mines, was not contented that evening.

Usually, as soon as the forge had been extinguished, and the sun had gone down, he sat on the bench in front of his door, and enjoyed that comfortable lassitude which results from hard work and the heat of the day; and before sending the apprentices home he drank one or two long draughts of fresh beer with them, while superintending the departure of the fabrics. This evening, however, the good man stayed in his forge until it was time to sit down to supper. Then he again returned to it as if with regret.

Old Lory's wife was thinking as she watched her husband: "What has happened to him? . . . Has he, perhaps, had bad news from the regiment, which he will not tell me? . . . Perhaps my eldest son is ill. . . ."

But she did not dare ask anything, and only occupied herself in silencing the three little fair-haired children, who, laughing round the tablecloth, were devouring a good salad of black radishes *à la crême*.

At last the blacksmith, pushing his napkin away in anger, exclaimed:

"Ah, the cowards, the wretches!"

"Of whom are you speaking, Lory?"

He fired up with anger.

"I am speaking," said he, "of five or six scoundrels whom I have seen since this morning lounging about the town, dressed as French soldiers, arm-in-arm with the Bavarians. They are again those who have—what do they call it?—sacrificed themselves for the nationality of Prussia. And that every day we should see these untrue Alsatians return!"

The mother tried to defend them.

"What do you want, my poor husband? It is not altogether their fault. Algeria, where they are sent, is so far! They are homesick over there, and the temptation of returning is very strong—not to be a soldier any more."

Lory gave the table a great thump with his fist

"Be quiet, mother! You mothers—you women—you understand nothing. Forced to live always with the children and living solely for them, you repeat altogether their babblings. Ah, well! I tell you that those men are blackguards, renegades, the worst of all cowards, and if by ill luck our Christian were capable of such infamy, as sure as my name is George Lory and that I have served seven years in the Chasseurs of France, I would pass my sabre through his body."

And, with flaming eyes, half standing up, the blacksmith pointed to his long cavalry chasseur sword hanging on the wall under the portrait of his son, a portrait of a zouave, taken in Africa. But to see that honest Alsatian face, all tanned and sunburnt, that calmed him suddenly, and he began to laugh.

"I'm a fine one to storm like this. As if our Christian could think of becoming a Prussian; he, who has said so much against them during the war!"

Put in a good humour by this idea, the blacksmith succeeded in dining gaily and soon after went to empty a couple of tankards at the "City of Strasburg."

Now old Madame Lory was alone. After having put her three little children to bed, who one could hear murmuring in the next room, like a nest settling to sleep, she took her work and sat darning in front of the door by the garden.

From time to time she sighed and thought to herself:

"Yes, I only wish it. They are cowards—renegades. No matter! Their mothers are very happy to see them again."

She recalled the time when her son, before leaving for the army, was there, at that same hour of the day, in the midst of looking after the little garden. She looked at the well where he came to re-fill his water-cans in his blouse, his long hair, those bonnie curls which they cut when he entered the zouaves.

Suddenly she started. The little gate at the bottom, that one which led to the fields, was opened. The dogs did not bark, although he who had just entered crept along the wall like a robber, gliding between the hives.

"Good-day, mother!"

Her Christian was at last before her in his uniform, his breast uncovered, ashamed, troubled, his speech thick. The miserable one had returned to his country with the others, and during the last hour he had prowled round the house, waiting for the departure of his father, in order to enter.

She tried to scold him, but she had not the courage. It was so long since she had seen him. She embraced him! Then he gave her such good reasons—that he had longed for his home, the forge; to live always far from them, amid that discipline, had become so hard, and his comrades called him "Prussian" on account of his Alsatian accent. Everything he said she believed; she only had to look at him to believe.

Still talking, they entered the room below. The little ones, awakened, ran down, with their feet bare, in nightdresses, to embrace their big brother. They tried to make him eat, but he was not hungry. He was only thirsty—always thirsty—and he drank great gulps of

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water on the top of the beer and white wine which he had had since morning at the *cabaret*.

But listen! somebody was walking in the court. The blacksmith had returned!

"Christian, here comes your father! Quick! hide yourself, so that I may have time to talk to him—explain to him——" And she pushed him behind the earthenware stove, then began to sew afresh, her hands trembling.

By ill-luck, the zouave shakko was on the table, and it was the first thing that Lory saw on entering. The paleness of the mother, her embarrassment—he understood all.

"Christian is here!" said he in a terrible voice, and, taking down his sabre with a mad gesture, he threw himself towards the stove where the zouave was cowering, pale and sobered, leaning against the wall, for fear of falling.

The mother threw herself between them.

"Lory! Lory! don't kill him! It was I who wrote and told him to come back again, that you needed him at the forge."

She clung to his arm, dragged him, and sobbed.

In the darkness of their room the children were crying to hear those voices so full of anger and tears, so full of bitterness that they did recognise them again. The blacksmith stopped and looked at his wife: "Ah! It was you who made him return. Good, let him go to bed. I will see to-morrow what is to be done."

The next day Christian, waking from a heavy sleep full of nightmares and causeless terrors, found himself in the room of his childhood. The sun, already hot and high, streamed through the little panes of glass framed with lead, crossed by the hop-flowers. Below, the hammer rang on the anvil. His mother was sitting by his pillow. She had not left him the whole night, so much anger on the part of her husband had frightened her.

The old man had not been to bed either. He had been walking about the house till morning, crying, sighing, opening and shutting cupboards. He entered his son's room, gravely, as if for a journey, with his high leggings, large hat, and his solid mountain staff with its spiked end. He advanced straight to the bed: "Well, get up!—dress yourself."

The boy, a little confused, wished to take his zouave uniform.

"No, not those," said the father severely. Then the mother, quite afraid, said:

"But, my husband, he has no others."

"Give him mine, I—I have no more need for them."

While the boy dressed himself, Lory folded the uniform carefully, the little vest, the large red trousers, and, the parcel finished, he passed the cord of the case containing a road map round his neck.

"Let us now go down," said he at last, and all three descended to the forge without a word. The bellows were roaring. Everyone was at work. On seeing the shed quite open, the zouave recollected his childhood. How he had played there so long, between the heat of the road and the sparks of the forge, quite brilliant in the black dust. An access of tenderness seized him, a great desire to have his father's pardon; but on lifting his eyes, the same memorable look met them.

At last the smith decided to speak: "Boy," said he, "there are the tools, the anvil—everything is yours—and all that also!" he continued, pointing to the little garden bathed in the sunlight and full of bees, which was framed in the scented porch. "The bee-hives, the vine, the house, all belongs to you. As you have sacrificed your honour for these things, the least you can do is to look after them. You are master here. I am going. You owe five years to France, I am going to pay them for you."

"Lory, Lory, where are you going?" cried the poor woman.

But the blacksmith had already gone, walking quickly without turning.

* * * * *

There has been, for some few days, in Sidi-bel-Abbe's, at the depôt of the 3rd Zouaves, a re-engaged voluntcer of about fifty-five years of age.

A COMEDY OF ERRORS

is included in the second part of ***Pearson's Shakespeare,*** the first number of which was issued on Thursday, February 4th. It is profusely illustrated with sketches drawn expressly for the volume by Sir J. Gilbert, R.A., and the illustrations are considered to form the great work of his life.

Pearson's Shakespeare will be published in thirty weekly parts, each part consisting of eighty pages and costing ***6d.***

If you appreciate a work of art of this sort, put at once with your newsagent an order for the complete set, and he will deliver them regularly every week without any trouble to yourself.

RESULT OF JUMBLE STORY.

No. 28.

THE BEST THING TO DO.

The Key.

12	55	11	121	51	101	115	102	82
19	122	5	32	84	83	45	111	50
26	3	24	54	86	113	78	92	13
10	1	15	27	20	107	77	118	124
42	8	52	18	95	71	127	110	106
46	75	93	65	125	117	60	81	41
85	21	57	73	74	70	36	109	66
64	22	28	40	91	126	37	116	119
35	30	38	14	25	104	76	89	
61	6	128	87	34	69	58	120	
105	33	4	88	90	99	108	31	
62	23	16	112	100	97	67	48	
68	39	114	63	94	9	59	49	
98	7	42	44	96	80	79	123	
2	29	72	56	103	53	47	17	

£2 has gone to Ireland, and the remaining £8 is divided among the following competitors, all of whom were correct:

M. A. Gill, 35, Newlyn Road, Lordship Lane, Bruce Grove, Tottenham.
A. B. Maclachlan, 4, Mildenhall Road, Clapton.
J. Burton, 102, Glenpacke Road, Forest Gate.
Miss Barrand, 13, Oriental Place, Brighton.
G. F. Hill, 83, Anderton Road, Sparbrook, Birmingham.
Mrs. E. A. Holland, 46, Clapton Road, Peckham.
W. H. Fitzgerald, 9, Oudine Road, East Dulwich.
M. E. Burns, The Mall, Sligo, Ireland.

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The Queen Against Owen

BY
Allen Upward
Author of "Secrets of the Courts of Europe," "The Prince of Balkistan," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XII.

The C.C.R.

The Court for Crown Cases Reserved is a modern institution, whose workings are not always quite understood by the public.

In every case which is tried before a jury there are two questions to be decided. The first is whether the evidence produced by the plaintiff alone is sufficient in point of law to justify a verdict. The second is whether the balance of evidence at the end of the trial is in favour of the plaintiff or the defendant.

The first of these questions is for the judge, the second for the jury. From the verdict of the jury there is, strictly speaking, no appeal. From the decision of the judge an appeal may be carried right up to the House of Lords.

But in criminal cases, where the Queen is treated as plaintiff, there was anciently no such method of reviewing the judge's decision. Now a special court has been established, embracing all the common law judges of the High Court, who sit in a body to decide these questions. It was to this tribunal that Tressamer had intended to resort.

But though the prisoner's legal advisers, both her former and her present one, looked to this court for their client's deliverance from the extreme penalty of the law, the general public turned to a very different remedy, that of agitation, to be exerted upon a very different authority—an impressionable politician in the Home Office.

Up to the hour of her conviction public opinion had ru[illegible] strongly against Eleanor. Whether this was deliberately aimed at by Tressamer or not, it was the consequence of the policy adopted by him. But no sooner had the law pronounced her doom than the tide turned with startling rapidity, and a gigantic agitation was at once set on foot for a reprieve.

Clergymen of mild manners and susceptible hearts went round canvassing their parishioners for signatures to petitions. Legal gentlemen, whose practice did not yet correspond to their own opinion of their deserts, rushed into print with gratuitous opinions on the evidence and the various points in the case. Newspaper reporters, sensitively alive to the first symptoms of a "boom," wrote up the tragic situation with graphic pens. They described the youth and beauty of the prisoner, her gentle bringing up, her desolate condition. Even her relations with the counsel for the defence, of which some inkling had transpired, were freely glanced at, and the reader was invited to sympathise with the despair of the lover as well as of the beloved.

Then the illustrated journals took it up. They had already given pictures of the scene of the crime, of the deceased, and of other characters, including the prisoner. But they now threw away the blocks representing Eleanor, and which had originally done service in America, where they represented a female temperance lecturer of moderate attractiveness, and came out with full-page illustrations, taken in one case from the portrait of the most charming actress on the Parisian stage, and all calculated to feed the growing flame of sympathy with the victim of what was now boldly referred to as a "miscarriage of justice."

The sporting fraternity, too, rallied round Eleanor almost to a man. A tremendous number of wagers had been made as to her fate, and those whose success was involved in her escape neglected no means of bringing about the desired end. And as public sentiment has not yet sunk quite so low as to tolerate petitions and meetings against clemency, the natural effect of all this was to make it appear that the suffrages of the whole community were on one side.

Even the jurymen began to repent their verdict. Several of them allowed themselves to be interviewed by pressmen, and went so far as to state that they had given their

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verdict with much misgiving, and hoped that a commutation of sentence would follow.

Petitions flowed in upon the Home Secretary. Meetings were held, not only in Porthstone and the neighbouring towns, but all over the country. Finally the excitement culminated in a monster meeting in London itself, in one of the largest public halls of the Metropolis, at which the chair was taken by a nobleman, and the speakers included a canon of the Church of England, a Roman cardinal, a leading light of the Wesleyan denomination, a major-general (on half-pay), and an ex-colonial judge.

The office of Home Secretary happened to be held at this time by an experienced member of the legal profession, and it is well-known that trained lawyers are far more cautious in condemning, and usually milder in punishing, than laymen. The Home Secretary wavered. He sent for the judge who had presided at the trial, and Sir Daniel Buller, who had had time to recover from his little pique against the prisoner's counsel, infused his own doubt into the Home Secretary's mind.

At last the Minister issued a decision. It was a thorough specimen of the not-guilty-but-don't-do-it-again order of judgment. It stated that the Home Secretary saw no reason to doubt the substantial guilt of Eleanor Owen, but that as, in his opinion, the evidence was of an imperfect character, and failed to throw a clear light upon all the circumstances of the case, including the motive for the crime, he had advised Her Majesty to commute the sentence to one of imprisonment for life.

The very day that this unsatisfactory announcement appeared, thirteen judges sat side by side at the Royal Law Courts to consider the point reserved.

Charles Prescott represented the prisoner. If the judges felt any surprise at this change of sides they were careful not to express it. Young Mr. Pollard appeared on behalf of the Crown, but he was led by the great Appleby, Q.C., and, as a matter of fact, was not allowed to open his lips once during the proceedings.

Begged Prescott to take her to a seat.

Prescott's argument was long and elaborate. A crowded bar were present to hear the celebrated case, and the feeling was universal among them that he had never shone so conspicuously on any former occasion. He took up the history of the law of murder from its earliest stages, and along with it he traced the gradual evolution of circumstantial evidence. He showed with what suspicion and reluctance the latter had been gradually admitted into our courts, and how succeeding judges had been careful to fence it in and restrain its application. Then he turned to the particular rule of law which Tressamer had relied on in the Assize Court, and repeated and emphasised the arguments made use of by him. He wound up with an impressive appeal to the judges to lean in the prisoner's favour, reminding them of the old maxim that a statute must be construed in favour of life, and asking them to apply the same principle in expounding the common law.

Then Appleby, Q.C., addressed the court. In reply to Prescott's last observations he said that imperfection of evidence was a good ground for commutation of sentence, but none for releasing the prisoner altogether. This was, of course, a reminder to the judges of the Home Secretary's decision, announced that morning. Then he proceeded to argue the case on general lines.

He began by stigmatising Hale's precept as a mere piece of advice to juries rather than a maxim of law. He went on to say:

"The most serious difficulty in following this rule is to know how far to apply it. How much of the deceased's body is it necessary to produce in order to justify a conviction? If the head had been discovered, surely my learned friend would not venture to argue that that was not sufficient. It seems clear that it must be a question of fact in each case, and a question of fact is eminently one for the jury, and where they are satisfied that a death has taken place, it would be the height of folly for their verdict to be set aside because there was not exactly what would enable a coroner to hold an inquest.

"In the present case, however, as a matter of fact, an inquest has been held. The proceedings have gone on all along on the assumption which every reasonable man must have formed, namely, that the body of the deceased had been committed to the waves. To set aside the conviction under such circumstances is simply to encourage crime, and to hold out a guarantee of safety to every murderer who will take a little trouble to conceal the remains of his victim."

When Appleby had finished, Prescott made a brief reply. He confined himself to saying that this was a case of interpreting the law, and not of framing it anew on the ground of expediency. But, he added, even if the court had to decide without reference to authority, he should still be prepared to urge that the danger of convicting one innocent person must always outweigh that of granting immunity to any number of felons, and he reminded their lordships how very rarely such a circumstance as the present occurred in actual experience.

When the judges came to give their opinions it was at once evident that the court was divided. In accordance with old etiquette, the youngest judge delivered himself first, and he, with some hesitation, declared in favour of the prisoner. But the next three all took the opposite side, and did so with great firmness. After them came another who supported Prescott's view, and then one who sided against him. Sir Daniel Buller repeated his decision at the trial, and Sir John Wiseman dwelt with elaboration

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on the reasons which swayed his cautious mind to the opposite view.

But the member of the court who was listened to with most attention by his brethren was Sir Stephen James, who had made a European reputation by his studies in criminal law. His works on the subject were in every library, and his mere dictum carried almost as much weight as a decided case. When it began to be evident that he was going in the prisoner's favour, Prescott took courage again.

His Lordship's decision was brief and to the point.

"When I am asked to apply a rule of law to a state of facts," he said, "and it appears doubtful whether or no the facts are included in the strict wording of the rule, I think it rational to look behind the words to the meaning, and to ask whether the reason for the rule applies with equal force to the facts now before me. Now, the reason I am able to discover for Sir Matthew Hale's rule is the danger of condemning anyone on a capital charge when you cannot be quite sure that a capital crime has been committed. It is no use to say to me that the jury believe this, that, or the other. The jury may believe it will be a fine day to-morrow, but that does not justify me in condemning a man to death on the assumption that it will be a fine day. The question is whether the jury are justified in coming to their verdict by cogent and decisive evidence. In this case I can see nothing of the sort. An eccentric old lady, with a mania for hoarding jewels, has disappeared in the night, carrying her jewels with her. A hand, identified as hers, because of the rings on it, was found on the beach next day. On those grounds, practically, we are asked to say that she is dead. I can only say that I decline to come to any such conclusion, and, furthermore, I am quite satisfied that if Sir Matthew Hale were sitting on this bench to-day he would be in favour of quashing this conviction."

Two other judges at once subscribed this judgment, and finally, when all but the Chief Justice had spoken, it appeared that the court, so far, was evenly divided, and that Lord Christobel held the fate of the prisoner in his hands.

Possibly his Lordship was not ill-pleased at this. He was a past master of dramatic effect, and in his hands the ancient dignity of Lord Chief Justice of England lost nothing of its imposing character. It may be added that it lost nothing of that higher dignity conferred upon it by the Gascoignes of another age. Lord Christobel had shown on more than one occasion that all ranks, even the highest, were equal in the eye of the law as administered by him. He was the scourge of truckling magistrates, and a thorn in the side of those petty tyrants whom our peculiar system allows to flourish in rural districts in the degraded robes of justice.

He did not long keep the court in suspense. In a gracefully-worded judgment he endorsed the arguments of the prisoner's counsel, and pronounced the conviction of Eleanor Owen to be void in law. The prisoner was to be discharged forthwith.

Hardly did Prescott wait for the closing words of the judgment before rushing out to the telegraph office at the entrance to the Law Courts, and despatching a message to Eleanor, who was still in Abertaff gaol.

He followed this up by thrusting a few things into a bag, cashing a cheque, and hurrying to Paddington, where he caught an express for the county town.

Within four hours he was in Eleanor's presence. She had waited for him in the prison, and now put on some outdoor things. He led her to the door, where the governor took a courteous leave of them, and they passed through the gates.

When she found herself for the first time in the open air, Eleanor's limbs shook beneath her. She looked wildly round, as if fearing to behold some disagreeable object, and then begged Prescott to take her to a seat.

They had emerged into a wide, dirty street, formed by the prison wall on one side and a row of shabby little houses and shops on the other. A few boys were playing marbles on the path, and Eleanor never saw the game afterwards without remembering that evening.

The sun was about to set as they took their way by the quietest route to a little public garden in the neighbourhood, where was a grass plot and some seats. There they stopped, and sat down for a short time to decide on Eleanor's future steps.

Eleanor's first words fell heavily on the ears of her companion.

"I almost wish myself back again. Where am I to go now?" And she shivered slightly.

"Oh, Eleanor, don't say that! To-night you must go to some hotel in the town, but to-morrow we will go up to town together, and I will find you lodgings for a time."

She turned and looked at him sorrowfully, not reproachfully, and shook her head.

"No, no. You forget what I said to you before. I have accepted your friendship, and I need not tell you how grateful I am for it, and for your efforts in obtaining my release. But I am still where I was, as far as the world is concerned. They will go on believing me guilty, and while they do I cannot let you associate with me."

"Oh, why not? Surely you know by this time what you are to me? Need I tell you, Eleanor——"

She put up her hand.

"Hush, Charles!"

The word sent a thrill through him. He looked round. Some children were engrossed in a game a hundred yards and more away. The sunlight was fading from gold to crimson across the roofs and chimneys beyond. The whole scene was still and Sabbath-like. A great peace seemed to speak to him, and bid him take courage and hope for better things. He turned again to Eleanor.

"Thank you," he said, in acknowledgment of her tacit confession. "But oh! if I am satisfied, what need you care for others? Listen: I have some money—more than enough to keep us for some years. We will go to Australia, where they have not heard of us; or, if they have, we will change our names. I can join the bar there, and do as well as here. Are you not my only happiness? What are other things compared to that?"

Again she looked at him sorrowfully. Again she shook her head. Then she turned and gazed into the green and crimson of the sunset while she spoke.

"You would not speak like that if you knew me. Do you suppose I have not thought of all these things during my weary prison hours? I have done nothing else since I saw you, since I saw you and know you loved me, Charles. But I must be strong where you are weak. I must decide in this matter without heeding your wishes. I must decide as your mother would, if you asked her. Would she wish you to marry a convicted murderess? I have to speak plainly, because I want you to understand me at once, Charles, and spare me the pain of further talk like this. I shall go to London by myself, and I shall let you have my address on the strict condition that you are never to come and see me till my character stands clear again. You may write to me sometimes, not often, but if you break the condition and come to me, I shall move somewhere else and hide myself from you altogether. Now let us go and find a hotel for me, different from yours."

She made a movement to rise. Charles looked round once more. The children had finished their game and disappeared. The brilliancy of the sunset was dropping into dusk and grey. They were alone in the twilight, beneath the faded trees.

"Eleanor, one pledge that you will not forsake me!"

She turned. Their eyes met; then their lips. The silent, close embrace lasted but a minute, though to both of them it seemed longer than the whole of their previous life. Then they arose and went forth out of their poor paradise, like Adam and Eve, with the world lying empty and desolate in front of them.

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CHAPTER XII.

Under the Great Seal.

Shortly after Prescott had returned to town, he was surprised to get a letter from Tressamer to this effect:

"I want you to give me Eleanor's address. I must see her once more, as I have something of importance to say to her."

Without an instant's hesitation, he sat down and wrote an answer, in which he said:

"You have no further claim on my friendship, nor on Miss Owen's. Fortunately, she is now under my protection, and in a place where you are not likely to find her. Do not expect for one moment that I shall do anything to bring her again within the reach of your dangerous character. Only the memory of your old kindness restrains me from writing in a very much stronger way. I am sorry that I must ask you never to hold communication with me again."

Meanwhile Prescott had been doing his utmost to obtain some further light upon the mystery. But neither his inquiries, nor those of the skilled detective, whom he sent down at his own expense to investigate, had resulted so far in finding the smallest clue to what had happened on the night of the first of June.

He had not seen Eleanor since they parted at Abertaff. He now received a letter from her, in which she fulfilled her promise of letting him know her address. But her letter was so despondent, and showed her to feel her situation so deeply, that Prescott was greatly shocked and grieved.

Two days after he was roused by seeing in the papers this announcement:

"The Porthstone Murder: Discovery of the Lost Jewels.—Last night, while dragging for fish along the shore of Newton Bay, some fishermen brought to land in their net a chest which had evidently been in the water some time. On being opened, it was found to be full of valuable gems. The police were at once communicated with, it being supposed that they were those missing since the night of the murder. They sent for Mr. Lewis, but as he was unable to speak to their identity, Mr. Williams, of Abertaff, who had supplied deceased with jewellery, was wired for, and he came down by the next train and identified the contents of the chest as the missing jewels. It will be remembered that a part of the body was discovered at or about the same place.

"The importance of the discovery is in negativing the theory that the crime was committed for the sake of robbery. But it cannot be said that the mystery which has enshrouded this murder from first to last is in any degree dispelled by this new incident."

While Prescott was still pondering over this discovery, and its bearing on the position of Eleanor and the facts in the case, he received a second letter from Tressamer.

His first impulse was to return it unopened, but he thought this might be doing an injustice, as the letter might contain some explanation, though hardly any excuse for his strange conduct. He therefore opened it.

The letter was a long one, taking up many sheets of paper. After the opening words, it went on:

"I know not what opinion you have formed of me and of my conduct towards Eleanor Owen. Neither do I write in any hope of excusing myself. I am past that now, and I shall soon be past the reach of your anger and of hers.

"Let me begin at the beginning. You remember our childhood, and you know, none better, the bonds between Eleanor and myself. But you do not know that, as children, we were united by those pledges which children sometimes make in imitation of the serious engagements of later life. Of course, as we grew older that passed more or less out of sight, but the memory of it remained—at least, with me.

"I think it was you who first came between us, even at that early age. I used to think she liked you better than me. But why dwell on these things? Let me come on to a later time, the time of her father' death, when I had passed into manhood, and she was passing into young womanhood.

"That was my first opportunity of showing her my devotion, and I did so. I paid off her father's debts, and by the time I had settled everything, and handed over a little sum to her, I had spent some hundreds of pounds of my own.

"Eleanor was grateful. Whether she had any warmer feeling for me at that time, I cannot say. But I thought then that she had, and that she returned my love—not in the degree that I gave it; no, that could not be. Still, the pleasure she took in my company, the trust with which she seemed to lean on me, certainly filled me with the hope of some day winning her.

"I went to work cautiously. I dreaded her being afraid of my passion if I let her see its whole force. I never did. I chained it up when I was with her, and played a mild and cheerful part. I had my reward. At last, the Christmas after her father's death, I ventured to speak. She heard me with no delight, but yet, it seemed, with no great repugnance. Time soon reconciled her to the idea, and before long I had the rapture of hearing her consent to be mine.

"Then it was that I betrayed myself. I let my mad passion peep forth for an instant, and in that instant I was undone. I saw I had terrified and shocked her. I would have given worlds to recall that volcanic outburst, but it was too late. Her feelings, mild hitherto, were soured by the lightning of my intense love. From that hour she turned from me with deeper and deeper aversion, and from that hour my passion grew and grew upon me with the force of mania, till it usurped the functions of reason, morality, prudence, and every motive that guides and controls the life of man, and left me with but one dominating, desperate idea, that I must possess Eleanor Owen or perish.

"I need not dwell on what happened during the next year. How I saw her turning from me with a sickening heart, how I hungered for the tokens of even that mild friendship she had shown me of old, and how even that was denied; how I brooded upon my wrongs till I scarce knew whether I loved or hated her, whether it was passion or revenge that inspired my mad resolve to kill her rather than forfeit my right to her.

"You, yes, you came between us again. God help me! I sometimes think she must have loved you all along, unconsciously. She asked me for your portrait; I refused. She persisted. Then my wrath broke out in an ungovernable transport of jealousy, and I showed—I must have shown—something of the black stuff that was working in my heart. I saw her lose colour. I saw her tremble, and I rushed away to calm myself if I could.

"From that moment I could see that all friendly feeling was at an end between us. She hated me and I hated her; but I would not give her up. The very animosity between us seemed only to feed my fierce desire to have her and make her my slave. Am I writing wildly? Do you start back and shudder at all this? Go on; you have not yet come to a glimmering of the worst!

"I began to grow impatient for a final end to this state of things, and I pressed her to name a day for the marriage. She replied, putting me off. I went down by the next train to have it out with her. And then at last we spoke freely.

"I accused her of having ceased to love me. She said she had never really felt love for me, but only affection, and that I had extinguished that by my own behaviour.

"I asked her what behaviour. She was silent. Then the flood-gates of my wrath broke loose, and I put all my weakness and wickedness before her. Ah, how I spoke! You may think you have heard me eloquent. But you never have. I was that afternoon as one inspired. I stood there on the bare sands alone with her, with the wind rushing past us and the sea roaring in front and the wild seabirds

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EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS IN THE TREATMENT OF OBESITY.

Our corpulent readers will be glad to learn how to positively lose two stone in about a month with the greatest possible benefit in health, strength and muscle, by a comparatively new system. It is a singular paradox that the patient, returning quickly to a healthy state, with increased activity of brain, digestive and other organs, naturally requires more food than hitherto, yet, notwithstanding this, he absolutely loses in weight 11b. to 21b. daily, as the weighing-machine will prove. Thus there is no suggestion of starvation. It is an undoubted success, and the author, who has devoted years of study to the subject, guarantees a noticeable reduction within twenty-four hours of commencing the treatment. This is different with other diseases, for the patient in some cases may go for weeks without being able to test whether the physician has rightly treated him, and may have derived no real or apparent improvement in health. Here, we repeat, the author guarantees it in twenty-four hours, the scale to be the unerring recorder. The treatment aims at the actual root of obesity, so that the superfluous fat does not return when discontinuing the treatment. It is perfectly harmless. We advise our readers to call the attention of stout friends to this, because, sincerely, we think they ought to know. For their information we may say that on sending two penny stamps, a book entitled "Corpulency, and the Cure" (256 pages), containing a reprint of press notices from some hundreds of medical and other journals (British and Foreign) and other interesting particulars, including the "recipe," can be had, post free, from a Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn house, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.—*Belfast News Letter.*

CORPULENCY THE THIEF OF TIME.

That procrastination is the Thief of Time is a truism so obvious that it has no claim to be regarded as an epigram. To more practical purpose it may be urged that Corpulency is, in very many respects, the parent of procrastination. The putting off till to-morrow what can be done to-day certainly becomes a mental habit, but it is unquestionably very frequently begotten by physical conditions which render exertion irksome. That, in the majority of cases, procrastination is easily curable, is one of the considerations suggested by a perusal of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's "Corpulency, and the Cure," whose remarkable popularity is evidenced by the recent issue of the 18th edition. The enormous mass of correspondence which this expert has accumulated, and many extracts from which are included in the 256 pages of this little book, forms the most valuable addition which has yet been made to the literature of obesity. It is specially notable that a very large proportion of Mr. Russell's correspondents who have undergone his course of treatment for the reduction of obesity, emphasise the renewed vigour which they have experienced after passing through the process—a wonderfully rapid one, according to this method—of banishing the superabundant fat. The universal adoption of Mr. Russell's system by corpulent persons of both sexes would increase, by a stupendous percentage, the working capacity of mankind. The rapidly growing popularity of the treatment is due, doubtless, to the author having discarded all the obsolete notions about semi-starvation being requisite to insure comely and comfortable slimness. It is certain that the more the marvellous possibilities of Mr. Russell's system become known, the less will be the tolerance for the laziness of people who decline to reduce their overweight by the pleasant and facile means which are described in this little book, which can be had, post free, by forwarding two penny stamps to Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.—*Liverpool Daily Mercury.*

WASTE ACCUMULATIONS OF FAT.

What is described as an important medical discovery was recently made by F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Bedford Square, London, who has given long and intelligent study to the origin of the disease of corpulency. Mr. Russell has discovered—or rather invented—a medicine for the reduction of fat, which, from a long list of testimonials now before me, appears to be attended with the most remarkable curative results. His remedy differs in essential particulars from the Newmarket, Dusseldorf, and other well-known thinning systems. Its effect is not merely to reduce the amount of superfluous fat, but, by affecting the source of obesity, to induce a radical cure of the disease. Moreover, it entails no unpleasant restriction in diet, no exhausting "constitutionals," and no sudorifics and high temperature vapour baths. Here is a man who practically meets you with a handful of simple British herbs, and has performed the very extraordinary task of removing 14lb. of waste accumulation in seven days. It is merely a vegetable medicine, agreeable to the taste, and possessing such valuable tonic and invigorating qualities, that its use is often continued by the patient when the prime necessity for its administration is past. Mr. Russell makes no secret of its composition. His book is only two stamps—cheap enough indeed—send for it.—*Leeds Times*, January 9th, 1897.

CURIOUS EFFECTS IN THE TREATMENT OF CORPULENCY.

The old-fashioned methods of curing obesity were based upon the adoption of a sort of starvation dietary. Would any reader now believe that by the new orthodox treatment a stout patient can take almost double his usual quantity of food, and yet decrease one or two pounds of fat daily for a time? This is very singular, and directly hostile to previous opinions held by medical authorities, yet it is a fact. The author of the comparatively new system in question explains that the person under treatment is restored to a healthier state in the small space of 24 hours, having lost probably two pounds of superfluous deposit, the organs display great activity, and more food is required. By standing on a weighing-machine the proof of reduction is incontrovertibly shown daily. In serious cases, a pound to ten pounds weekly loss is registered until the person approaches his or her normal weight; then the diminution becomes less pronounced, the muscles firmer, the cure is effected. Compiled reprints of medical and other journals, and interesting particulars, including the book entitled "Corpulency, and the Cure" (256 pages), containing the "recipe," which is quite harmless, can be obtained, post free, from Mr. Russell, of Woburn House, 27, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., by inclosing two penny stamps.—*Dublin Weekly Freeman.*

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wheeling and screaming far away. Oh, it was a grand hour for me! The frenzy mounted to my brain. I felt like a destroying angel. I took her miserable girl's heart in my hands and rent it in twain and cast its miserable pretences to the earth. I showed her myself, my manhood, my ardour, my passion, my devotion. I terrified her, awed her, fascinated her. For a time I think I had almost won upon her to yield.

"But my power forsook me. No sooner did I see the first symptom of returning tenderness in her, or what I mistook for it, than my hatred and rage departed; I was melted in a moment; I flung myself in front of her on my face, and implored her with sobs and tears to give me one little spark of love. Fool that I was! Fool! Fool!

"She took advantage of my weakness. Doubtless she despised me for it. She made me one of those mincing, lying answers that women know how to make to us in our madness, and she took courage at last to rise and leave me lying there—lying there with my face upon the wet sand, and the wet rain beating down upon my head, and the moaning tempest rising over me in the heavens, like the awful eruption of maniacal hatred that was working its way into my being within.

"I got up at night and came away. I suppose I still looked and acted as if I were sane. At all events, the people I passed said nothing to me. I packed up and left for Abertaff that night.

"With me I took an object which I had picked up on the sands where Eleanor had sat. It was the key of the house where she lived. When I caught sight of it it seemed like an inspiration. In an instant I resolved to make use of it to execute my vengeance. Since I could not marry Eleanor, I would kill her.

"But in the train a more subtle scheme presented itself. If I killed her she would be lost to me for ever, and I still longed for her as madly as at any time. The new idea which I had got was this. I would kill, not Eleanor, but her friend and benefactress, and I would do it in such a way as to cast the stain of guilt on Eleanor herself. You see the plot. Her life was to be in no real danger. The body was to disappear, and hence she was to escape a trial. But the horror and condemnation of the whole world were to be turned upon her, and then, in her hour of blackest misery, I was to come forward and say: 'I love you still. I believe in your innocence. Come with me to a foreign land as my wife, and I will make you happy.'

"I need not tell you much more. I came back by road for greater secrecy, and did not arrive in Porthstone till eleven at night. I was not tired. Some superhuman power had taken possession of me, and in all I did I felt as if I were but a passive instrument in its hands.

"I approached the house at twelve, expecting all its inmates to be asleep. Just as I was about to enter it the door opened, and to my astonishment Eleanor herself emerged. I gazed at her retreating figure with a sort of stupid fascination for some time, and then recovered myself, and went in. I had taken off my boots outside, and hence, I suppose my footsteps sounded light as I went upstairs.

"Well, do you want more? Do you care to hear how I killed her; how I stabbed her in her sleep, lowered her through the window, and came down with the jewel chest in my arms? I had to mutilate the corpse; the weight would have been too great for me at once. As it was, I made three journeys before I had disposed of all, and thrown everything, including the latchkey, into the sea.

"Then I walked back to Abertaff—twenty miles it was, and I got there before ten the next morning. I had breakfast, and was still walking the streets when the news came that the murder was discovered.

"It overwhelmed me. I assure you, Charles Prescott, on the oath of a dying man, that I knew not what I did till that moment. I was possessed as surely as any of the Galilean sufferers of old. Madness, your modern science calls it. It is all the same. I passed out of it into my ordinary state with a terrible shock, and then I set about playing the part I had looked forward to, of delivering Eleanor, and carrying her off.

"But it was not to be. I had forgotten that she was not mad, too; I had made no allowance for her, and now I found that my protection, my confidence, was of no value to her, when she had lost the good opinion of the world.

"Of the world, do I say? Verily, I believe it was you; I believe you unconsciously thwarted me then, as before.

"I gave way to my frenzy again in secret. Again the demon came back and resumed his sway. He has held me ever since. He holds me now.

"Yet I can act my part. I deceive all. I just rang for my clerk, and told him I should want him to carry this to your chambers. Fool! He had no suspicion that he was never going to hear me speak again.

"Good-bye. 'Twere folly to ask you to forgive. I do not wish it. Yet, Eleanor—Eleanor——"

The letter ended abruptly at this point. The reader put on his hat and rushed round to Tressamer's chambers. It was too late. He found him sitting in a chair, stark and dead, with a dagger driven through his heart.

* * * * *

When a year had elapsed, a quiet wedding took place, in an out-of-the-way city church, between Charles Prescott and Eleanor Owen. The only dowry brought by the bride was her restored beauty, and a parchment under the Great Seal of England, pardoning her from all accusations that had been or might be raised against her on account of the tragedy which had so nearly involved her in a felon's doom.

THE END.

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THE reply is given in an interesting article by MR. J. HOLT SCHOOLING which appears in **PEARSON'S MAGAZINE for February**. Now on Sale. Price **6d.**

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THE SHADOW-HAND," by Louis Tracy, commences on page 229.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 425. FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 20TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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SHORT STORIES

No. 425.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending February 20th, 1897.

MR. VANDERNEST'S VALENTINES.

"I NEVER, never saw anyone quite like you, Clare. So persistent, so insistent. Always money, money, money! I should think you thought I was made of money!"

Perhaps Clare had seen too little of her father to let her think him made of anything else.

"Well, aren't you, papa?" she said roguishly, looking up into his sour face, and hugging herself, while the wind whistled round her bare head.

"Really, Clare is the only one who can do anything with her father," said Mrs. Vandernest, looking down cautiously from the drawing-room window, left open by the maid, to the street where Mr. Vandernest had been arrested on the way to the carriage by Clare's fluting voice, hiding herself, meanwhile, behind the curtain which blew about her, threatening to disclose her, do what she would, and not daring to drop the sash lest her husband should glance up and see her.

"Take care, Emma," said her sister, who chanced to be spending the morning with her. "If he sees you, it's all up with Clare's hopes. What a gale it must be out at sea; a regular dry storm! Here, let me hold down the curtain. There! He's getting to be a regular curmudgeon. Who would ever have dreamt it of Sydney?"

"It's too bad," sighed the wife. "It's really too bad. But it's wrong for me to let you talk so, Helena. He is my husband and——"

"Nonsense! I should have to be blind and deaf, as well as dumb, and a senseless woman besides, not to appreciate Sydney for all he's worth——"

"He's worth more than a hundred thousand. He never used to be so," whimpered Mrs. Vandernest, whether in reference to the money or the curmudgeon.

"Clare's indifference doesn't trouble him; Gerald's despair—and Ruth is such a lovely creature! If all the Gulnares of the sea looked as she does in that last picture of Gerald's, we should have very few young men above water."

"But really. Look, look quick!—I do believe——"

"He certainly is—hush!" exclaimed Helena in a whisper. "If Clare hasn't carried the day! He's putting his hand into his pocket! He's taken out a note! Oh, be careful, don't let him see us—it's a crucial moment."

It was indeed a crucial moment. "I don't approve of a young girl having so much money," Mr. Vandernest was saying petulantly.

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"What was it you said you wanted it for?" suspiciously and still holding the note by one end between thumb and finger.

"I didn't say, papa," she cried gleefully.

"Well you had better if you want it."

"It's—it's rather a secret," she said hesitatingly, the colour coming and going like a flame. "You know that lady—I shall catch my death of cold out here!"

"Then run in at once. What lady?" as she didn't run in.

"Why, the pale one with the brown eyes and the white hair, with the lovely lame girl—that exquisite creature whose lameness is only a beauty, she uses her crutches in the way a swan does his feet in the water—that sits behind the big pillar in church——"

"You want to spend my money on those beggars!" he roared. "You want to give away what it has cost me years of labour and struggle to get together! Those people I've forbidden Gerald to go near again! You——"

And just at that instant a great puff of wind came sailing and swirling about them, and snatched the bit of paper from his thumb and finger, and went careering up and away with it, up, up, up, over the bare tree-tops, over the houses and into the clouds themselves.

Mr. Vandernest looked after it one long moment. As if he could not believe the evidence of his senses, he glanced at his hands, at the steps, made a motion towards his daughter as if he would like to shake her, and then dashed down to his carriage like one of the swine into whom the evil spirits betook themselves. But Clare had already fled the place, and she darted upstairs and into the front drawing-room, where Aunt Helena slammed down the window.

"Oh! oh! oh!" she sobbed, as much with excitement and apprehension as with disappointment. "When I all but had it! And what, what do you suppose he will do and say when he comes back?"

"He—he can't kill you," said her mother.

"He can shut me up in my room——"

"He never did."

"He can forbid me to go out, and refuse me a new bonnet for a year, and bring me to shame by disputing the dressmaker's bill——"

"No," said her Aunt Helena, smoothing the tangles of yellow curls where the wind had played havoc, "he will do nothing of the sort. He'll just fret about the waste of butter, and the surplus of the pudding-sauce, and threaten to put Gerald to work as a day-labourer on a farm."

"It's a dreadful life, oh, it's a dreadful life!" sighed her mother.

And although anyone might have seen that Mr. Vandernest's family was in what is politely called an insurrectionary state, no one would have supposed that he really loved them with all the heart he had, be the same much or little, and that they lived in a house little short of a palace, provided by his money, even if every separate article in it had been wrung out of him as if at the cost of his life's blood.

"Well," said Clare, ruffling all her curls again, "that's the end of Ruth's worsted. If she ever has her foot straightened, it will be by no means of ours. And I did so want to help her, and I made up the work and offered her the price—I must take it, anyhow, mamma, and I must pay her; I shall sell my pearl earrings. Just think what papa might do for people if he only would! There's the postman. Oh, yes, James has his hands full! Valentines! Oh, what a deadly waste of money!"

It was odd that just at that moment Mrs. Paul, the pale woman with brown eyes and the white hair who sat behind the pillar in the church, should be making the same remark about Mr. Vandernest. "Just think what he might do with his money, if he only would!"

"Well, as his daughter Clare would say, he only won't," Ruth answered her. "And that isn't the worst of it!"

"No," said her mother. "He only will—when it comes to this question of demanding his own. And it is his own, I suppose, but your father always told me he had rendered Mr. Vandernest good and sufficient service for the money represented in that note; and the moment we were left defenceless that note is presented, and we have nothing to do but to pay it, or lose the house over our heads. I am thankful there is only £20 more to pay on it."

"I should be more thankful," said Ruth, "if I knew where the £20 was coming from. You see, stitch as I can on this embroidery of Clare's, I can't finish it yet."

"If it were done and paid for," said the mother, "I had meant that money to go for the straightening of your foot."

"Not with that debt hanging over us. I forget my foot isn't straight—Gerald never remembers it. I only submitted to taking the fancy price she promised in order to pay the debt to her father, and I don't see what we can do."

For all the look of trouble on her face, she was as beautiful as King Cophetua's beggar maid, as she sat there with the sprays and wreaths growing under her needle like frost on the pane, the dark hair accentuating the perfect pallor of the face, whose red lips were its only colour, the features perfect as an antique, the great black-lashed, sea-grey eyes shining like aquamarine jewels. The mother thought if Mr. Vandernest once saw her, once heard the music of the brook-like voice, he might feel a pride and pleasure in his son's choice. She felt almost angry the next moment to think that Gerald was her daughter's choice.

"I am going out," she said presently. "I shall go to his office and ask him to take less this time. He can but turn us out, and he will do that way, without scruple. What a storm there is blowing up! But I suppose you will know nothing about it. Gerald will come while I'm gone, and when he comes, it's all sunshine!"

"I wish there were a little sunshine now," said Ruth. "It's so dark for such fine work. I wish that shutter would swing back. Hold the mull, mother, please, while I open the window and fasten back this blind." But the wind blew in as she opened the sash, and in spite of the mother's hand, mull and patterns and thread went whirling every way at once, and suddenly, while Mrs. Paul was hurrying to gather them out of the wind's way, the girl's voice cried: "Oh mother, mother, look; but do look!" And as if a bird had flown into her bosom she had clasped her hands across something nestling there, a great white leaf, a fresh, crisp £20 note.

"If this isn't a valentine sent from Heaven, there never was one!" cried she. "And what a valentine! A £20 note! I never saw such a note before, and I never had a valentine," she cried, letting the window fall. "Oh, I will never doubt Providence again! A £20 note!" And the girl's joy transformed her into a sort of radiance.

Mrs. Paul took the note and examined it, even to the daub of red ink where someone had started to scribble initials on the back and then smeared them out. "Yes," she said calmly, "some one has lost it—poor soul. It was not a kind Providence to that person. We must advertise it, I suppose. It isn't ours."

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Ruth looked at her a moment, first in amazement and then in horror, hiding her face in her hands. "Oh!" she cried, "how wicked I am! How good you are! I am no better than—than—any bad person! I would have kept it, but it wasn't ours!" And when she went back to her needle she could hardly see it for the tears that kept coming.

Mrs. Paul folded the note away in her purse, wrote out a brief advertisement, which she put beside it, and presently stood before Mr. Vandernest's desk, briefly stating her errand.

"It's very extraordinary, very extraordinary, indeed," he said fussily. "Women never seem to have any idea of business. A most improper request of a business man. Business is business. And to ask a man to receive partial payment when the whole is due——"

"It is all I have," said Mrs. Paul, with a gesture of something like despair. And then she remembered herself and opened her purse and took out the £5, and laid the little pile before him. "In three months," she said, "I hope to be able to pay the remainder. But to-day it's all I have."

"Madam!" said Mr. Vandernest, peering over his desk suddenly, "why do you make such a statement as that, when I saw plainly, very plainly, a bank-note in your purse? Not that I want it, but that I see it! A five—a ten——"

Mrs. Paul took it out instantly and opened it before him. "It is a £20 note," she said, "but it is not mine. It blew into my window less than an hour ago."

"It is mine," he said quickly, his dark face flushing purple. "It blew out of my hands less than an hour ago as I stood talking at my door with my daughter. I know it by the mark and smear of red ink—it caught my eye then—there it is——"

"If as you say, sir," said Mrs. Paul quietly, "there can be no doubt about it. The note is yours." She tossed the advertisement into the waste-paper basket and laid the note on the desk. "I am glad to be able to restore it to you," she said, and waited a moment for his decision of her own affair.

He opened a drawer, dropped the note in and closed it, looked out of the window a moment, and then up at the ceiling, and then examined his finger nails. "Well, no, Mrs. Paul," said he, "I don't feel called upon to administer charity in this case. I have already been more than lenient. I will give you what I may call the customary three days' grace, and then if you are not able to pay me the rest of the money, I shall feel obliged to put an attachment on your property." He would like to repel her so that she wouldn't let her daughter marry Gerald. But no danger of that, he thought.

"Death is a great leveller, I have heard it said, Mr. Vandernest," said Mrs. Paul, after a moment's silence, "and my husband's death has shown me the truth of the saying. If I had come into your office during his lifetime you would have sprung to offer me a chair; you would have placed your purse at my disposal. Now, you have not even asked me to be seated, and you make yourself the oppressor of the widow and the fatherless in my person and my child's. Good-morning."

And feeling glad at any rate that she had been able to give him that piece of her mind, she left the place, and left him full of astonished silence; for Mr. Vandernest was not a man of violent language, and if he had been, he was quite too much amazed to use it. He, the courtly Mr. Vandernest, accused of incivility. He, a church member, called to his face the oppressor of the fatherless. He felt as if he were turning to stone.

He sat so for perhaps half-an-hour, not consciously thinking of anything at all.

Then he rose and put on his great coat. Let the wind blow. He must pay a visit to his solicitor.

He glanced over one or two papers. There were others he must have, but they were with certain of his securities in the safe which was built into the library wall at home. The carriage had gone back; but he could call a cab and go for them.

So Mr. Vandernest drove home, and let himself in and mounted the velvet-covered stairs to the library where were the papers he sought. As he noiselessly opened the safe, a hum of voices on the other side of the curtain caught his ear, and mention of himself arrested him.

"I shouldn't feel so," Clare was saying, "if papa was like other men."

He! Mr. Vandernest! Not like other men!

"But just look at the contemptible parsimony with which we are treated."

Contemptible parsimony! Oh, Miss Clare, you have sealed your fate! Mr. Vandernest looked about him at the old Indian rug on the floor from the palace of a Ramapootra prince, for which he had paid £600; at the Jules Breton on the wall, the Diaz, the Merle, the Corot full of dreaming; at the Vibert on the easel with its every dainty detail and its scorching moral; at the velvet divans, the bronze Perseus, the silver lamps, the sweeping purple velvet curtain, the books, marvels of tooling, the screen, the vases, the crystal jar of red roses—these had cost nothing less than 5s. apiece—he knew—had he not paid for them? And parsimony! He, who liked to have everything rich and fine about him! His heart stood still a second.

"Yes," his wife was saying, "he could trust me with the right use of his children all their lives, but not of his money. The house is a palace, but I feel like a caged bird in it. I can't spend a penny without accounting for it. I can't have a penny without asking for it like a beggar and telling what I want to do with it, and then it's like drawing teeth to get it. It's been so for years. I might have an immortal soul in my charge, but not a cheque-book."

"Somebody had to have the immortal souls in charge," said Clare, "and I'm sure papa doesn't even know if we were made with souls or without them. He has never spent enough time with us to find out. He doesn't know that Gerald has genius enough to make his name known when that of every mere millionaire is forgotten. He doesn't even know he has a painting-room at the top of the house. I'm sure if he were to open a studio he would have orders enough in a year to let him marry Ruth Paul, the dear beauty, instead of breaking their two hearts as they are doing now! I think the best thing we can do is to go off by ourselves, mamma. You've a little money, and that would pay our room-rent, and I could get a school, and run the house, and then nothing could be expected of us, and at all events we should have some peace from papa——"

"Clare!" said her mother, drawing a long breath of astonishment.

"And I'm sure that as for him he'd be a great deal happier rid of us, and never seeing us again——"

"Oh, you don't think so!" cried the mother, horrified and aghast.

"Yes, I do. And so would we, once we were used to it. At any rate, we'd be free. Why, mamma, what in the world are you crying for? I do believe—why, mamma, it isn't possible you love papa?"

"Yes, it is!" cried his wife, in a volcanic outburst.

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"Yes, I do," she sobbed. "I've loved him all my life—and I can't leave off now—because he—isn't—he isn't—all I wish he was. I love him all the more because he needs love all the more! He—he—has a great deal of right on—on his side—from—from his point of view, too. I'm very inefficient, or I should never have allowed you to go on so. Your father, your dear father—he was handsome, he was kind, he was tender once—I don't care if he is occupied with making money now, I can wait, I am waiting, I have been! By-and-bye he will come back to me."

Mr. Vandernest's face grew very white as he listened. It seemed to him all at once that the speaker was a young wild rose of a girl, in a briary, blossomy land of summer evening, and he for the first time pressing his lips to hers, drawing her soul into his own, with his arms about her there under the swinging branches, the purple heavens, the hazy stars, his heart full of high purpose, his will of endeavour. He sank for a moment into the nearest chair. "He was really undergoing a good deal to-day," he said to himself; he felt faint.

A sort of mild Day of Judgment, this, on which he had fallen, not St. Valentine's day after all, and he laughed grimly and silently. Here was his wife waiting for the happiness she had never had since the first year of their married life; and his children feeling this way.

Clare, the little ringleted, rosy creature who—who—well, if he lost her, life wouldn't be worth a toss up; and Gerald—his boy—no time to win them back, to take the pleasure which he had always felt was waiting ahead, ready when he was ready! Why, he was past fifty now—when was he going to enjoy it?

The voices rippled and ejaculated and wept on, but he heard no more. He sat there, again lost in an abyss of thought, and only roused himself and went to his safe and his table when the chimes struck out the half-hour. One would not have needed to be eavesdropping to have heard a singular sound shortly after that, a sound like a child with an ear for a tune trying to blow a piccolo.

"Hush!" exclaimed Clare. "Hush! What's that? I declare, if that isn't papa whistling! Oh, what do you suppose he's at home for at this time of day? And whistling! it frightens me! Is he going to make a fuss about that bill blowing away?"

The curtain parted at the word, and Mr. Vandernest stood there, hat in hand and overcoat on arm, a smile on his lips, and a parcel of papers in his fingers.

"Well, Emma," said he, looking at his trembling wife, "I suppose you're wondering what I'm at home for at this hour? What if I had said the firm had failed, and that I am a ruined man, and we have to begin all over again?"

"Oh, Sydney!" she cried, running forward with clasped hands, "I should be so glad!"

"The deuce you would! Well," he returned, laughing, "I'm sorry you can't be made glad—I mean I'm glad—that is, oh, well, it would be a lie if I said so. But the fact is, it's St. Valentine's day, you know, and I thought I'd do a little of the old saint's work for him to-day. Don't you remember when we used to make much of the day, thirty years ago or so?"

"Oh, Sydney," with a pretty girlish motion. "I——"

"Well, in the first place, here's a valentine for you, my love, not so pretty as the old valentines used to be when you lifted the lace paper and saw your own pretty face in the little mirror there. But more useful," said Mr. Vandernest, "more useful," and he handed her a big envelope. "There are bonds and certificates of stock, coupons attached, which will give you an independent income to spend just as you please, and give account to no one. And if there's more than you want to spend all at once, put it in a bank. And there's a cheque-book. And that's your valentine. Clare! Here! What are you slipping away for? Didn't you say that note this morning would make the foot straight for that girl?"

Clare only stared at him, open-eyed. "Well," said he, "that note blew away. But this cheque is just as good. It's for several times more. And you can tell her to get her wedding clothes ready with the rest of it. And I'll send Gerald along to her after a little talk. Where is he? Top of the house? In his painting-room? I've about decided that if he wants to go to Paris and study, he'd better; and I'd rather he took a wife along with him than go without. It's no use having all our money and letting people fret their heart out for what money 'll do. Well, that's her valentine. And—and—wait a minute, Clare, here's another envelope; that's for the old lady, the mother, Mrs. Paul. It's a cancelled note. You give it her with my regards; that's her valentine. And I protest, Clare: there isn't any valentine for you, unless," —and he held his arms wide, and Clare sprang into them.

"Oh, you're my valentine, papa," she said, "when you're like this! I don't mean giving but living, and being one of us, and making us love you."

"And now, my dear," said Mr. Vandernest, holding Clare in one arm and reaching the other for his wife, "no matter about the gale. 'It's an ill wind that blows nobody good.' Do you remember going to see a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, thirty years ago to-day with me? Well it's on again now, and if there's anything in the house for lunch, we'll have a bite and be off to it, you and I. We may as well have a season of theatre going and concerts together while we can. I dare say I'm as big an ass as Bottom was, to be as much in love with you now as I was almost a generation ago. No, that isn't what I mean, of course. But it seems to me to-day as if I'd been an ass for a good while. Well, we'll begin again; and if you'll seal the compact with a kiss; well, that shall be my valentine!"

R. Baird.

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PROLOGUE

The afternoon sun of an autumn day was among the leaves of Chisholme Park, a small estate in Dorsetshire.

It was setting for the last time upon the owner of the compact estate, who lay dying in the rather diminutive square grey house standing on a lawn in the middle of the park. The Honourable Ernest Wentworth, the younger son of a great family, lying abed, could see the red beams making bars on the carpet, and, in his loneliness, reflected on the failure of his life—his short life of thirty-six years—till tears rolled from his eyes.

He would have been still sadder if he could have risen from his bed, walked down an avenue of limes, and seen two persons, one of them his wife, sitting on a bench within a bower.

Ernest Wentworth, a year before, had made a *mésalliance* in Paris with one of the *artistes* at the *Théâtre des Variétés*. His brother, Lord Hilton, had not been hasty in discarding his own flesh and blood. In a curt letter to Ernest he had said that he was willing to receive the couple at Hillcrest Lodge; but he took care that the house should be empty of visitors on their arrival. The newwedded pair were not slow to accept the invitation; for they almost entirely depended for supplies upon the bounty of the elder brother, and felt that they must not slight his will. But an hour of Julie's company was enough for Lord Hilton; he decided that she was "impossible"; that his brother had, in truth as well as in appearance, disgraced his name. He would have no more to do with him.

Chisholme Park, however, remained to Ernest in his own right.

And now, after a year, he lay dying of consumption; and Julie, for whom he had braved obloquy and loss, sat in the bower; and her hand lay in the hand of a stranger.

In the woman's eyes was a strange look—a look almost like mesmeric subordination.

And yet she had only met the man some four months before. It was in the middle of the whirl and gaiety of a county hunt-ball. No such function to which she could gain admission did her light, pleasure-loving nature ever permit her to miss; and in everything upon which she set her wayward heart the Hon. Ernest Wentworth was bound, for the sake of peace, to indulge her. At this ball she had happened to meet Dr. Lemaitre, and at the first look into his eyes Julie knew that she had met her fate and her master.

"Money!" she said now, with a little playful scorn; "you are always wanting money."

"Money and you," he said, drumming a tune with his fingers on her hand.

"I have got myself to give away," she said, and rubbed her face against his shoulder, "but where am I to get money from?"

Lemaitre took up her hand, and set to examining her nails. He was a very large, tall man, with dough-like, coarse skin, heavy moustache, and a great tuft of imperial falling over his chin. The top of his high and massive forehead was somewhat bald, though he was quite young.

"Where am I to get it from?" he said, mimicking her. "Where I got it from before, to be sure! Rather neat nails, now I come to think of it; but this little finger is a *leetle* bit crooked in the top joint."

She snatched her hand free and pouted.

"But, Julie," he went on, "this money business; it is serious, you know. I am *fearfully* pumped, and I only want fifty pounds, but it must be to-night."

"Not to-night," she said, with firm-set lips.

"May I ask why?"

"No—not to-night."

"But I say to-night, Julie."

He was frowning a little behind her with a most intense kind of effort at the back of her head. Her dark face wore a flush of crimson.

"If it comes to that, you have no right to command me—to order me about, Armand," she said half-angrily, half-nervously. "I am nothing to you."

"But you profess to love me, Julie."

"Oh, yes; that I don't deny."

"Then why not to-night?"

"Armand, be reasonable. My husband lies dying. Is it fair to steal from him just at this moment?"

"But you don't seem to realise that I *want* the amount."

"Oh, I know that you *want* it," she said; "but must you have everything you want just at the moment? Do, I beg you, wait two days—three—till he——"

"My child, you are talking nonsense."

All this time Lemaitre had been frowning, frowning, unseen by her, at the back of her head, suggesting, implanting obedience into her brain. A vague, dreamy look gradually overspread the eyes of Julie.

She heaved a soft sigh.

"Oh! I feel so faint, Armand. And I do love you."

"Good girl! go now, then."

Slowly she rose; and slowly, steadily, she walked away

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from him over the green sward without a word. It was not difficult to see from her carriage that she was unusually perturbed.

Dr. Lemaitre, looking after her, smiled to himself, and said:

"Poor Julie! I believe I am genuinely fond of the child."

He was some few years older than she, she being hardly nineteen; but her richly-flushed, black-eyed face had the look of a much more mature age. As she passed over the threshold with her fine, free step, a servant said to her:

"I think the master has been calling for you, mum."

Julie did not reply. She went toward the dying chamber, but not into it. Instead, she turned off, and entered a small room separated from the other by a door.

Her step was soft, all her actions were stealthy, as she took a bunch of keys from a writing-desk, and fitted one into the door of a bureau.

At that moment she heard a faint voice call:

"Julie, is that you?"

She did not reply. She plunged her hand far into the drawer, and seemed to grope with he fingers, half-kneeling. At last she drew out a small bundle of notes. She counted some, which she held in her right hand, while she replaced the others with the left. She was just rising to lock the bureau, when she heard a sound behind her.

The door had opened, and there stood Ernest Wentworth, tall, and white-robed, pointing silently at her with the forefinger of his outstretched arm.

There stood Ernest Wentworth . . . pointing silently at her.

From his white and working lips no sound came.

Suddenly he swayed forward, then backward. His arm dropped, he tottered, righted himself again, and fell sidewards, dead.

Julie rushed from the room, her face white and haggard. She did not stop. Straight across the lawn, down the pathway of the park she fled, the notes in her hand.

Lemaitre came slowly from the bower to meet her.

"Why, what is the matter——" he began.

"Here—go—go," she panted. "He is—go——"

She hurriedly handed him the money, and ran back towards the house.

The manner of her husband's death, and the circumstances of the moment under which it occurred, had given her a sharp shock of affright.

There is in us all a deep instinct that wrong must be punished. In the evil-doer's sky is a cloud.

Julie was very frightened. And her condition was one in which small events have big effects. That night she bore a daughter, considerably before the expected time.

Ernest Wentworth had left her practically without an income. He was an improvident, happy-go-lucky fellow, who had always lived from hand to mouth. Julie had fears that she would have to go back to the stage, even if she married Lemaitre; and under the circumstances she had strong objections to the inconvenient new arrival. In writing to Lemaitre, who had returned to Paris, she studiously refrained from mentioning the coming of the little girl, fearing that he too might show disapproval at her advent. When, after three months, her lover summoned her to France with a view to their marriage, she was at her wit's end what to do with little Edith. The one thing she was resolved not to do was to present the child to her new lord. She dreaded like death his least frown.

But Providence cut the knot for her. Lady Hilton, hearing of her poverty, induced the Earl to adopt the little one, and at the critical moment the proposal came to Julie to give up the child to them on the strict condition that her connection with it should thenceforth cease.

She jumped eagerly at the offer, and, on the same day that she handed the child to Lord Hilton's messenger in London, left for Paris.

CHAPTER I.

The Murder in the Train.

A little more than nineteen years after the death of Ernest Wentworth Edith came home finally to Hillcrest Lodge from Paris, where Lord Hilton, who was a Roman Catholic, had placed her in the Convent of St. Julienne to be educated. Lord Hilton had long been dead—so long that it was Lady Hilton only whom Edith knew as her guardian.

She reached Hillcrest Lodge about three weeks before Christmas. Lady Hilton put her two hands on the girl's shoulders, and held her away from her, looking into her face for some little time before she spoke.

"Why, child," she said at last, "how much lovelier do you mean to grow? It will be positively dangerous to have a party of men in the house with you."

Edith smirked.

"I suppose the Convent of St. Julienne is hardly a likely place for love affairs," continued Lady Hilton, "or I should ask if you haven't had an offer yet."

"Auntie!" the young cheek went rubbing against the old one, "why, I *abominate* men—all of us in the convent—and despise them. You should hear Cécile—oh, you *will* like Cécile, Auntie, when she comes! Cécile says——"

"But who is it you are like?" said Lady Hilton, holding her off again. "Not your—your—mother, I think. I saw her once, you know. And not your father either. That portrait there is your father at twenty-five. You have his nose, you know—that narrow nose with wide nostrils panting like a thoroughbred's; but still, you are not like him a bit."

"I had an idea that I was like—like—mamma," said Edith.

"No—oh, *no*—don't think that. You are not nearly so dark, for one thing, and your mother had a much bolder,

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more precocious aspect, with features beautiful indeed, but not nearly so refined. But come—tea!"

That was three weeks before Christmas. There was to be a great party at the Lodge that season; and presently the arrivals began to drop in.

Hillcrest Lodge is a vast demesne in a beautifully-wooded valley. Its name of *Hill*crest was in no way due to its position on a hill, but to the name of a collateral branch of the Wentworths and Hiltons. The mansion itself is very large, built in the style of a French château, the lawn being cut into a long series of terraces.

Hillcrest is about five miles north of Seaborough. The express from King's Cross stops at York, then comes a small station further north, then Seaborough. From Seaborough to Hillcrest is a fairly level carriage drive.

At five o'clock on Christmas Eve the train arrived at York station, containing some dozen of Lady Hilton's guests. Captain Arthur Musgrave, turning to a lady at his side in the carriage, said:

"You must be frozen. What shall I get you in the way of refreshment?"

"I? Frozen!" she replied with a strong French accent. "At least, my teeth are not chattering as yours are! Men are self-conceited, eh? Three times since we passed—what you call it?—Grantham, you have shivered down the body, *so*; and once, three minutes and a half after we left Doncaster, you have tried to put a point to your moustache and could not."

"Dreadfully observant you are!" said Captain Arthur.

"Ah, I am a woman. A woman must keep her eyes open in the world. I think nothing of her if she can't."

"But as to refreshments?"

"Stay where you are, poor man. You can't move for the cold in you. *I* will——"

She had the carriage-door open before he could stir to help her, and was gone, running like a doe towards the bar in a moment.

This was Cécile, Edith's second self.

She was a small, slim creature, without hips or bust, all movement and sauciness and vivacity. She was fair-haired. One of her eyelids drooped a little over the left eye, the only fault in a very pretty face. Yet even the fault was pretty, giving her a piquant, artful charm when she perked her face sideways, as was her manner in speaking.

Captain Arthur languidly got out, stretching his stiff limbs, to follow her. But Cécile was soon returning loaded, followed by a waiter also having both hands full.

"This is for you, sir," with a curtesy; "and the wine for you, Professor Queech, and the brandy for you, Mr. Jack, and the biscuits for—everybody."

Mr. Jack, which was short for Mr. Jack Heathcote, as he took his brandy, tried at the same time to touch by accident her little finger with his forefinger, but missed his aim; while Professor Queech, a little old man with a bald head, said, looking at his wine:

"A most extraordinary thing, now—the colour of this wine reminds me of it—yes, perhaps none of you ever considered the relation between colours and musical sounds."

"*I* have, dear Professor!" cried Cécile.

"Ah? Then we must discuss the question between us. Dark purple, now—how akin to the diapason of an organ——"

"Only *not* to-day, Professor; it is so cold, eh?"

Cécile leapt in. The Professor, who had travelled in Siberian snows on colder days than this, hunting for proofs of his theories about musical sounds, made room for her beside him, but Cécile somehow managed to drop into a seat next to Jack Heathcote.

"I shall have the pleasure," said Professor Queech, "to read you, at some future date, a short pamphlet on——"

"Oh, but I say," broke in Cécile, "did anyone note the lady in the next compartment?"

She looked at Arthur, who had got out for a moment.

"No. I don't think I noticed," said Arthur.

Cécile was soon returning loaded.

Just then the train moved on.

"So droll!" said Cécile. "I am sure she is French, too. Stop!—her face put me in mind of someone—who is it? I can't think. But she looked pretty cold, I can tell you. And what do you think she was doing? Drinking spirit out of a flask, and up and up went the flask, and up and up went her little finger as she drained it. I thought it so droll!"

"The present shape of the modern flask," said Professor Queech, "is due to a fact, not, I believe, generally known——"

"It's to be hoped she was alone," said Jack Heathcote, with his shy, blue Yorkshire eyes fastened on the rug. What he was really thinking in his heart was this: "She has sat down beside me!"

"Alone?" said Cécile, wriggling on her seat. "No—that is, she was at the time; but she has somebody with her—I caught a glimpse of his back in the refreshment room—a very large, tall man. I believe she was drinking while he was away—what you call it—'on the sly.'"

"But however did you know?" began Jack Heathcote.

"Oh, you men! You are going to ask, how did I know that that particular gentleman was the gentleman *she* has with her, isn't it?"

"Yes," confessed Jack.

"Why, it is very simple. She was sitting on a thick Khorsedabad rug made of long dark red hairs; and in the view which I had of his back I saw three of these hairs hanging to his light-coloured mauve overcoat."

Captain Arthur Musgrave, who had stretched out his long legs, and closed his eyes, rather tired of Cécile's chatter, looked up a little, and dreamily said:

"What remarkable powers of observation, Miss Delisle! No wonder you despise a mere man."

"Oh, men are nothing!" pouted Cécile, "don't you think so, Miss Newton? But what a back! so broad and strong. He was bending over the bar, sipping. A real Parisian back; he is French, certain."

"Which do you like the best—Frenchmen or Englishmen?" asked Jack Heathcote.

Cécile smiled a little to herself.

"Frenchmen, sir," she said.

* * * * *

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On the other side of the partition—in the next compartment—things went not so smoothly.

"You are half drunk now, I believe," said the man in French.

"Well, that's nothing strange for me, is it?" answered the woman.

"And whose fault is that?"

"Yours, my friend."

"On my word, I hate the sight of you, Julie. I wish to God you were dead."

"I know that, Armand Lemaitre; but I shall live, unless you kill me——"

"*That* could be done——"

"Unless you kill me. And I'm not the meek lamb I have been. I shall live, and fight you on brandy—brandy—brandy."

Lemaitre was over her.

She took from her pocket another flask and drank it dry—her third within the last two hours. She was hardly the same Julie of nineteen years ago. The semicircles beneath her eyes were nearly black; her flesh was wrinkled, and faded, and drink-besodden.

"You provoke me too much, Julie," said Lemaitre. "You are running a *dreadful* risk——"

"I know. You are a murderer in your heart. But I will run the risk. Take care I don't spoil your fun with the grand people you are going among, Armand Lemaitre"

Lemaitre smiled.

"Danton—that is my name. Pray, try and remember—Dr. Danton."

"And is it right—I ask you that—is it *right* for you to be going among these people, passing yourself off, and taking your pleasure, while I——"

"You will be comfortably lodged in the charming town of Seaborough. You know very well that you are not presentable in fashionable society. You have nothing to complain of."

"Oh, no? *Nothing* to complain of, Armand Lemaitre?"

"Danton—Dr. Danton."

"Nothing to complain of? Well, but suppose to-morrow or the next day I present myself at the Lodge among the grand folk and see whether *they* think I have anything to complain of or not?"

She had leant forward with glaring black eyes towards him; a puff of her loaded breath greeted his nostrils.

"Horrible hag!" he said to himself, and rose, walking to the window.

He pulled down the sash and looked out. The air was white and thick with snow, wheeling in the parching wind. You could not tell whether the eddying flakes were coming down from the heaven or up from the earth.

The train was passing over a desolate tract of the Yorkshire wolds, cut into, here and there, by vast deep ravines, through each of which brawled a swollen and foaming brook.

Lemaitre stood at the window full five minutes, pondering on Julie's last words: "*How if I present myself at the Lodge?*"

He turned round with a sudden jerk; and cried:

"What d'you mean, hey?"

"Ah, you are not going to have it all your own way, as you have done, Armand Lemaitre!" said Julie. "I have been a child long enough."

"You fool—can't you understand that I will *kill* you, if you talk to me like that?"

Lemaitre came near her, his white teeth clenched, his paste-like face inflamed.

"Yes, I say, I know you are a murderer, Armand," repeated Julie; "but however it goes, you don't leave *me* out in the cold, if I can help it——"

"Be silent this moment, vile hag!"

"Silent? I? You think so——"

Jean Lemaitre cut her short by a blow with the back of his hand across her mouth.

"You beast!" cried Julie, and the flask she held in her hand went flying at Lemaitre's head. It struck him over the brow.

The next moment Lemaitre was over her, tugging murderously at her windpipe.

* * * * *

Professor Queech, on the other side of the partition, was just saying:

"I have written a little pamphlet on that very subject. A most extraordinary thing, now. The musical tones of the Jew's-harp——"

When Cécile cried:

"Stop! Did anyone see——"

She leapt up and flew to the window. It had seemed to her, as she looked that way, as if some large dark object had rushed past the glass outside. But by the time she had pulled down the sash and looked out, nothing was to be seen but snow, snow in the heaven above, and the air between, and on the earth below.

The train at that moment was dashing over a viaduct, bridging one of the great ravines which cut up all this lonely country-side into deep gullies. This one was called Thorgill Beck.

A minute's stoppage was made, a quarter of an hour later, at a small station half-way between York and Seaborough. But none of the party bound for Hillcrest had occasion to get out.

"I am almost sure," said Professor Queech as the train moved out again, "that I some time ago heard a—what shall I say?—a scream, it seemed, coming from that direction. I have ever since been considering the precise tone in its blending with the rattle of the train. Did you, Miss Newton, hear it?"

Miss Newton, a thin lady, tending towards old-maidishness, and sharp of tongue, said:

"Your continual effort to note the sounds around you make your ears over-keen, Professor. I am sure *I* heard no scream. Did you, Miss Delisle?"

"I heard *something* certainly," said Cécile; "but it seemed to me to come from outside the train."

In ten minutes the train drew up at Seaborough station, where carriages from Hillcrest awaited the guests.

As Cécile passed by the compartment in which she had seen the lady drain the flask, she glanced into it, and, to her surprise, saw it quite empty. Had the two, then, got out at the small station? Her clean-pencilled brows were knitting. She had seen no one pass over the platform there from the train. Her nature was intensely inquisitive. She did not like to be puzzled.

She moved away with the others; but stopped, and deliberately turned back. Surely, she must be mistaken. She could not have looked properly into the dimness of the compartment. The two people, she reasoned, *must* be there.

Once more she went to look, and this time held up high her little shapely chin, and gazed over the window into the carriage. She saw standing there, just about to come out, a man—a short, heavy-bodied man, with broad, tanned face, and a long goat-beard, such as Yankees wear, a man of the lower classes with foul and ragged clothes—in a first-class carriage.

Cécile turned away, and sped back, half frightened, to the others. It was a very evil face which she had seen. And its appearance there was as mysterious to her as the apparition of a ghost.

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CHAPTER II.

Loved by Two.

Dr. Danton did not arrive at Hillcrest Lodge that night, though he was expected. During the forenoon, however, of Christmas Day, he came in a hired cab from Seaborough. He explained that he had missed his train at King's Cross.

His introduction to the circle at Hillcrest Lodge was due to a sporting relative of Lady Hilton in Paris, with whom Dr. Danton had had close relations on the Paris Bourse. This relative had given Dr. Danton a number of introductions on his coming lately to England, and had written to Lady Hilton that she would do himself a kindness by entertaining the doctor, who was an accomplished man, and excellent company.

Three days after Christmas the house was full of people. Edith, new-come from Paris, was, of course, the centre of interest; and after her, Captain Arthur Musgrave, Lady Hilton's nephew. The Captain's face was brown with the Afghan sun. Till now, Lady Hilton had not seen him for seven years.

"I give him to you, darling," said Cécile to Edith in a corner of the drawing-room. "You know I am not easily pleased in the matter of the male material. But, *ma foi*, he will do, I think. What a moustache—and legs!"

"He *is* rather good-looking, isn't he?" said Edith.

"His legs are of incredible length, my dear! And that cut across the eyebrow is an improvement more than anything, I think. He is sure to fall in love with one or other of us, I should imagine."

"With you, more likely, dear."

"Oh, he needn't trouble! My choice is made already."

"Cécile! how you do talk."

"I mean it, really. You see that little man with the white hair and eyebrows, and straggling little moustache, talking to Lady Hilton? That's the man I am going to marry."

"Cécile! Oh, you *are* joking! You *can't* mean Jack Heathcote! Why, he is a mere yeoman, and you haven't known him a week."

"Yes, that's the man, darling. And he is dying of love for me, too. Just watch how he is leering round at us through the corner of his eye, while he is talking to Lady Hilton. But he will never have the—what you call it?—pluck to propose, unless I do it for him. The booby is so dreadfully afraid of me."

Gazed . . . into the carriage.

"And what do you think of *him?*" Edith pointed to Lemaitre, *alias* Dr. Danton, sitting *vis-à-vis* with Miss Newton.

Cécile was serious in a moment.

"*Who* is he?" she asked.

"I don't know, dear. A friend of my cousin Beaumont, I believe."

"What a huge man he is! And do you know that that tuft of imperial of his—is dyed?"

"Cécile! darling! what droll things you find out! and what eyes you have!"

"It is very simple, *chérie*," said Cécile. "He is old, you know, that man; and he wants to pass for a youth. There are grey hairs under that dye. Dye, you know, does not glint so brightly under the light as the bare hair. You can always tell."

At the same moment, Harry Pendragon, a subaltern in Arthur's hussar regiment, was saying to the Honourable Lily Grandcourt:

"Yes; I agree with you; she is certainly very pretty. Quite a sculpture she looks, talking there to her friend, Mademoiselle Delisle."

"But have you noticed the very extraordinary resemblance between her and the—doctor there? Everyone is talking about it."

"Yes, they are alike certainly," said Harry Pendragon, a gentleman with slender legs and lithe sheer of waist. "One cannot avoid noticing it. That sort of coincidence does happen, you know."

Everyone, in fact, had seen the strange resemblance between Edith and the Frenchman—everyone except the Frenchman and Edith herself. Cécile said nothing on the subject, for it was not every thought that went on in that busy brain which came out from the talkative tongue.

Dancing, all through the Christmas season, was the order of the day. Lady Hilton, a massive old lady, with beautiful silver hair, dimples in her fresh, pink face, and the manners of a queen, despatched Jack Heathcote to the piano, and signalled to Cécile to take her harp.

Jack began to thump out a waltz, and Cécile, sitting by him, plucked the tune from her strings.

A general movement began, and Captain Arthur, opening his wide blue eyes, and standing straight upon his soldierly legs, looked wearily round the room.

There was some amount of hypocrisy in this survey; for before rising he had already decided whom he should seek as a partner. He sauntered lazily toward Edith. She was at the opposite end of the room. At the same time, from another direction, Dr. Danton was walking towards her with a like intention. They were at about equal distances from her, only the doctor's step was not a saunter, but a firm, decided advance. He reached Edith slightly before Arthur.

"If I may have the pleasure——" he said in French.

It was almost the first time he had spoken to her—so close together—alone. The eyes of the man and of the girl met.

Their eyes met—and for the moment could not part. In the man's the girl felt, rather than saw, some memory, some mystery, some strange power, some affinity. In the girl's the man felt an attraction which struck like a pain at his heart.

In the next instant Arthur came up. He was not much of a Frenchman, his ears being little accustomed to the sounds, and though he had heard Dr. Danton speak, had not caught what he said. He guessed, of course, that the doctor had come to ask her to dance, but with his cool, insolent *nonchalance*, he stepped forward and said:

"May I—Miss Wentworth?"

Danton did not remember to have heard the name distinctly before. Wentworth? The name was not unfamiliar to him. He had known, in his past, someone or other by that name. But whom? The thought passed through his mind like a mist, and faded. He forgot.

Edith glanced from one to the other.

Tall as Arthur was, Danton towered a head above him, though there was a slight stoop in his shoulders. Edith, too, stood high in her shoes; and with either of them would have made good pairing in the dance.

As Arthur spoke Danton glared a moment at him. Then said again, in his courtliest French way:

"Will you permit me?"

"You see you are a moment late," said Edith to Arthur.

He bowed.

"The *next*, perhaps," she added.

He bowed again, with a suspicion of stiffness.

By this time she was on Danton's arm. He led her away. He had won the first contest.

It was the beginning of a long duel between the two men. And the beginning was a bad prophesy of how the fight would go for Captain Arthur Musgrave.

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Cécile, plucking the air of the waltz from her gilt harp, glanced round, and saw Edith flitting in the arms of Dr. Danton. She lifted her eyebrows a little and said:

"Do you know Dr. Danton at all?"

"I?" answered Jack Heathcote. "Not I."

He was bending low over the piano, in the seventh heaven; yet flurried and shy, seeing her so dangerously near him.

"Don't you like—the dance?" she said, after a little.

"I?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Middling, you know. All depends if I have the right partner."

"What do you call 'the right partner'?"

"Someone that I like very much, you know. Someone small——"

"I see. You don't like tall ladies."

"No. Someone small, and——"

"But playing for other people to dance is dull. You don't like that, do you?"

"I don't mind it—not a bit. If I have someone that I like very much to play with me——"

"Suppose the person you have playing with you is not small—what then?"

"Oh, well, but—I say—she usually is, you see."

"But can you dance really well?" said Cécile. "Can you dance like a Frenchman? Because, if so, I mean to have a dance myself presently."

"Is that so? Yes, I believe I can dance, if I can't do anything else. And do you mean that you will have me for——"

"A partner? Yes, I mean. But doesn't the loss of the middle toe of your left foot interfere at all with your movement?"

"There now!" cried Jack Heathcote, "however did you know?"

"As if one could help knowing!" said Cécile. "Doesn't the leather of your boot always sink in just over the spot when you make a sudden step?"

"By Jove, now. Think of noticing that. I had it cut off when I was a boy. It was crushed by a stone when I was barefooted, bird-nesting."

"And here—just here, at the back of the neck, under your collar—you have a big scar, sir."

"Oh, well now, this is too much, you know!" cried Heathcote. "How *do* you know that?"

"You fancy me simple, I think? Why, one guesses that by the way you put down your finger behind, and screw your neck irritably, and settle your collar—even by the way you hold the neck sometimes. One is not blind."

"But you—*you* see everything."

"Then people should hold their neck straight—like *so*—then one would not know. Straight up, like a Frenchman!"

She laughed. But Heathcote did not see the joke. Two minutes later he said suddenly:

"But I say, which do you like the best, now—a Frenchman or an Englishman?"

"A Frenchman, sir," she said.

"But you don't *dislike* an Englishman, do you?"

"Oh, no—not *dislike* him. We must talk of that later; I am going now——"

When the second waltz was beginning, with Miss Newton at the piano, Edith, still on Dr. Danton's arm, looked shyly aside for the coming of the Captain to claim her. As the music began she saw him coming, with his languid saunter, towards her.

"I promised——" she began.

Danton bent his head down to a level with hers, frowning.

"The next—give me the next!" he said eagerly.

"I promised——"

"No; you did not promise," he said, speaking rapidly and intensely. "You said 'perhaps.' Give me the next!"

Edith looked at him, surprised at his earnestness. Once more their eyes met in fixed scrutiny. Then Edith's curving lashes drooped upon her face, and a slight shiver passed through her.

"The next?" he said.

A faint "Yes" came from her lips.

By the time Arthur had approached the spot she was once more out in the waltz. A strangely faint, subdued feeling seemed to have overcome her; her motions, as she danced, seemed to be hardly her own, but to be imparted to her by her partner; a dreamy, rather pleasant langour half paralysed her will. She tried to shake it off, without result.

Arthur's shoulders just shrugged a little when he found himself ousted a second time, and he walked away with his usual unconcern.

On the third day of the New Year came off the great event of the gathering at Hillcrest Lodge, the ball at which Lady Hilton had determined to celebrate in style the return of her nephew from his Afghan campaign, and the final home-coming of her niece-in-law. All the great ones of the county were present, as well as the chief magnates of Seaborough and York. The suites of halls of the château-like mansion were brilliant with thousands of wax candles, and all the guests wore costumes of the period of Marie Antoinette at the time of the greatest splendour of this queen of fashion and of France.

All through the night Cécile was in a bad temper. Something, no one knew what, visibly annoyed her. When Jack Heathcote came nervously bowing before her, asking for a dance, she said:

"Please find a partner who does not mind being bumped about. I had enough at our last waltz together, thank you."

And yet Jack was looked upon as the perfection of dancing form by the village lasses on a certain Yorkshire property not a hundred miles away. He stared, and retired backward. Cécile presently went dancing with Harry Pendragon.

But her soul was not in it. She broke loose from her partner when she saw Edith standing for a moment by herself in an alcove.

"Edith, you make me vexed!" she said. "Why can't you dance with anybody but that heavy brute? People will notice it!"

"Why, darling Cécile, how cross you look!" cried Edith. She was dressed as the Duchesse de Polignac, the friend of Marie Antoinette, in a gown of white satin, with full underskirt, and embroidered all round with gold, turquoise, amethyst, topaz, and brilliant jewelling. The upper skirt was caught back with pale blue, similarly embroidered. She wore her hair high and *poudré*, and appeared a constellation of magnificent diamond and turquoise ornaments; she was loveliness itself, and her large brown eyes, lit and animated with excitement, outshone all jewels whatever.

Cécile stood before her, tapping the floor with her slipper.

"Do you *like* this Danton, then?" she asked.

"I! Why, Cécile, no! not particularly. It merely happens that I have granted him most of the dances. I can hardly explain it, dear."

"Don't dance with him any more! Huge bulk he is!"

At this moment there was a movement towards supper.

In the supper-room were a number of little round and oval tables; while in the centre, at a larger square table, sat Lady Hilton, attired as Marie Antoinette, in rich brocade, wearing the Hilton family jewels round her neck as a superb collar; a turquoise velvet cap, clasped with jewels, on her white *coiffure*, and a *bandeau* of family jewels under her cap. Her court mantle was fastened at the shoulders with a tiara of diamonds, widened out so as to clasp the cloak from shoulder to shoulder. All the tables were decorated with flowers, some of them from the south of France; while dishes of strawberries, apricots, grapes, and pineapples were in luxurious contrast to the falling snow outside.

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Sitting with Professor Queech.

The room was illuminated with silver candelabra containing wax candles. At every arched door were immense screens of magnificent Beauvais tapestry, while here and there, throughout all the rooms, were huge church-candles in gilded stands five feet high.

At the central table, side by side, sat Edith and Arthur among the Queen's "Court."

"I haven't once—not once," said Arthur, "danced with you to-night. That is very hard lines, you know."

"You will not die of it," said Edith; "you have not shown very much eagerness in asking me. Procrastination is the thief of partners."

"You do not know whether I will die of it," answered Arthur, feasting his eyes on her down-bent face. "Misery is not a skin disease. I, at any rate, do not wear my sorrows on my sleeve."

"I am sorry if you are sorry," she said simply. "But the night is only half over, and I could dance for days without stopping."

"May I take it, then, that the rest of the night will be mine?" he asked.

"Not *all* of it?" she said, lifting her brows archly.

"Yes—all."

She looked up into his face, half shyly, and laughed, without speaking.

"*All?*" he said, near to her ear.

She nodded her head up and down, laughing a soft, gay laugh.

Soon after they rose from the table, and the guests streamed back to the dancing-halls. The suite of rooms led one into the other, so that the vista of magnificent and brilliantly-lighted apartments was superb. Over three thousand wax candles were used, in addition to the electric light, which was made to simulate wax candles. The candles were unshaded, in imitation of the style of the French in the last century.

The great cedar drawing-room was used as the central ballroom. It was so called because panelled in cedar, a perfect background for the fine Vandyke family portraits hung round it.

The ceiling was white and gold, and there were two large arched windows, in one of which the band was stationed, and they, too, wore a white and gold dress of the French court. The room was lighted with five great crystal chandeliers with wax candles, suspended from the ceiling, with a high candelabrum in each corner, and with two smaller ones on each side of the great marble and alabaster mantelpiece. Palms were placed about; and flowers, forming Louis Quinze garlands, were festooned from one point to the other. The principal feature of all was the unshrouded light—it was day at midnight, but a chaster, holier day—the noon of the fairies.

Miss Newton, who did not patronise the dance, was sitting far back near the panelling with Professor Queech, who was dressed very absurdly in a long robe intended to personate Cagliostro. The Honourable Lily Grandcourt, a plump, large beauty, with a classical face rather lacking in expression, happened just then to sail past them in the arms of lank Harry Pendragon.

"Those now," said the Professor, "make a pretty couple. Notice the exquisite timing of their foot-fall with the beat of the conductor's *bâton*. The laws of sound are of such a nature——"

"But," broke in Miss Newton, "how is it that the two principal guests of the evening, Captain Musgrave and Miss Wentworth, are not seen dancing together?"

"Ah, yes, that does strike one, does it not? She dances rather with the French doctor. There may, my dear Miss Newton, be a lack of harmonious affinity——"

"I don't see her anywhere," said Miss Newton, looking round.

Edith had vanished.

"A lack of harmonious affinity," repeated the Professor. "May I ask you now, dear Miss Newton, if you will do me the honour——"

"Suppose there is a lack of harmonious affinity between *us*, Professor," said Miss Newton, smirking.

"I *hope* not, I *believe* not, if I may be allowed to say so, Miss Newton. From the first hour in which I saw you, I have realised——"

"But look at Mdlle. Cécile! She is apparently not very pleased with her partner, Mr. Heathcote," cried Miss Newton, dreading an outbreak of sentiment from the Professor. "Her eyes are wandering all over the room, and there is a distinct frown on her face."

"I fancy she is looking about for her friend, Miss Wentworth," said the Professor.

"Oh, that is it, without doubt," answered Miss Newton. "Edith is very likely with Dr. Danton in the conservatory, *I* should think. Have you observed the singular likeness between her and the doctor?"

"A most extraordinary thing, now," said Professor Queech musingly. "I will tell you a fact, not, I believe, generally known——"

"Well, Professor?"

"It has to do with children—children not yet born. I knew a musician who told me that a lady whom he instructed in singing, had a daughter soon afterwards, who greatly resembled him in face. He attributed it to the fact that during the critical time the mother had looked up to him as her instructor, and he had had a certain influence over her mind. What is more, it turned out that, as the child grew up, the musician had the same strong influence over *her* mind which he had had over the mother's, only to a much greater extent."

"Oh, Professor Queech, what things you do say!" tittered Miss Newton. "And do you mean to imply——?"

"That Dr. Danton may, by some chance, have known the mother of Miss Wentworth at just such a critical time," said the Professor, "and may, by some possibility, have had just such an influence over her mind. Of course, it is a scientific hypothesis. But talking of music and musicians, there is this fact to be noted, not, I believe, generally known——"

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"You are a singular kind of vermin!"

"Come," cried Miss Newton, starting up. "We will dance, if you will!"

Outside in the conservatory, in a little bower of palms, sat Edith and Danton.

"I never knew my mother," Edith was saying.

"Who was your father?"

"Ernest Wentworth—brother to Lady Hilton's husband."

Again the mist of memory passed through Danton's brain, and faded.

"Why did you not know your mother? Did she die?" he asked.

"No."

"Then why?"

"She—she was not liked by the Hiltons. She—she was not of the same class as they. They did not—approve of her conduct. They adopted me when my father died."

"I see. Is she alive?"

"I—don't know."

"I should have seen her somewhere—or your father," said Danton musingly, smoothing down his imperial.

"What makes you think that?" asked Edith.

"Because you remind me of someone whom I have known. It is strange I can't tell whom."

"Yes, it is strange," she said dreamily.

"From the moment I saw you," he went on, "I seemed to have known you all my life. You were never a stranger to me. I knew you as well as I know my own life, at the first glance. You are part of me."

Her eye-lashes were lying in long curvature on her pallid cheeks.

"I cannot listen to all that," she murmured, ready, she knew not why, to weep.

"You must. You are part of me. Can't you understand? We are made out of the same piece, our two souls."

The man's face was inflamed with passion, his eyes alight, like a serpent's fixed upon a fluttering bird.

"You cannot say 'no' to me," he went on. "You cannot rebel against me. You are given to me. It would *kill* me—it would kill us both—if you cut yourself out of me. You are part of my soul—part of my flesh and bone——"

"Oh, pray, let me go!" she murmured low. "I feel so faint here. I am very—very—young——"

"Stay and listen to me. Why do you wish to go?"

"I—promised—someone—to dance——"

"Promise *me* not to dance to-night."

"But—I don't think you ought to ask."

"But I do ask. And it is not so much to ask. Will you do as I tell you?"

"Well——"

"Do you promise, then?"

"As you are so insistent. But I must go—let me go now."

She rose with a sudden effort; stood a moment still; then ran away, casting a half scared glance behind.

At the same moment a figure stood before Danton at the opening of the bower. It was Captain Arthur Musgrave.

He stood looking coldly with his air of languor, at Danton, while Danton squinted up sideways from under one lifted eye at him.

"You are a singular kind of vermin!" said Captain Arthur Musgrave in perfectly cool, speculative tones, as though he were discussing the flavour of a cigar.

Danton sprang, at once, erect, with passion in his eyes. Arthur, the privileged guest of the night, was dressed in his close red hussar regimentals. Danton had on a rich court dress, which made his mighty frame look even huger; his coat was of mauve brocade, full skirted, and embroidered with gold; the waistcoat of mauve satin, embroidered in floral design; while knee-breeches of shot mauve and gold, silk stockings, court shoes, powdered hair, lace ruffles, jabot, and sword, made up a costume, correct in every particular, of one of Louis XVI.'s courtiers.

"A singular kind of vermin!" Arthur repeated.

This time Danton bowed gracefully, with his right hand over his heart.

"I chanced to be passing near," drawled Arthur, "and heard you trying to persuade a lady to break a promise made to me——"

"Trying—and succeeding," interrupted Danton with a smile—a dangerous smile. The man's blood was up.

"Personally, I don't care a curse whether you succeeded or not," said Captain Arthur Musgrave, pulling his moustache. "I merely wish, now, to know whether you prefer to take your departure at once from the company of ladies and gentlemen here, or submit to be caned like the cur you are."

Danton bowed.

"I prefer to be caned," he said.

"All right. I'll cane you. I would do it now, only I don't happen to have the weapon with me. To-morrow will do. You may look out for it."

Danton bowed. He had in his hand a thin, flexible little malacca cane, gold-headed. He held it out to Arthur, and with another bow, said:

"May I accommodate you?"

In a moment the switch was in Arthur's hand and swish, swish, down came the stinging chastisement upon the Frenchman's face. Arthur threw the cane on the ground.

Danton bore it grandly. He did not flinch. When it was over, he bowed.

"When may I expect to meet you?" he asked.

"To meet me? In a duel, you mean? Well—it is not the custom, among Englishmen; but as you are a foreigner and wear the dress of a gentleman, I suppose I must do you the honour of permitting you to fight me. I shall appoint a second to wait upon you."

He turned upon his heels and walked away. Danton resumed his seat, put up his hand to his stinging face—and smiled.

(To be continued.)

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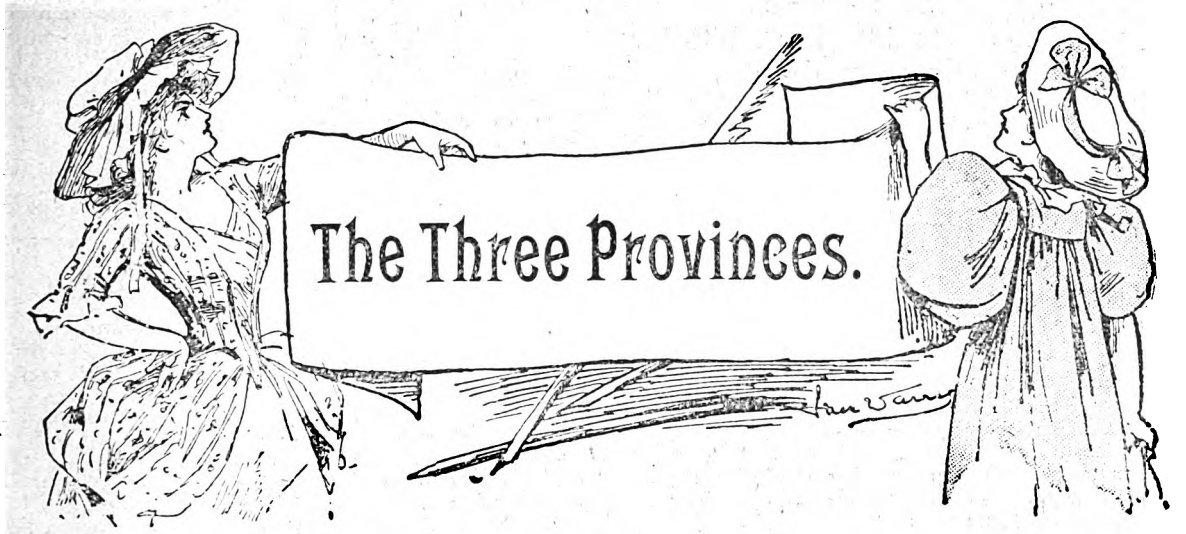

The Three Provinces.

A little more than seven hundred years ago there arose in Japan a great civil war between two rival families, each of which aspired to the high office of Shogun, sometimes called Tycoon. One of these families was called the Taira, the other, the Minamoto, but this has little to do with the present story.

After a long, fierce struggle the reigning Shogun, a Minamoto, was deposed and forced into exile; and many of the richest and most powerful nobles shared his ruin.

The new Shogun, of course, created a new aristocracy—for thus are written the pages of history.

As time went on, and prosperity and peace spread golden silence over the land, it began to be hinted among all classes that the new ruler was a true father to his people, and that the terrible struggle just past was but inauguration to a period of happiness that should eclipse all memories of previous grief or woe.

Later it began to be rumoured that the new Shogun's love for his subjects was such that he sometimes travelled through the country in the guise of a simple peasant, that he might learn and know the true needs of all classes. This, however, was so totally unlike the course usually pursued by high dignitaries in that land of etiquette, that the report gained but little credence.

Among the noblemen who had suffered most cruelly through the overthrow of the old Shogunate was the Daimyo (feudal lord) Sano Genzaimon. One by one he had seen his possessions devoured by the insatiable fiend of battle. His only son had fallen with a spear snapped deep in his young breast; his daughter, wed before the contest to a noble of the opposing faction, was denied all intercourse with her unfortunate parents; and now that the end was come, and poverty and grief held out lean, eager hands towards them, the aged pair fled by night to a distant province where, at least, they might escape the pity of their enemies.

By the sale of a few jewels and robes of state which they were enabled to retain, they secured a sum sufficient to allow them to rent a miserable hovel of one room, and to purchase from day to day a meagre quantity of tea, rice and millet.

A greater contrast to the luxurious life to which they were accustomed could not be imagined, and only their great devotion to each other gave them strength to suffer and endure.

It was upon a desolate afternoon towards the close of an unusually rigorous winter, that a priest, foot-sore and convulsed with cold, knocked at the unpainted curtain of their little door. All through the morning snow had been sifting and fluttering down from a dreary sky, but now it was coming in great hurtling armfuls; massing against the fences and tree trunks, and laying an effacing sheet over the wavering suburban roads. Twice had the priest knocked without gaining a response; at the third repetition he lifted his voice and cried:

"Open, in the name of Lord Buddha!"

In a few seconds there came from within the sound of a soft moving and bustling, then the curtains were drawn slightly apart, and the worn but aristocratic face of a middle-aged woman appeared in the opening.

"Pardon, honourable lady," chattered the priest between his bows. "I am deeply humiliated at thus forcing myself upon thy hospitality, but indeed I am faint with weariness and can proceed no further."

The woman drew a deep sigh, as, with a voice of exquisite tone and quality, she replied:

"Ah, my poor man, the deep humiliation is that I must refuse thy petition. My husband is absent, and thou knowest that it is impossible for me then to admit a masculine visitor, even a priest of Buddha."

"This custom does not prevail among peasants and labourers, thought the priest," but aloud he said: "When may thy husband return?"

"I have awaited his coming this past hour," she replied, looking anxiously across the waste of snow. "He but journeyed to the nearest village to purchase food and fuel."

"Grant, then," said the priest, "that I await his coming at the doorstep, for no other shelter is at hand and my feet refuse to bear me farther on."

"Willingly, willingly," exclaimed the lady, and, hurrying in, she handed him a teapot filled with boiling water, one of a smaller size containing a pinch of dried tea-leaves, and a little bowl for drinking.

"It is the best I have," she murmured sadly. "There is no rice nor millet with which to knead the cakes."

Thanking her again and again, the priest began to

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brew the comforting draught. He poured the steaming water into the smaller teapot, from thence also immediately into the bowl; the decoction in the process gained an almost imperceptible tinge and odour; but he drank down cup after cup with famished eagerness. There was no doubt as to the sincerity of his need. After watching him for some moments, the good woman silently rose to her feet, and, wrapping her thin shoulders in a robe of cheap, wadded cotton, she stepped out into the narrow, wind-swept portal.

The priest looked up in surprise.

"My poor man," she said, "I cannot see thee suffer. All day I have been housed and sheltered, and now will I yield thee such scant comfort as my poor dwelling can allow. Do thou retire within, and I will remain upon the doorstep until my husband shall return."

"Nay, nay," cried the priest, moved to tears by her noble unselfishness. "Thy soothing drink has warmed and restored me. I am well able to journey on, and should I encounter thy noble husband, I will crave his permission to return with him."

After much courteous parleying the priest hurried away, and the good lady, drawing close the curtain and the paper blind within, sighed and murmured sadly: "For the first time do I rebel at a maxim of the great Confucius. Surely the thought of storms and suffering priests of Buddha had not entered his great heart when he wrote: 'In her husband's absence a virtuous woman may not draw the curtains to a stranger, whatever his age, condition or estate.'" She heaped the little earthenware fire-pot with charcoal, although the last bundle of charred twigs was growing sadly meagre, then she brought forth their slender supply of tea, and drew from its hiding-place a small box of dried orange rinds which are sometimes used among the poorer classes in default of their cherished tea-leaves.

The kettles and the china bowl which the priest had used were frozen to the doorstep as she went to bring them in, and scarcely were they washed, polished and restored to their places, when she heard the sound of clogs at the door.

"Open," cried the priest. "Thy husband is helpless with cold."

With trembling, nervous fingers, she snatched aside the rude blind, and there indeed was the old nobleman, lying senseless in the arms of the priest.

"Do not be alarmed, kind lady," the latter hastened to exclaim at the sight of her terrified face. "It is only the cold and fatigue. Warmth and rest will quickly restore him."

The old wife, as the tears glittered down the wrinkles on her cheek cried: "Thou art sent by Buddha. Hadst thou not gone, he would have perished in the snow."

As the good priest had promised, warmth and comfort soon effected a thorough cure, so that, at the end of an hour, they were all sitting about the brazier, the men smoking tiny native pipes and sipping incessantly the tea-tinged cups of hot water which the hostess so assiduously filled.

With the night the cold deepened. As there was but one room and one supply of bed covering in the poor establishment, it was tacitly understood that they should pass the hours of sleep nodding and dozing about the brazier.

The priest, having felt from the first that his hostess was a woman of no common origin, dared not suggest that she should sleep in the presence of a stranger.

So they crouched in a tiny ring, speaking drowsily of the storm and the cold, and starting suddenly now and then, as a vagrant gust sent a blast through the little house, and rasped from off the roof tiles the masses of frozen snow.

The charcoal and rice which Sano had been to the village to procure were lost and buried in the snow ere the priest had happened upon the purchaser, and now the old wife laid their few remaining pieces of fuel, inch by inch, upon the angry little fire, wondering wretchedly what would become of them when the last fragment had been consumed.

Soon were her fears realised, and while yet the night and the storm were raging without, the blaze died away, and the glow took on a sullen pallor.

Sano looked towards his wife as if to see the reason of her inattention, and the poor woman hid her face to avoid his look.

"It is the last, Sano," she murmured. "There is no more."

"But our guest may not perish with cold," cried her husband. "Is there nothing which we can burn and so defend him from this bitter night?"

He sprang to his feet and hurried nervously about the cheerless room.

Alas! there was nothing but the wooden and paper blinds, and the wooden grooves in which they ran.

"The hovel is not mine," mused Sano, musing over them. "I cannot be a despoiler of other men's property." At this moment his glance fell upon three earthen flower pots, in which were growing the only treasures of his sad and broken life; a plum tree of that rare and beautiful variety in which the limbs droop downwards like a cluster of pliant willow wands, giving the effect, when in full bloom, of a fountain of flowers; a cherry tree not two feet high but of perfect, dainty symmetry; and a pine tree, dwarfed and trained into a fascinating grotesqueness.

The latter was dearest of all. It had been part of his old life of wealth and power, had come down to him from father and grandfather, four generations ago, and its mimic branches were knotted and lichened with the weight of full two hundred years. Without a word he broke the cherry tree to the root, and, snapping it into faggots, laid it on the smouldering coals.

The priest exclaimed in protest, but too late. At the end of an hour the plum tree was sacrificed, and the old dame covered her face with her sleeves.

But when, as the last charred embers of the plum branches faded and fell apart, he rose and moved towards the little pine tree, his wife threw herself upon the floor and in his pathway, crying: "Sano—Sano Genzaimon, not the pine tree also. The souls of thy ancestors forbid it. I charge thee, withhold thy hand from the pine tree."

"And shall our guest, a servant of Buddha, perish of the cold?" He thrust down her clinging hands, but his lips quivered.

"The daylight is close upon us," the poor woman cried. "I will haste to the hills for faggots. Do not, in Buddha's name, sacrifice thy cherished pine tree."

"Heed the words of thy noble lady," broke in the priest. "Do not, in the name of Buddha, ruthlessly destroy the tree of thy ancestor's planting."

Sano stood motionless, and the priest, hurrying to the entrance, drew the curtains apart.

"See!" he exclaimed, his face turned to his host. "The dawn even now is at thy door. Concern thyself no longer; I must be upon my way, and will soon direct some faggot boy to thy dwelling."

The wind had died away; the storm had emptied its

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full measure of snow upon the frozen earth, and as the priest peered out over the dawn-vague landscape, a grey-blue sheet spread out before him, broken only by the rugged darkness of a distant mountain.

To all the entreaties and protestations of his kind host, he made reply:

"I can tarry no longer; it is full time that I should bestir myself." At the moment of parting he turned to Sano and said: "Wilt thou not acquaint me with thy whole name, that I may offer it to Buddha, and thank thee, through him, for thy wondrous kindness of this night?"

With an unconscious lifting of the head the answer was given:

"I am Sano Tsuyeno Genzaimon, once Daimyo of the province of Kaga, in the city of Kinzu."

"Is it possible! Is it possible!" gasped the priest. "I knew that thou wert of fallen estate, but to find thee the Diamyo of Kaga! Art thou an enemy of the ruling Shogun?"

"Nay, my good priest, friend or enemy I am of little consequence. I did but return my knights and my possessions to the master who had given all. I am no rebel; only a ruined and broken man whose one friend is Death."

"To think of it, to think of it," murmured the priest again and again; then thanking them once more in the name of Buddha, he started out upon the waste of snow.

It had seemed but a few moments after his departure, when Sano and his wife, now muffled in ragged bed-covering in lieu of fire, heard a violent knocking at the door. Opening it after some little delay, they found a great sack of charcoal, a measure of rice, a keg of the finest saké (rice wine), together with smaller packets of tea, tobacco and sweetmeats.

There was no sign of human attendance, only a dotted path of fresh tracks leading out over the snow.

"A gift from Buddha!" cried the dame, in a fine quiver of joy and excitement.

"'Tis indeed a swift reward that hath been sent us," rejoined her husband, "but I had no thought of such a wondrous requital when I harboured his pilgrim servant."

* * * * *

Some weeks after this delightful happening, Sano and his wife were thrown into great agitation by the visit of a royal messenger bearing a summons for them to appear before the Shogun at Kamakura.

"Alas! Sano, what can it be?"

"Peradventure it is death," was the low reply. "I had not dreamt that in our poverty and old age it was possible that we should be hounded to further grief and ignominy."

However, despite these gloomy forebodings, Sano recognised the order as imperative, and announced to the messenger his intention of preparing for the journey at once. In three days' time all was in readiness, but what was the astonishment of the old couple to find, awaiting them at their very threshold, two richly lacquered palanquins, gilded with the Shogun's crest, and attended by a goodly number of bearers and running footmen.

"Is this a mockery?" cried Sano, with a passionate gleam of the old fierce light in his eyes.

The servants prostrated themselves to earth, saying that they had been detailed for the purpose of transferring the royal guests to Court. Further than this they knew nothing. With deep misgivings, the pair ensconced themselves in the gorgeous conveyances, and were soon upon the road to Kamakura, then a great city and the seat of the Shogunate.

At last the city was reached. The ponderous castle gates of wood and bronze and polished brass swung open at their approach, and the vast throng of warriors pacing about the wide, pebbled courtyard gave conviction to Sano's fears that he had been brought thither for purposes of revenge. Yet, to the old noble, it was pleasant to see once more the glitter and splendour of armed knights. The play of light upon brazen helmets and imbricated breastplates, the flash of tasselled spears, the glint of curved and polished shields, the clank of metal heels upon the stones, the hiss of moving silk and and steel, the blending of light and colour, of strength and beauty, filled his old heart like wine, and led him back in memory to his own proud castle and his splendid ranks of knight and vassal.

Their palanquins were not set down until the very portal of the castle door was reached, an exceptional honour, it being the custom for all except princes of the blood to dismount at the gate and proceed with retinue on foot to the entrance of the audience chamber.

But Sano no longer questioned "Is it mockery?" Beneath his poor and faded robes the old warrior's heart beat high, and the light of other days was on his face as he stepped into the splendid hall and bade his wife "Fear not, but follow me." There was a great conclave of nobles and warriors assembled, and they sat facing each other in two long rows, forming a glittering vista which terminated in the Shogun's raised daïs of lacquer and cushioned silk.

At their approach the Shogun rose and stood waiting. To the left of his throne was placed a plum tree in dazzling fullness of blossoms, growing from a vessel of bronze and gold.

At the other hand, a little cherry tree shone in a transport of flowers.

As the visitors knelt for the royal obeisance, the Shogun held forth his hand. "Rise, Sano," he said, in tones of suppressed gladness, "and see if thou dost recognise thy guest."

Quicker than her husband, the old dame gave an upward glance and fell again to the earth, crying: "It is the priest, Sano. It is the poor priest."

After explaining to his court in a few brief, glowing sentences the obligations under which this worthy pair had placed him, the Shogun said:

"And now, Sano Tsuyeno Genzaimon, thy castle and thy lands are again thine own. Be but as loyal to thy new master as thou wert to the old, and I will know thee as my truest friend and supporter. For the plum and the cherry tree which thou didst destroy that I might not suffer, behold I return them in kind"—pointing to the trees on either hand—"and, besides, with each will be given thee a new province to rule and govern; Sakurai, on the western coast of Nappon, the province of the cherry tree, Umèdo, in Shikoku Island, field of the plum, and for the pine tree, which thou wert willing to sacrifice also, the broad heritage of Matsuyama (Pine Mountains) that lies near the sacred city of Kyoto."

Mary McNeil Scott.

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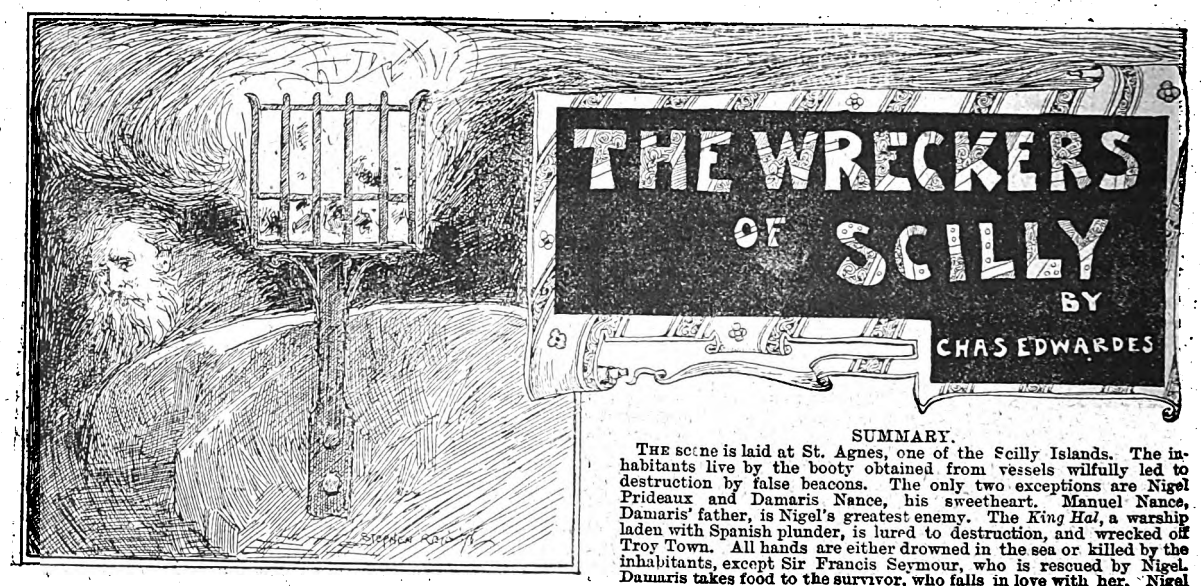

SUMMARY.

THE scene is laid at St. Agnes, one of the Scilly Islands. The inhabitants live by the booty obtained from vessels wilfully led to destruction by false beacons. The only two exceptions are Nigel Prideaux and Damaris Nance, his sweetheart. Manuel Nance, Damaris' father, is Nigel's greatest enemy. The *King Hal*, a warship laden with Spanish plunder, is lured to destruction, and wrecked off Troy Town. All hands are either drowned in the sea or killed by the inhabitants, except Sir Francis Seymour, who is rescued by Nigel. Damaris takes food to the survivor, who falls in love with her. Nigel arranges to secure Sir Francis' escape from the cave.

CHAPTER VII.

A RACE FOR A WIFE.

THAT night, when the moon was just walking from the cold waters of the Atlantic, our hero guided Sir Francis Seymour to his little boat, and successfully conveyed him to Hugh Town on St. Mary's.

Manuel Nance and two of the men.

One petition he made, and the granting of it was the only one condition Nigel asked in requital of his services.

"Thou wilt say no word of what in my heat I told thee about my brethren here? There must be no thought of avenging the deeds they may have done, for, after all, they are my kinsmen, and the playmates of my infancy."

To this the knight agreed, though it was against the inclination that had grown upon him during the later hours of his imprisonment in the cave. A suspicion had arisen in him that the St. Agnes men were guilty not only of horrid barbarity towards the soldiers and sailors of the *King Hal*, but that they had made some alliance with the storm to wreck the vessel.

"But, good Nigel," he demurred, "if perchance—I think it not probable, though fortune may rule it so—if perchance a box or two of gold or treasure may be vomited by the greedy sea——"

"And if 'tis so, thou must make no claim upon it. Why, sir, art thou not grateful for thy dear life that thou canst not forego such stuff as that——"

"Right good stuff, too, lad, as mayhap anon thou'lt perceive. But be it so. I will tell the tale that I, by the skin of my teeth, escaped, and not man nor unbroken spar besides."

Nigel landed the knight in the Bay of Porth Cressa, but did not accompany him towards the houses, and thus towards midnight he had returned to St. Agnes, shunning the moonlit water where he could, and reached his pallet unobserved.

The next day Manuel Nance and two of the men in whom he reposed most confidence spent divers pleasant hours in telling over the gold that had come to them.

The Lord of St. Agnes had not drunk so deep with the rest the previous evening but that when he lay on his bed a scheme recurred to him by which he hoped to gain advantage. Wretch though he was, he yet knew something of the pangs of remorse. But he was ignorant of the deeper truths of human nature. He fancied, forsooth, that by the bestowal of money-bags upon Holy Church he could get such absolution for his sins as should make him light of soul and innocent as a child. He therefore designed to visit the holy Abbot of Tavistock, whose fame and importance were unrivalled in all the West country, and to make a barter with him on these premises.

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Nor was this all. Nance was no fool, and read the times as well at least as most men of the mainland. If he secured the good will of Holy Church, it was well. But he could feel wholly safe only by gaining the interest of the civil arm also.

Here, too, money might do much—that he knew well; for had not he annually sent a present of various rich fabrics and jewels to the acting Lord in St. Mary's, thereby deterring that just-minded worthy from giving air and credence to the cavils that might reach him about the island and its people?

But it were better still if he could have a blood alliance with this governor who exercised nominal rule in all the Archipelago.

And this might be so easy of arrangement. Christopher Layton, the governor in question, possessed a family of six sons. They had no spotless reputation—indeed, in St. Mary's they were a by-word. But what of that? Young blood will gallop after its own fashion; and, besides, these fine youths were not of a temper to bear being penned in an island where their days were passed in inaction and murmuring.

Nance, therefore, leapt to the thought that he could in no way better protect himself against the charges that might some day be cast in his teeth than by marrying his daughter to one of Master Layton's sons. She was full ripe for the alliance. He had marked her beauty and fine growth even before her nurse had warned him of both. Further, he had marked what Nurse Cochran had not—namely, the indignation with which she met his words in dispraise of young Nigel Prideaux, who was confessedly the comeliest youth on the island. This, and the youth's looks towards Damaris whenever they were near each other, was one of the strongest causes of his exceeding violence against Nigel.

And so Nance fondled the idea as he lay abed, and resolved the next day to send a messenger with overtures to Master Layton. It was all one which of the Layton youths was chosen. But he flattered himself the love of five thousand golden crowns would not fail to get Damaris a husband. It was in truth a princely bribe, and out of question the father would be cunning enough to take it in the right light, and be mum about it.

"This arranged," said Nance to himself, "either St. Agnes shall go into other hands, or I will manage it differently. I like not to think of the burdens on my conscience."

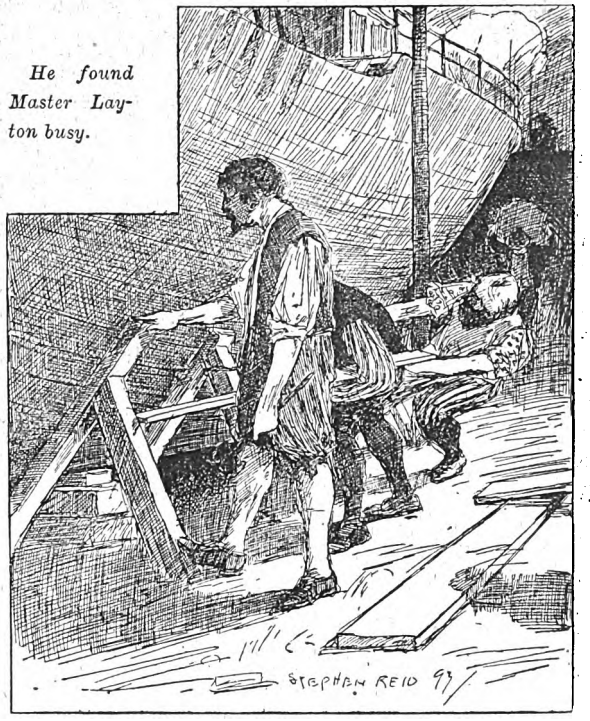
And having thus coaxed a little tranquility into his soul he fell asleep. But for all his self-cozening he had dream visitations in the night which made him in the morning increasedly anxious to clinch the bargains he had planned.

The gold and other treasures were stacked in the very room in which Nance slept. There was no peril of being robbed, for the St. Agnes men were loyal to each other.

Damaris had gone to bed that night with the chink of gold in her ears, and when she awoke in the morning her father was again busy piling the pieces for her marriage portion.

James Pender, the elder, was commissioned by Nance to cross the sound ere the tide turned, and to see Master Layton on the subject. Had he dared, Pender would have refused such a business. He had hoped Damaris might fall to the lot of his own son, for there was little choice on St. Agnes, and was not he the best man in the island after Nance himself? But he was won over to the task, as much as aught else by the hints that the lordship of St. Agnes might be his own in a month or two, if he would but be patient and wait.

He found Master Layton busy in getting out his vessel for a distinguished voyager, who was none else than Sir Francis Seymour. For awhile he could not interfere to explain his mission; but when he told it, uncouthly and grossly enough, the lord of St. Mary's burst into a laugh, and said it would please him mightily.



He found Master Layton busy.

The governor's sons were sent for, and in their presence the matter was again related, more in detail. Truth to tell, but for the golden crowns (of which Master Christopher was to take the half), the youths would have mocked at the idea that any one of them should take a wife out of St. Agnes.

But the money made all the difference. And besides, it needed not Pender's description of Damaris to suggest to them that the girl herself was no ordinary Scilly maiden. The rumour of her beauty had already spread about St. Mary's, and the priests of Tresco had made a fair report of her intelligence and grace.

"I'll have no brawling over it," said Master Christopher, with an affectation of alarm. "Certes, there be no more foolish way of puffing up the pride of wenches than by making them think they be worth fighting about. So settle it peaceably."

But this they were unable to do. Their imaginations began to riot about poor Damaris, until they rated her as a Helen, and the thought of the gold pieces, and what might be done with them, made them look angrily at each other, and discountenance each other's plans contemptuously.

As fortune would have it, however, Sir Francis himself came to their relief.

Told of the dilemma, though not of the prize, he said laughingly:

"My good friend, never saw I stouter youths. Let each strip himself to his smock, and the one who first reaches the island be the winner."

The idea delighted the governor, and was not distasteful to the young men, who were all much at home in the water.

It was thus agreed upon. And the day being unusually propitious, and Master Nance's eagerness for a settlement as great as theirs, they straightway drank a cup or two of ale, and in the presence of a crowd of the islanders and Sir Francis himself, took to the water by the rocks of the Fort hill, nearest to St. Agnes.

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She saw the boat at length return.

Pender accompanied them in his boat, and a boat of St. Mary's also went with them, that the vanquished might later in the evening return.

Could Damaris have known what was in progress, she would have found diversion in watching the issue of this singular love race. And the more so that she would know in her heart how foolish and futile such an effort to win her affections was bound to be.

But she knew nothing of it until her nurse began to babble to her about the stalwart young strangers who were descending the gorse-clad hill behind the village.

The eldest of the Laytons had won the race, which somewhat allayed the irritation felt by his brothers. With a hot face and expanded nostrils the lucky youth (as he was regarded) strode towards the house, and loudly called for Master Nance. Here he caught sight of Damaris herself, who viewed these lusty youths with curious sensations, and called her to him with such freedom of manner that the girl ran into her own room, and thence escaping by the yard into the open, she betook herself straightway to her kine on the downs. There with her thoughts and maiden fancies she was ever passably content. And there, too, she stayed till evening, especially when she perceived that there was a quest for her.

From her vantage post she saw the boat at length return across the sound, with the unwelcome, forward young newcomers at the oars.

Both the kine and she herself were glad of it, for it was long past the common milking hour.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HEART OF A MAID.

MASTER NANCE was rarely pleased with the condescension of Master Layton. He had but half thought his suit (for so it was, in fact) would be considered at all. Knowing himself for what he was, he was not shrewd enough to realise that he might yet seem to others more reputable than he really was. The unwonted thoughts of his own guilt had yet more lowered him in his own regard.

When the Layton lads appeared, therefore, and in a brawl told him—though in different keys and some with open sneers at the folly of the contest—how they had swum the sound of St. Agnes in honour of his daughter, he was as proud as a knight whose only child might be the queen of a tournament in which all the combatants were of extraordinary distinction.

"Where hies she? Where hies she?" persisted Eric Layton, the winner of the course. "I did but just see the sparkle of her eye, yet I feel my heart all aflame to become more intimate with her."

"Marry, thou fair son-that-shall-be," answered Nance, clapping the youth on the shoulder, "I give thee permit to go wheresoever thou wilt to find her. Nay, be not modest——"

At this the Layton lads laughed till the sheep browsing near ran from them in alarm. That ever they should be charged with such a weakness!

"No, faith, good father-that-may-be—I keep not a chamber within me for that most excellent virtue to dwell in. Such modesty as there is between us lies among those five varlets yonder."

"And right sensible thou art," continued Nance, though not without a feeling of discomfort at his position. "'Tis a world in which one were better to be bold than backward. And so I say to thee—seek her freely, and if thou art urged to crack the very panels of the door behind which she nestles in her maiden fear, I'll give thee absolution for it!"

"Hearty thanks, Master Nance," responded the lad, and, with a wink to his brothers, young Eric went off on his quest.

But this, as we have seen, was futile. Undeterred by Nurse Cochran, who hurled some strong abuse at him for his unmannerliness, he searched the house from roof to outbuildings. He even plunged his arms into a box of gold, as if he thought she might be there. And he took the bedding of fair Damaris' couch in his arms, and flung it loose into a corner, that she might not remain hid beneath it. This done, he gave the old woman a slap upon the cheek which roused all the bad blood in her, and told her that anon he would crop her tongue for her ere he took her with Damaris into his household.

"Thou dark cub!" cried the nurse at his heels. "Never while I have nails to tear thee from her shalt thou—coarse brute—mate with my white lily!"

But the youth jeered even while he climbed the downs, and took no heed of the angry looks of the other men and women of St. Agnes, who had gathered about the house to see what was in the wind.

"Fair doings, forsooth!" muttered the elder Pender. "There'll be no privilege in St. Agnes if deeds like these be borne with."

"The brawny whelp!" cried one of the women, half in admiration of his figure and half in hate.

But late in the evening young Layton rejoined his brothers, angry and tired. Though he had trodden in every part of the island (so he said), he had not found his bride. Vain was it for Nance to try to persuade him to tarry for the night. He was piqued, and talked loosely of surrendering the prize he had won. Yet at a word from his brothers, who had not spent their strength in idle quests, he was prompt to recant on this heading. For the present, however, he would return home. It was agreed that when due preparations were made for the wedding, Nance should fetch him, and then, without any more absurd prudery, Damaris should resign herself into his hands.

"Why, my wench, didst elude thy lover so?" asked Nance in the evening.

"I know not, father," she replied, "wherefore he is my lover. I like not him, and he misused my nurse, with scant care for her age."

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"Her age! quo' she," interrupted Dame Cochran. "One need not be so old, child, to be nurse to thee. For all that, he's a bad youth, that Layton, and I marvel, Master Nance, thou canst talk of him and thy Damaris in one breath."

"I repeat it, Dame, notwithstanding; the girl has four days to bring her mind to it. See thou aid'st her, or it will be the worse for thee. I'll endure no opposition under my own thatch and beams."

"Oh, gramercy!" said the dame with an ironical curtesy, Then afterwards, Nance having left the two alone, "I'll see thee dead and buried, like yon shipload of men, Manuel Nance, ere I'll brook words like that from thy mouth. I tell thee, girl, thou shalt not be wife to this governor's chick."

"Of that I am resolved, and so no more about it," observed Damaris, with a decision of tone and demeanour that surprised the old woman.

Each day of the following three Nance put to his daughter the same question:

"Wilt obey thy father, Damaris, in this matter?"

And each day she confessed herself unfilial, and likely to be. It hurt her to grieve her father, for there was much love of a kind between them, yet on this subject she had full assurance from her heart that she was a better judge than he.

Moreover, had she not each day obtained new strength to resist him from Nigel's stouter mind? They twain met on the downs as before, and sat hand in hand in the cave which had lately sheltered Sir Francis Seymour. Their love grew tenfold, until it was as if it had reached a degree beyond which a mortal body could not hold it.

Sat hand in hand in the cave.

At first, Nigel had made as if he cared not so greatly for her when she told him without comment of the bridegroom her father had brought for her. She was plaguing him. Of the distaste she felt for young Layton and of his obvious defects she said nought.

For this reason Nigel, though heavy at the heart as if lead lay there in barrels, said no word either in objection or abuse of his rival.

"Perchance," he said to himself, "she may be of a disposition to love this young gallant even as she has made a show of loving me. I will not bar her!"

Then, when she looked at him in wonder that he said nothing, and opened her pretty eyes wide upon him, he could no longer resist speaking after his own instincts.

"Damaris, my dear," he said, with a quaver in his voice, "you shall do as you like best to do. I will not bind you. We are both young and shall outgrow our troubles, if we have them. If you feel a fondness for Eric Layton, in the name of God and all His saints let me not stand between him and you—if you wish it not!"

But this was more than the girl could bear.

She cast herself upon Nigel's breast and put her arms about his neck.

"How vile thou art, my Nigel, to taunt me thus! Dost thou not see it in mine eyes that I was but trifling with thee? Thou alone art my life, and if I mate not thee I will die a maid—when God shall desire it."

After this, said in passionate tones, and with the girl's clear eyes looking rebukefully into his, there no longer abode any doubt in Nigel's mind.

He clasped Damaris to his heart, and covered her face with kisses.

Then it was too that he made the proposal which had lain near his soul ever since he had heard of this new suitor for his sweetheart.

"If it fell out, Damaris," he said slowly, fondling her hair while her cheek lay upon his shoulder, "if it fell out that no other way remained, wouldst thou confide in me, and depart from St. Agnes, and go whither Heaven would have us go?"

"I'll go with thee, my brave Nigel, to the land of the Turk, or to those uttermost parts of the earth, where the men are no higher than bodkins."

"Thanks, my sweet. Then trust me I will contrive a way."

With these words Nigel had brought back to the girl all the fortitude which her father's question had disturbed and routed.

And at each meeting they felt the surer that Heaven was upon their side, and that Eric Layton and Damaris would never be housed together under one roof.

When he had nought more pressing to do, Nigel spent the hours in fresh caulking his little boat, and hammering leather cuts and sound wood patches upon the weaker parts of the framework. Also he cleansed and scoured it as it had never before been cleansed and scoured. And daily, while he was fishing, he had his eyes quite as much upon his boat as upon the water in which he dangled his line. He was earnest in bethinking how he could improve the thing, and make it more waterproof and worthy of the guest whom he hoped it might by-and-bye receive. Also, without exciting remark, he increased the stock of meal and frogs' flesh in his cottage. Ban, the idiot, likewise enjoyed himself in wringing the necks of sundry fowls, which were afterwards boiled into softness, and highly seasoned to make them keep long without decaying.

Damaris had less to sustain her.

It wounded her sore to bring the cloud upon her father's face morning and night, in response to his "Well, my daughter?" Latterly, she could not hold her tears. And on the evening before the fourth day, when she was to be made a bride against her will, at Master Nance's cold bidding of "good-night" she dropped upon her knees and laid hold of his wristband with the plaintive pleading:

"Oh, father! father!"

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"I crave a favour of thee."

But he only cast a look at her to see if the old obduracy was in her lips and eyes, and left her with the laconic injunction:

"See thou art ready on the morrow!"

Had Dame Cochran also been against her, it would have gone hard indeed with the girl. But this lady prided herself upon the constancy of her hatreds and the strength of her memory. For all her unfeminine habits and appearance, she had a corner of tenderness in that withered old organ, her heart. And now she was as gentle towards Damaris as erstwhile she had been rough and unfeeling.

"Be hearty, my lamb," she murmured caressingly, as she unstrung the girl's gown from her back, perchance for the last time. "I have a notion it will not come to pass, though we be so near the threshold of it. 'Tis not for nought, beshrew me, that I have found a stripling chick in the two eggs I've cracked this last day of our lives. Marry, my wench, let's go to our beds in faith. How know we not that King Arthur himself shall not come in the night on his great white horse and carry thee off, Damaris, through the black night air to his fair castle and Court. I crave a favour of thee, my duck, if it comes about; make me thy tire-woman there, even as I have been thy waiting-woman here. For mine eyes have become used to the sight of my Damaris' fair face."

"Fond nurse, I will die ere I choose other than thou to wait upon me. But I need no servant, for I am on the brink of much misery."

Yet although she went to bed with these words on her lips and tears in her eyes, no sooner was she alone and in the dark, with her head upon the silken pillow, than the figure of Nigel came before her shut eyes to hearten her. And when she dreamt there was no element in her visions that she would have wished away.

(To be continued.)

THAT AWFUL COMPETITION!

Of course you know all about the Coupon Collecting Competitions. You read the full particulars of them in the ***Christmas Week Number of SHORT STORIES.*** You don't believe in this sort of thing. It is a lot of hard work with a very poor chance of success.

Well, it is fortunate for others that you do think so, because it gives them a better chance. But do you realise that working for about an hour a week—that is, fifty-two hours a year—you stand a good chance of earning

A Hundred Solid Sovereigns?

A lot can be done with £100, but, of course, if you are sufficiently wealthy to ignore the offer, pass along to something more exciting.

One of the coupons on the second page of ***SHORT STORIES*** will be collected by ordinary people, the other marked "newsagent," by tradesmen of that ilk. Similar coupons appear in ***PEARSON'S WEEKLY*** and ***HOME NOTES.*** Procure as many of these coupons as you possibly can, and paste them either in exercise books or on slips of paper.

£100 will be given to the reader who collects the greatest number from ***SHORT STORIES*** and ***P. W.;*** another £100 to the reader who collects from ***HOME NOTES;*** another £100 to the newsagent who collects from ***S. S.*** and ***P. W.;*** and another £100 to the newsagent who collects from ***HOME NOTES.*** There will also be numerous Consolation Prizes.

ONE PRIZE OF £25. FIVE EACH OF £5.
TWO EACH OF £10. TEN „ „ £2.
TEN EACH OF £1,
AND HUNDREDS OF SMALLER PRIZES.

Newsagents' coupons must not be collected by readers.

S. S. and ***P. W.*** coupons should be kept together: ***HOME NOTES*** Coupons should be collected separately.

NO COUPONS TO BE SENT IN BEFORE JANUARY, 1898.

PART THREE
OF
PEARSON'S SHAKESPEARE

Will be on sale on Thursday, February 18th. You will know it by the dainty appearance of its cover. The letters are printed in red on a pale salmon-pink surface, and the contents are as good as it is possible to make them—they consist of excellent printing and of reproductions of illustrations by Sir John Gilbert, R.A.

The volume will be complete in thirty parts, and it will be best for you to subscribe weekly rather than to wait until the whole is finished, as the number of bound volumes will be limited.

Part Three contains eighty pages of letterpress and nearly thirty illustrations, and the play treated is "Romeo and Juliet."

PEARSON'S SHAKESPEARE

should be ordered through a newsagent, or may be obtained from these offices, post free, for 7½d. per copy.

The winner of the "Small Handwriting Competition" is Mr. J. P. Nix, of 8, Rendezvous Street, Folkestone. He wrote the words *Short Stories* 2,297 times on the back of an ordinary Government oblong postal card, the title of the story being counted as once. A cheque for Two Guineas has therefore been sent to this gentleman.

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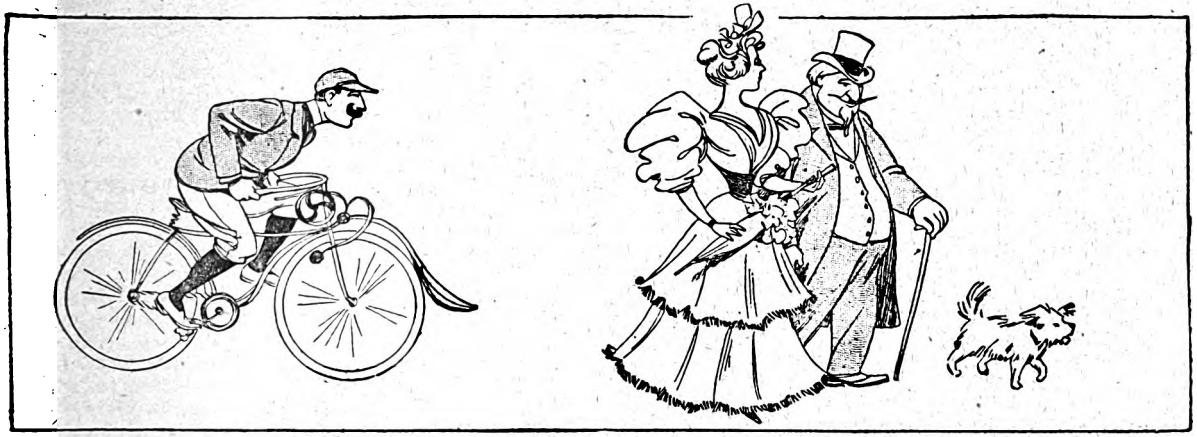
A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.—No. 4.

SEE PAGE 252.



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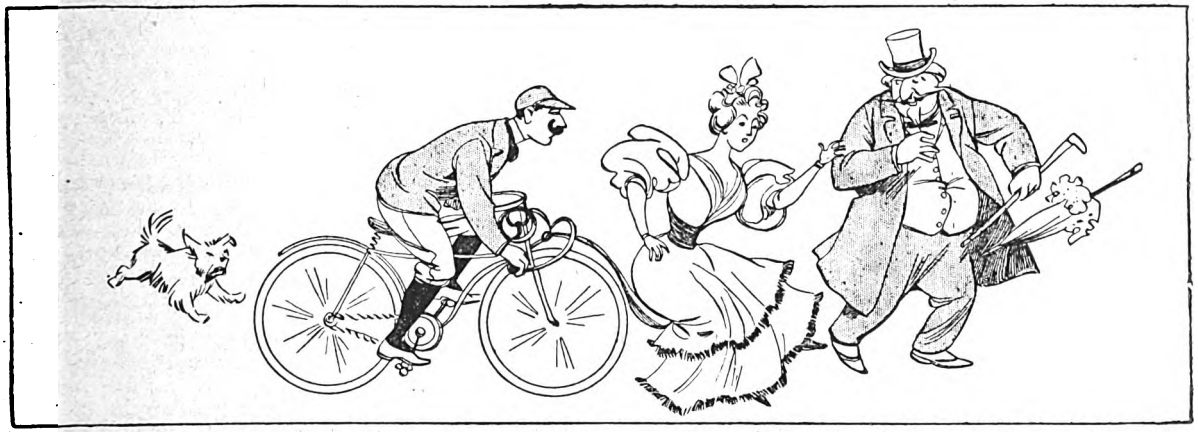

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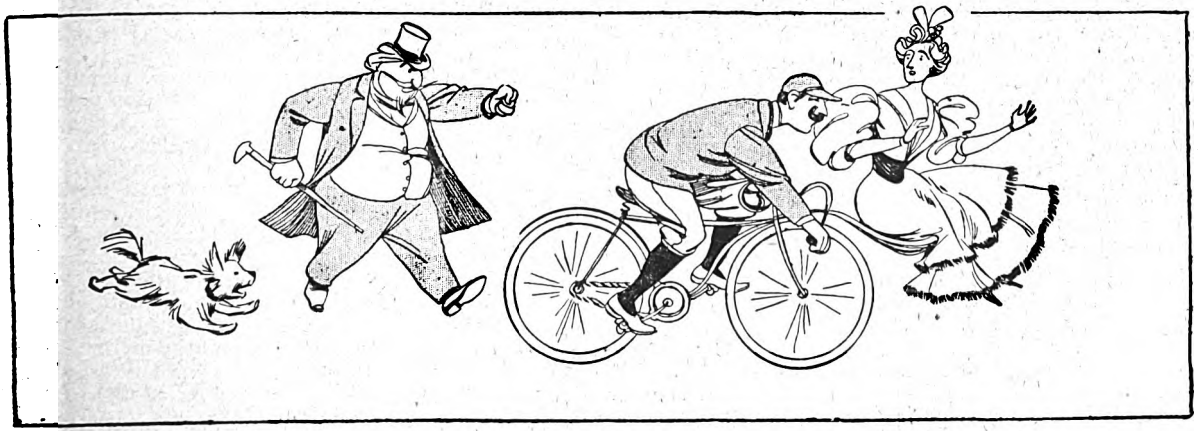

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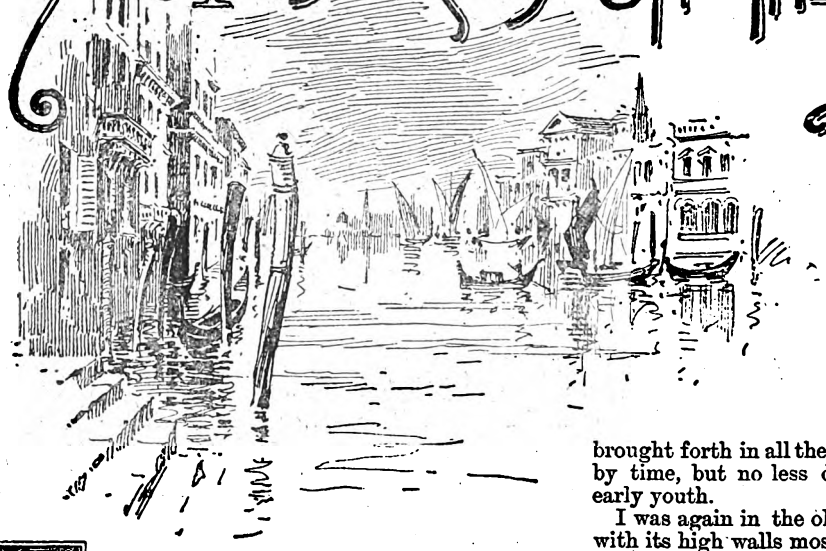
"My Boat is on the Shore"



IN one of her prefaces, Georges Sand tells how, when in Venice, upon overhearing a conversation between two women, the idea occurred to her of writing her romance "Audre." Their gossiping across from door to door reminded her so forcibly of La Chatre that she seemed suddenly to be transported from the spot out into the open country.

One morning in the same Venice I experienced an almost identical impression while leaning from my window and drinking in the fresh silence which is one of the charms of this enchanted city. The spot was propitious for dreaming. The water lapped caressingly against the moss-covered walls that rose from the lagoon; in front of me an old brick house, with high, arched windows and marble balconies, mirrored its blackened façade in the rippling waters below; the terraces blossomed bravely with bright geraniums, and through an occasional opening one caught glimpses of a narrow garden bordering the canal.

Farther down, the canal made a sharp turn, where, at long intervals, heralded by the cries of the gondoliers, gondolas would emerge from the shadow, glide through the dusky water it ruffled into a silvery wake, and disappear under a neighbouring bridge.

This drowsy little nook bore such a striking resemblance to one of the old quarters of my own native village that little by little a strange illusion took possession of me. The matin chimes sounding from the tower of a neighbouring church, added still another link to my retrospective vision. I seemed to have renewed my youth to five-and-twenty years and was drifting down our old canal of Vilette, between the tall, narrow houses of the Rue des Juifs, while the bells of the church of the Augustines rang out the hour of morning mass.

All at once, in the exquisite freshness of this suggestive silence, the voice of a woman floated out from a window hidden behind the railing of the terrace. The voice, limpid and young, hummed a barcarolle—a popular old Venetian air, beginning:

"My boat is on the shore."

Now the hallucination was complete. This barcarolle I had heard in my youth, and how I had loved the voice of her who had sung it!

Just as the cry of a passing boatman had awakened in me a long forgotten memory of the past, the music of this barcarolle evoked in me emotions that had slumbered for years. It dredged the very depths of the still waters of my memory and brought forth in all their freshness, softened and dimmed by time, but no less dear, the buried treasures of my early youth.

I was again in the old quarters of the Rue des Juifs, with its high walls moss-grown and darkened from the humidity of the canal, and as I looked at a certain high window blossoming with red carnations, there appeared the bewildering figure of Juliette Stadelli, who sang—

"My boat is on the shore."

This Juliette was the daughter of an expatriated Italian count, Daniele Stadelli, who, during the earlier years of his exile, had made occasional apparitions in his household, but finally had disappeared altogether.

At the time of which I speak Juliette, or Zulietta, as she was familiarly called, was scarcely twenty years of age; tall and lissom of figure, with an Italian vivacity she inherited from her father, dark eyes that glowed with a lustre like that of our wild cherries, and auburn locks that fell half caught, half free, about her neck. Two things alone marred the beauty of an otherwise faultless face; the chin was too massive and the distance too great between the upper lip and the finely modelled nose, which gave to the lower part of the face an expression a little *animale*, but when she smiled and showed her little white teeth, one freely forgave this slight detraction.

Notwithstanding this rare beauty, or perhaps on account of it, Zulietta was not well received in our rigid provincial society of Vilette. Her boyish manner and frank speech, her showy, eccentric toilettes, betraying her love of display, displeased the materfamilias, while her striking beauty excited the jealousy of the marriageable daughters who reproached her with being ill-bred and indiscreet. Nevertheless, on account of her wonderful musical talent and rich voice, she was welcomed at all our soirées.

We, the young men of the place, were all bewitched by her. When she sang, we formed an adoring circle round her; when she danced, we fought over her waltzes and contra-dances, and after the ball we loitered at the corners of the deserted streets to get a last glance from those sparkling eyes, as bright as the stars above her.

Zulietta received our enthusiastic homage indiscriminately, as one inhales the fragrance of a bouquet of roses,

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without attaching more importance to one than to another. She allowed herself to be made the centre of our adoring circle without showing the least preference for any one of us. All of which, for my part, was most exasperating.

I loved Zulietta with all the ardour of my five-and-twenty years and with the candour of a man who feels his heart beat seriously for the first time. As everyone does who is passionately in love, I imagined Mademoiselle Stadelli to be the only woman whom I could ever love, and that without her my life would hold no purpose or charm. Her indifference and coquetry, therefore, caused me the most acute suffering.

I could not resign myself to the uncertainty of the relations existing between us, for I was not so calmly disposed as my comrades, and this doubt was more than I was able to endure. A plain situation, however desperate it might be, seemed preferable to the anxiety which I now felt, and in spite of my natural timidity I resolved upon the first occasion to make a frank avowal of my love.

This was not easy, for while the young girl invited us all cordially enough to her house, she adroitly avoided a *tête-à-tête* visit with anyone.

However, on one particular day I was before the others, and found her alone in the room which served her at once as studio and parlour.

I see it before me now, that large, light room on the top floor of the house in the Rue des Juifs. On the sill of the open window the bright geraniums waved and nodded gaily to the wanton breeze that fanned them, and from the canal below the music of the lapping water mounted on the air. The reflection of the sun upon the

The bewildering figure of Juliette Stadelli.

water threw upon the wall fair, shadowy figures that floated in a fantastic dance across the room. It was Saturday afternoon, the bells chiming from the tower of Augustines mingled in a strange harmony with the murmur of the flowing water and the fantastic dance upon the wall.

As, with a beating heart, I closed the door behind me,

Leant her elbow on the piano.

Zulietta, who was seated at the piano, slightly rose, then, perceiving that I was alone, advanced a step, still fingering the keys, and absently extended her other hand towards me.

"Oh, it is you, is it?" she murmured. "You are come at an unfortunate time. I am in the depths of one of my discontented moods. You cannot imagine how wearied I am of stagnating in this hole of Vilette!"

She struck a last petulant chord, then arose, threw back a truant curl with an old familiar gesture and leant her elbow on the piano. "Think," she continued, with evident irritation, "how one lives but once, and I am wasting this life so short and so precious buried at the bottom of this little provincial town."

"But you would not leave us?" I protested timidly.

"I would!" she cried, with flashing eyes and dilating nostrils. "I would go into the world and have a name and live according to my rank and have a mansion and pictures and jewels. To be a queen courted and admired in a circle of artists. Yes, I must have all that, and I am ready to give my soul to whoever will give it to me!"

This declaration held but little encouragement for me, who had nothing but my heart to offer her. I felt myself small and insignificant before this catalogue of ambitious desires. However, I ventured tenderly:

"All this pomp can never equal the joy of loving and of being loved, and if you knew, oh, Zulietta, if you only knew, how I love you!"

She regarded me a moment in amazement, then burst into a mocking laugh.

"You!" she cried. "Oh, my poor friend, my poor friend, you are mad! Let us talk no more about it," she added, and, turning quickly round, seated herself at the piano.

"Let us have a little music to dissipate your senti-

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mental humour. I will sing you a barcarolle that I learnt when I lived in Venice with my father," and, without troubling herself further about my suit, began:

"My boat is on the shore."

Her rich contralto voice filled all the silent room. In the intervals of the couplets the sound of the lapping water rose plaintively, like a great sob. The cruel disdain of this proud girl cut me to the quick. Hot, passionate tears rushed from my eyes. I felt that I should weep ridiculously, but I would not have her witness the spectacle of my chagrin.

"Adieu, Zulietta," I managed to say. "Adieu," and fled precipitately, while she, without disturbing herself, continued her barcarolle.

In spite of my humiliation, I still loved Zulietta passionately, but I swore I would never see her again. Under these circumstances one often takes such oaths, but this time Heaven took it upon itself to see that I should not perjure myself.

A few weeks later we heard that Mademoiselle Stadelli was married. She had married an old man, but assuredly a rich one, and the bearer of an aristocratic name. Thus her ambitious dream was realised. Immediately after the nuptial ceremony she left Vilette, and all was over.

I strove a long time to recover myself after this blow. This marriage had turned my life into a nightmare. I lived upon the memory of my shattered hopes that were like the *débris* of seaweed and broken shells that the ebbing tide leaves upon the strand. I had breathed the bitter perfumes of love, and this tonic of bitterness fortified me against the return of my paroxysms of sentimentality. The following year I left Vilette for Paris. I knew that Zulietta was there with her husband, but I made no effort to see her. I had fought my passion inch by inch and feared a new fall at sight of her.

From time to time I heard others speak of her. She had become a gay woman of the world, and in the *Echo* I read occasionally of the brilliant receptions given by "the beautiful Mme. de R——"

There were rumours that the affairs of the household of Mme. de R—— did not run smoothly, and that the old husband complained bitterly of the carelessness and gaiety of the young wife.

The next year I heard that Juliette de R—— had abandoned the conjugal domicile, in company with an Italian artist, of whom she had become enamoured the preceding winter in Florence. This, of course, caused a great scandal, and for several months the select world in which she had lived commented upon this *esclandre*. I next heard that shortly after her arrival in Rome Zulietta had been neglected by her lover, and had gone upon the stage.

Then, as the gay world ceased to regale itself with accounts of absent ones, a silence settled about the affairs of Juliette de R——. Years passed, burying her adventures deeper and deeper beneath their oblivion. With myself also, time had done its work. The memory of Zulietta of Vilette was not dead, but profoundly sleeping, and it would never again have been awakened had it not been for the enchantment of Venice that recalled it after a lapse of twenty years.

This Venetian barcarolle, that I had not heard since my youth, wrought in me a magic resurrection like that of the coming of the Prince to the Palace of the Sleeping Beauty of the Wood. Again, the dusky charms of Zulietta surged across me in all the freshness of those old Vilette days. It seemed to me I must see her appear among the red geraniums on the balcony before me, with her glowing eyes and careless smile. She haunted me all that day as I wandered through that enchanted city.

She followed me over the threshold of the old palaces of the Grand Canal and along the lagoon, where the soft shadows were lightened by the slanting rays of the departing sun. The slender, swift gondolas gliding over the tranquil water seemed to carry, under the black cowl of the *felze*, the phantoms of my dead youth. When one after another they stopped at the steps of the Lido, I almost expected to see, emerging from the low cabin, the supple grace and proud beauty of Zulietta.

Through the sumptuous halls of the Doges' Palaces, among the mausolia of San Giovani and San Paola, under the arcades blossoming with lilacs of San Lazzaro, this obsession pursued me.

In the evening, after having dined alone in the gay little restaurant of *Capello Nero*, I went in search of my good Francesco, the gondolier, and told him to take me slowly to the Rialto. As in the barcarolle of Zulietta, the water of the Grand Canal was black as jet, the sky was enamelled with stars, and in the distance, under the first white beams of the rising moon, the islets seemed floating in a silver mist.

Many of the palaces were brilliantly lighted, but those along the bank were enveloped in shadow and stood out against the starry sky a confused mass of black roofs. In this imposing mystery of dusky water and sleeping palaces, the gondolas glided to and fro in ghost-like silence, only the prow and saw-teeth could be distinguished, and the little twinkling lantern swinging from the roof. All this shadowy picture, peopled by dim spectres fleeting and uncertain, aided still more to plunge me into the strange world of delusion.

In front of the old Gustiniani palace, now occupied by the Hotel de l'Europe, a good half of the canal was encumbered by an assemblage of gondolas grouped round a long barque full of serenaders. I commanded Francesco to approach as near as possible to the musicians, whose barque was gaily illuminated with different hued lanterns, which the rippling of the water caused to balance and nod merrily to each other.

The figures of the performers were confused and indistinct under the yellow flare of the lanterns, but I had no difficulty in distinguishing a great fellow in a slouch hat, with cloak draped loosely about his shoulders, who stood in the prow of the boat with a theatrical pose. As I drew near they were singing a popular Neapolitan air, with an accompaniment of violins, guitars and mandolines; then, during the pause that followed the close of the song, one of the musicians, leaping from gondola to gondola, made a collection of small coins, which he brought in his hat to the big fellow in the cloak.

This latter deigned to receive it, and turned and spoke to one of the singers sitting beside him, whom I had not noticed before.

She arose, and after indicating her selection to the orchestra, began the serenade from *Don Pasquale*. The voice of this woman lacked volume and power, but it was so caressingly tender and pure, and managed with such consummate art, that from the first notes I was affected by it. Although at times the woman seemed rather to sigh than to sing, the articulation was so clear that not one word, even at my distance, was lost.

I caught the lowest notes and they carried me away with their sweet clearness, and touched a responsive

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chord in my nature that had not vibrated for years. Here was another inexplicable emotion! I sought to explain it by the nervous state in which I had been since morning, and by the influence of my unusual and mysterious surroundings, all of which had worked upon my imagination; nevertheless, I was still troubled, and felt drawn by an irresistible impulse to see the singer a little nearer.

When the song was finished, the singer was rapturously applauded, and someone called for a selection from *Trovatore*. The man in the cloak raised his hat in sign of acquiescence, but the woman shook her head, fearing probably that her voice was not powerful enough for such dramatic music; still her companion insisted upon raising the tone. One could see by his imperious manner that he spoke to the woman more as a master than impresario.

At last she obeyed, but chose another selection, and the orchestra played the opening measures of a *Miserere*. The poor soul had reason to doubt the violence of Verdi's music; the impassioned plaints of Leonora surpassed the range of her frail voice, and she was obliged to protest. The impresario, on the other hand, shrilled out in a stagy tone, "*Addio*, Leonora!" scoring a success for himself at the expense of his companion, and at the next pause proceeded himself to make the collection, which this time was abundant!

By this time some of the gondolas had moved away and I profited by it to have Francesco move nearer. He manœuvred so well that I found myself side by side with the orchestra! Upon a closer view, I experienced a sad disappointment.

At a distance the singing barque, with its gaily coloured lanterns, had harmonised appropriately with the fantasy of the Venetian night, but at a nearer approach the scene lost much of its poetry. The singers were common in face and figure, and passed round from hand to hand a flask of Chianti, which they gulped down with coarse pleasantries.

I searched the faces of the company eagerly to find the artiste who had sung the serenade from *Don Pasquale*, and suddenly I received a shock in good earnest.

In spite of her age—she seemed to have passed forty—and in spite of the drawn features and sallow complexion, which still retained the melancholy traces of beauty, she bore a strange resemblance to Juliette Stadelli. There were the same loose locks of hair waving over a high forehead, the same glowing eyes, the same massive lower part of the face, which the carnous mouth still brightened occasionally by a weary smile.

The sloping shoulders and graceful head were carried as proudly as in the old days, and the small hands were moulded as delicately as those I had raved over and longed to cover with kisses.

Was all this merely a trick of my imagination, too prompt to take its chimeras for a certainty, or had I really before me the proud, disdainful beauty, Juliette Stadelli, whom I had found so lovable and so cruel?

The singer was certainly of the same age as she whom all Paris had at one time called the beautiful Mme. de R——; but the puffy eyelids, the heavy mouth with its sunken corners, the shabby, threadbare appearance of her dress, all told of years of misery and debauch.

Could it be that in the course of a few years the proud young beauty, the admired of all Vilette, the queen of Paris, had sunk to the level of a strolling singer?

I assured myself again and again that I was simply the dupe of a fortuitous resemblance; still, my eyes could not detach themselves from the face of this woman. As the rise and fall of the water brought us occasionally on a level with each other, she divined that she was the object of my persistent attention, and our glances met.

Left standing alone outside the door.

At that moment, the movement of the gondolas brought me closer to her, and I could not resist the opportunity to satisfy myself.

"Juliette!" I whispered; "Juliette Stadelli!"

She started at my voice and fixed her black eyes upon me. A frown contracted her features. She crisped her lips together dolorously and there seemed to be a conflict between her humiliated pride and her excited curiosity. She raised her eyebrows questioningly and I fancied I saw a gleam of recognition, softened by regret.

"I am one of your old friends of Vilette," I added, but just then the man with the cloak came back with his hat full of copper coins. The face of the woman expressed the greatest apprehension. She shook her head negatively, and quickly applied her finger to her lips to impose silence. All this had taken scarcely more than a second.

As soon as the impresario had assumed his theatrical pose, I saw his companion lean towards the musicians, who began to tune their instruments, then, rising and standing under the soft light of the lanterns, she began:

"My boat is on the shore."

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Her clear, pure voice rose in the silence of the night like a melancholy echo of the past, and after each couplet the musicians repeated the chorus.

The choice of this barcarolle dissipated my last doubt. It was the voice that had charmed my youth, the voice that had shattered the dreams of my first love. I saw again that familiar room in the Rue des Juifs; in the interval of the couplets I heard, as on that former occasion, the plaintive sobbing of the water of the canal, and again my eyes filled with tears and I could have wept like a child.

The song had ceased, but I remained bewildered, lost in the memories of my early life. One after another the gondolas surrounding mine had moved off and disappeared. At last the musicians, too, put away their instruments and set their barque in motion; as it grazed mine I raised my eyes and met those of the singer; she leant towards me and said in French: "Adieu, and good-night."

The tone in which she spoke this wish surprised me, and I gave a sign to Francesco to follow the musicians.

In a few moments they stopped at the Vallaressa and slowly prepared to ascend the steps, after snuffing out their lanterns. I kept within sight of them, and at the end of the long, narrow street the group dispersed.

Three or four of the company, among them the impresario in his cloak, stopped at the threshold of a *trattoria*, evidently deliberating about entering to discuss a *bicchiero di Cipro*. The others, carrying their instruments wrapped in green lustrine, disappeared at the end of the street after having said good-night to the singer. The latter was left standing alone outside the door awaiting the pleasure of her lord and master.

I sought a last opportunity to speak to her, but as I approached, the impresario appeared at the door, and in a loud, imperious voice, cried: "Zulietta! come in." She drew herself up with a slight shudder and silently followed the man with whom she had chosen to cast her lot.

With my heart wrung with compassion, I followed their retreating forms, my lost youth vanishing with them.

And with a feeling of utter loneliness, I regained the Rue San Mose, where the electric lights flared with a brutal clearness on the swarming throng of promenaders.

ANDRÉ THEURIET.

What did the Other Fellow Say?

THE following monologue is supposed to take place at one end of a telephone. What did the other fellow say? Two guineas is offered for the best set of sentences which constituted the other man's part of the conversation. All attempts to reach *Short Stories* offices by Monday, February 22nd. All envelopes to be marked, "Telephone Talk":

Bur-r-r-r-r-r.
Are you there? Number 46,532, please. Hurry up.
Bur-r-r-r-r-r.
Ah! That you, Charlie?
. . . . . .
Jack.
. . . . . .
First-rate, thanks.
. . . . . .
No; really?
. . . . . .
Oh, I say, you had it pretty hot, old man, didn't you?
. . . . . .
Eh! what?
. . . . . .
By Jove! I'm glad it wasn't me. Tell me all about it; go on.
. . . . . .
No, I didn't; I got home fairly early.
. . . . . .
Poor beggar, I pity you; go on.
. . . . . .
Good gracious! You don't say so!
. . . . . .
What in the world did you say? I hope to goodness you——
. . . . . .
Great Scott! whatever shall I do. She'll, she'll——
. . . . . .
Hang you! What a fool you are.
. . . . . .
No, no, no; not yet.
. . . . . .
Yes.
. . . . . .
Well, you are——
. . . . . .
You did.
. . . . . .
But I say you did.
. . . . . .
Oh, be quiet.
. . . . . .
I do, and I never want to hear of you again.
. . . . . .
Oh, you—— Bur-r-r-r-r-r.

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A GLOWING southern sun bathed the drowsy old garden in a flood of molten gold. The milky pucca blossoms mingled their beauty with that of the flaunting scarlet of the cactus. The orange and fig trees hung their luscious fruit within tempting distance, while over the thick white adobe wall, across the trellis before the house and up to the Señorita's bedroom window, climbed, in a riot of yellow splendour, the superb Gold of Ophir rose tree, famous along the entire coast.

Never was there such another rose tree! Its limbs were as thick as a man's arm, and its blossoms were great, glorious nests of colour and perfume. It bloomed the entire year—bloomed for offerings before Our Lady's Shrine in the old Mission; bloomed for weddings and funerals; for the tourist who paused at the Señorita's gate to wonder and exclaim at the marvel; and for the Señorita herself.

The Señorita was straight and tall and slender. Though the grey was beginning to creep in her dusky hair, and the tell-tale wrinkles were seaming her forehead, she yet was a handsome woman, with the same Andalusian features; the soft, speaking eyes; the clear, olive skin her beautiful mother had brought from Spain years ago.

In the tiny low-ceilinged drawing-room, immaculate as a sanctuary, with its snowy matting, its wooden blinds, its sanded thresholds, among the images of the martyrs and the pictures of the blessed saints, hung a portrait of the Señorita, painted when she was eighteen. She wore, as became her station, a silken gown and a string of pearls about her throat. Over the superbly moulded shoulders a bertha of rare lace was thrown, and in her hand she held a Gold of Ophir rose—the first one ever plucked from the bush before her door.

Every afternoon when the Señorita had finished her household duties, before she sat down to the dainty drawn work which was a part of her daily occupation, and from which she derived a modest income, it was her custom to enter the drawing-room, and, after adjusting the blinds so that the sunlight would touch the portrait gently, to stand before it intently regarding her own lost youth.

"Mother of God!" was the murmured exclamation, "but it was a long time ago—long—time—ago."

There was always a vase of golden roses on a little stand before the portrait. When the Señorita's gaze left the picture it fell upon the flowers. With a gentle sigh, she would pensively touch the petals with caressing fingers, then silently and like a ghost slowly glide from the room.

This was the little shrine at which the Señorita worshipped, loved, and remembered. Every day were these unostentatious ceremonies repeated. Every day her gentle voice murmured: "Mother of God! but it was a long time ago—long—time—ago."

Years before, when the Señorita had been young—a beauty and the belle of the little Spanish-American settlement—up at the Presudio there had been a gallant young lieutenant who fell desperately in love with the charming Spaniard. Their courtship, amid the myrtle and orange groves, under the warm moonlight of the Southern region, in the sheltered nooks along the white beach, had been ideal. Both young, ardent, and madly in love, their affection became a bit of local pride. "May you love as Ygnacia," was the blessing mothers whispered to their daughters, and "May the saints send you another lieutenant!" brought the blood into the cheeks of the Señorita's girl companions.

Once when the lieutenant returned from Santa Barbaram, whither he had been sent on important military business, he brought to his sweetheart a tiny rose-bush, which he planted before her door.

"Ygnacia," he whispered as he caught her slim hands in his and bent his bold, blue eyes upon her blushing face, "my love for you will be perennial, like this bush, and sweet as its blossoms."

But alas for the pledges of passion! The lieutenant was one to love and ride away. Ere the roses had bloomed the third year, he had departed with fervent vows and promises of a speedy return. But the long, burning summers, the slow, dreary winters, drifted by and he never came. The tiny bush grew to be a lordly tree and never did the Señorita cut a rose for the Mission, the bride, or for the dead, that she did not see the handsome face, those bold, tender eyes, and hear again those passionate words: "My love will be perennial, like this bush, and sweet as its blossoms."

She heard of him now and then—the famous Indian fighter, then the major, the colonel, at last the great general, whose name was honoured throughout the land. Then came the news of his marriage to a celebrated heiress.

The rose tree was growing and blooming, but hope was dead in the heart of the Señorita.

Year after year she lived her simple little life in the old cottage abode of her ancestors. One by one her friends passed away. To the Señorita were left only her rose garden and memory. The Gold of Ophir rose tree climbed to her window, and thrust its great yellow blossoms into her room. Each perfect flower seemed to challenge her attention, and to cry: "Look at me, Ygnacia. I am sweet as was his love for you." And

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the Señorita, growing older and plainer every day, kissed the rose and murmured: "Mother of God! but it was a long—time—ago."

It was a great day for the sleepy little Spanish town when the railway came; greater, when the rich syndicate built the magnificent hotel. Then came the electric cars, rushing and clanging before the Señorita's rose garden. Inquisitive tourists poked their noses over her wall and, seeing her wonderful rose tree, begged to be allowed to enter. The Señorita received these visitors with sweet serenity and gracious hospitality. No one went away empty handed. The golden roses were bestowed with prodigality upon any who begged the gift.

Our Lady's Shrine was always decorated with the great blossoms, and ever before the portrait of the Señorita in the tiny drawing-room stood her offerings to her own lost youth.

One evening the Señorita sat under the Gold of Ophir rose tree. In her hand she held a cluster of her favourites. As she inhaled their fragrance her thoughts were as ever busy with the past. Again she saw her lover, straight, manly and tender, standing before her, heard his whispered vows, and felt his kisses on her cheeks and lips.

The garden gate clicked and swung open. Two people advanced slowly and uncertainly through the gathering dusk; a man and a young woman, fashionably dressed, with an unmistakable air of good breeding. The man, stepping forward and courteously lifting his hat, said: "Have I the honour of addressing Señorita Ygnacia Bonaventura?"

He stopped abruptly as a sharp cry broke from the Señorita's lips. She had risen, with her customary courtesy, at the first words of the stranger, and stood now clinging desperately to the trellis, over which the rose tree climbed.

"*Santa Maria!*" she breathed rather than spoke, "who it ees?"

"I am sorry to have startled you so," replied her visitor gently, "we were told at the hotel that you were quite willing strangers should see this beautiful rose tree or we would not have intruded. I beg your pardon," and he turned as if to go.

"Stay, Señor," she cried, "do not go. I will show you the roses with happiness. But your face it ees which gave me so moocho start. *Jesu Christo!* but you are like someone——"

"Maybe you knew my father," said the stranger. "He was stationed here at the Presudio, years ago, and I have often heard him speak of this charming town."

"Your fathaire here?"

"Yes, my father, General Saunders; Lieutenant Saunders when he was here."

There was profound silence. The straight, slim figure seemed turned to stone. The great dark eyes looked out from under the folds of the black tapelo with sad intensity and earnest scrutiny. Tom Saunders felt as if he were confronted by some vague, unknown tragedy. His young wife, too, was experiencing a sensation as if she were looking on at a mysterious phase of human emotion, and, drawing near her husband, clasped his arm with both her hands, and turned her sweet face, full of tender sympathy, towards the Señorita. For an instant they stood thus, three souls looking out of their windows to scan each other with searching looks. The Señorita spoke first: "Si, señor," she said in a low, grave voice, "I did know your fathaire long—time—ago. He look like you—ah, I 'ope ees well—si?"

"Did you not know?—but of course you would not have heard," said Saunders sadly; "my father is dead. He died a month ago."

"He ees dead?" repeated the Señorita mechanically.

"Yes," said Saunders, "and before he died he charged me with a sacred commission. He knew that I was coming here on my wedding journey. He called me to him one day and said: 'When you get there I want you to hunt up Señorita Ygnacia Bonaventura. Tell her for me that now, as I am nearing death, I see with clearer vision, and that I regret the past. Tell her that as I lie here racked with pain, I long, oh! I long for the coolness and quiet of her rose garden, and that in the long watches of each restless night I smell again the perfume from the golden rose I planted before her door.'"

There was a sound of sobbing, as Saunders finished his pathetic message. It came from his wife, who was profoundly affected by the situation. But the Señorita did not weep. Her white face was tense in its agony, but not a tear glistened in her sombre eyes. She held out her hand to the son of her old love. He took it in both his and pressed it gently. "She has suffered for my father's sake," was the thought that flashed through his mind, and he bent his head and laid a reverent kiss upon the Señorita's brown, toil-worn hand.

As Saunders and his wife were leaving, their arms filled with branches and clusters of the Gold of Ophir roses, the Señorita held open the gate for them. When Saunders passed her, she laid in his hand the king of all that year's blossoms, a great, royal golden rose. "For the lieutenant's grave," she simply said.

Saunders bowed, too much moved to speak. And six weeks later the remains of that perfect flower were reverently strewn over a grave in Greenwood.

Hours after their departure, the Señorita entered the little drawing-room. Her face was wan and haggard and old. She lifted her flickering candle high before the portrait and gazed steadfastly upon the beautiful young face that smiled down at her.

"Mother of God!" she breathed, "but it was a long—time—ago."

The next morning they tried in vain to waken the Señorita. She lay still and cold on her bed, drawn close to the open casement. Through the window, the great, gay golden roses climbed and looked into the poor little chamber. And one, bolder than the rest, had laid its yellow head close to the dead heart of the Señorita.

Edith Sessions Tupper.

A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.

£10 in Prizes.

On page 245 three sketches are given in their proper order. £5 is offered to the reader who sends us the most appropriate wording to go under each sketch, the whole to form a story descriptive of the illustrations, and £1 will be given to each of the senders of the next best five attempts.

It is not necessary for competitors to have any literary ability. If you have a good idea, surely there should be no difficulty in putting it down in words. The whole of the story is limited to one hundred words, which may be distributed under the sketches according to the judgment of the competitor.

All that you have to do is to write in the order of the sketches the wording that you think most appropriate, enclose your attempt in an envelope (which should be marked "Picture Story"), and forward it to this office before Monday, February 22nd

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THE LONG-EXPECTED BURGLAR.

Ezra Timmins was a steady man of forty, who had been fifteen years book-keeper for the prosperous grocery house of Ham, Bacon, Lard and Co. He had lived ten years with his wife in the same house in Eddy Street, and had saved money, for his habits were frugal, his pleasures simple, his pains few. His pleasures consisted of an occasional game of whist, at which Mrs. Timmins was always his partner, for the reason that he would not allow anyone else to scold her when she revoked, though he did not mind scolding her himself.

His pains were an unreasoning terror of burglars, and a dire apprehension that his niece and ward, pretty Constance Timmins—who was the only young person in his house—would end one of her many flirtations by throwing herself away on some worthless scamp.

To guard against burglars, he cultivated an acquaintance with a policeman who alternated on the beat, and dropped mysterious hints of munificent rewards in case they caught a burglar in the act. He had a burglar-alarm in his bedroom, and a fowling-piece, from which Mrs. Timmins was in the habit of withdrawing the cartridges for fear he should shoot himself. Many a sleepless night he spent in prowling about the house in the dark in quest of some intruder whose footstep he thought he heard. He read some article in the newspapers about burglaries, and surprised his wife and niece by the extent and accuracy of his information touching the methods of the fraternity. He plunged them into depths of despair by declaring that he knew it was his destiny to wake up some morning and find the house robbed and Constance murdered.

Constance was a lovely girl, the daughter of an elder brother of Timmins, who had gone to Jamaica, bought a plantation, taken the yellow fever, and died, leaving an estate, of which the value was unknown. She was a coquette, and had a host of admirers, who seldom commanded the approval of her uncle or aunt. If they were young, Uncle Ezra said they were snips, and ought to be in the nursery; if they were old, he said they should be in some Old People's Home. Constance laughed at his invectives, and when her uncle forbade this or that man the house, she met him elsewhere, if he had taken her fancy.

Among the few admirers who could not fairly be condemned to the nursery was Colonel Pitblado. He had met Constance at a small party, and he had been struck by her beauty and vivacity. With his usual circumspection, he had instituted inquiries respecting her prospective fortune; from the assiduity with which he pursued her afterwards, it may be inferred that the result of the investigation had been satisfactory.

Much to his annoyance, Constance not only did not ask him to the house, but begged as a favour that he would not come, at any rate not for the present.

"You see, Colonel Pitblado," said she, "I have rather taken a fancy to you, and I don't want to lose you. Now, my uncle, who is the best man in the world, invariably takes a dislike to people who pay me attentions. I have a presentiment that if you came to the house he would quarrel with you, and that would be the end of our acquaintance."

The Colonel argued, but it was of no avail. The only concession which Constance would make was that now and then, say once a week, she would leave the door open after her uncle had gone to bed, and the Colonel might slip in and spend a few minutes with her in the dark in the hall or in the drawing-room.

"I know," she said, "that you are too much of a gentleman to make me regret my good nature; anyway, I think I can take care of myself."

The Colonel's behaviour was beautiful; his speech was eloquent on the subject of his love, but he rarely ventured even to press the fingers of his charmer as they sat side by side on the sofa.

There they sat one night, and Constance, in a subdued voice, was explaining her uncle's extraordinary terror of burglars.

"Has he ever been robbed?" asked the Colonel.

"I believe that when he was a child, burglars broke into the house where he was living, and killed one of the inmates. He was awakened by the sound of the shot, and he has never got over the shock."

"I can quite understand it," replied the Colonel. "There is something peculiarly terrifying in a midnight encounter with a man whom you cannot see, and who has everything to gain and little to lose by taking your life."

"Oh!" cried Constance, "the thought fills me at times with such horror, that I am as afraid of burglars as my uncle. I think that if I saw one in my room, I should die of fright."

"I hope," said the Colonel, laughing, "that I should

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not show the white feather. But I must say that I do not hanker to meet a burglar in the flesh."

At that moment a slight noise was heard outside the drawing-room door. It was the faintest possible creak of a weak flooring-plank under a tread. Both the tenants of the sofa looked up and held their breath with ears on the full strain. Another board creaked, and presently, after a wait which seemed to last for ages, the acute ears of the Colonel detected a muffled tread on the carpet of the room in which they sat. There was a third party in the room. He was shod with wool and was moving noiselessly, and occasionally stopping as if to listen whether he was detected. The long expected burglar had come.

Constance fainted silently on the sofa. The Colonel, in whom the presence of danger had awakened his fighting instinct, rose from his seat and groped his way noiselessly towards the intruder, whom he could not see. He could, by this time, hear the scoundrel's breath coming and going, and instinct prompted him to hold his own. He would have given worlds for a weapon, but his stick was out of reach. He must give battle with his bare hands against one who probably had both pistol and knife. As he reflected, the intruder's foot came in contact with a stool. The Colonel hesitated no longer, with a sudden spring, he was upon the invader. He had thrown his weight into the spring, and felled the burglar to the ground, face downward. Then swiftly seizing his wrists, he held them in a grip of iron, twisted the arms upwards, and sat down on his back.

The burglar struggled, evidently striving to free one hand to use his knife; but the Colonel was now fighting for his life, his clutch of the wrists did not relax. When the struggle grew weaker, and Pitblado got back his breath, he hissed:

"You villain! If you don't keep your hands still, I'll drive my knife through your vitals. One motion, and you are a dead man."

The burglar made no reply. He panted, and sounds came from him which, to Pitblado's ear, sounded strangely like a sob. The Colonel derived a qualified satisfaction from his stillness.

If he had dared to loose his clutch of the fellow's wrists, he would have tried to throttle him; but the danger of a stab in the side, if he moved his hands to the burglar's throat, was too obvious. He thought of shouting for help. But that would have betrayed his presence in Constance's drawing-room after the lights were out, and her uncle was in bed. He would rather risk the knife than compromise her. He supposed that she had flown upstairs, whereas, in fact, she was in a dead faint on the sofa.

What was he to do? Was he to stay sitting on that burglar all night?

While he ransacked his brains for an expedient, a deep groan came from the man under him. The burglar gasped, and, at last, muttered:

"If you'll let me get up I'll show you——"

"Yes, I dare say," said Pitblado; "you'll show us lots of things. That cock won't fight. It's that I am going to show you the door of the other world."

The Colonel could feel a quiver go through the frame on which he sat. The burglar went on:

"I'll show you——"

"Haven't I told you that I am going to do all the showing?"

"If you'll only lift your weight off my lungs, so I can breathe——" said the burglar.

"You'd make use of your breath to drive a knife into me, wouldn't you? Not much. I'm just thinking how I shall kill you so as not to ruin the carpet——"

"Oh! oh! oh!" came from the prostrate body.

"What an unreasonable fellow you are," said the Colonel: "here I've let you live for ever so many minutes while I have been studying how to put you to death."

"Spare my life!" gurgled the burglar.

"Why should I?"

"I'll—I'll show you where the silver is."

"You'll show me," repeated the Colonel, puzzled.

"I will. I give you my honour I will."

"Oh, I see," said Pitblado: "you want to divide. It won't do."

"What more do you want?"

"I don't intend," said the Colonel, "that you shall have a single spoon."

"Take them all, take them all. Only let me keep Connie's christening cup."

"By George!" muttered Pitblado, "you're a romantic sort of chap to be a burglar."

It had by this time become manifest to the Colonel that the situation could not be prolonged for ever. He could not sit on the burglar's back till morning—the tension of the muscles of his arms was weakening. He must, somehow, get him to the nearest police-station. If he only had a ray of light!

At that moment a faint groan came from the sofa.

"Good Heavens!" muttered the Colonel: "he's got an accomplice."

Another sound from the sofa, and Pitblado saw that time was up. The new-comer might at any moment rush to the rescue of his accomplice. Pitblado had noticed a poker and shovel in front of the drawing-room grate. With a sudden spring he regained his feet, let the burglar go, leaped to the grate, and seized the poker.

A wild shriek came from the sofa, and simultaneously the Colonel struck a match. By its flare he saw, to his amazement, Connie sitting upon the sofa, and the burglar lying motionless on the floor. Had he killed the scoundrel?

Another match lit the gas, and Connie sprang to the burglar, took his head in her arms, and screamed to Pitblado:

"You have killed my uncle!"

"Your uncle? Why, that's the burglar."

"It's my uncle, and you have choked him to death. He's insensible. Oh, help me to bring him to."

The prostrate man revived, and, seeing Connie, muttered:

"Let him take all the silver, Connie, except your christening-cup. If he'll spare our lives, we'll not prosecute."

It did not take long to get Mr. Timmins on the sofa, and, as he was not hurt, a glass of wine, administered by the tender hands of Connie, restored him to his senses. His mind was still confused. He murmured:

"I have had a narrow escape, my poor Constance. I seemed to hear a noise in this room, and stepped in, when a man of gigantic strength leapt upon me, and was about to kill me, when you must have appeared and frightened him away."

"That is not quite exact, dear uncle. While you were struggling in the most heroic way with the burglar, Colonel Pitblado happened to pass, entered the house by the front door, which the burglar had left open, drove the fellow away and rescued you. Allow me to introduce you—Mr. Timmins, Colonel Pitblado."

G. P. Harrow.

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3. L L H U
4. D N I B R E U H G
5. L L I P O O V R E
6. D L E E S
7. K O R Y
8. M A H E S E T R N C

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NOTICE.—The £120 is offered to purchasers of the puzzle until the end of February, 1897, and orders from those taking part in the contest should be sent in as early as possible, but not later than Saturday, February 27th, 1897, when the awards will be made, the prizes dispatched, and the result communicated to all competitors by Monday, March 1st, 1897.

If you cannot solve all the puzzle words, do as many as you can, as the prizes will be awarded in order of correctness, and in cases of equality will be added together and divided; thus a prize is insured to every person sending in all eight solutions correct.

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Answers to Correspondents.

READERS of *Short Stories* will this week observe that we have commenced an Answers to Correspondents page. So many inquiries are made from time to time on all subjects, the replies to a large number of which are quite interesting, that we fancy the enjoyment obtained by readers from perusing this feature will justify the crowding out of a page of short story. *Pearson's Weekly* contains a column devoted to reviews of new discoveries and strange inventions. It is not possible to institute such a feature in *Short Stories*, but if readers are the originators of any invention which they may care to put before the public free of charge, let them send it along, and, if it is of sufficient general interest, a notice of it will appear on this page.

MEPHISTOPHELES. — A lifeboat costs twenty-seven shillings a week to maintain.

MAGGIE.—You are on the wrong track. Queen Victoria seldom, if ever, goes shopping. It is probably the Queen of Italy whom you have in mind. When she enters a shop, the doors are immediately closed, and the public excluded until she has left.

ANNOYED suffers from soreness after shaving.————Try the effect of a preparation formed by mixing glycerine and bay-rum in equal parts. Apply it immediately after your morning scrape.

K. L. AND OTHERS.—Farmer Hayseed's idea was: "I think I'll have a drink."

J. K.—Some time ago there was a great deal of talk about the possibilities of artificially creating rain storms, but the experiments do not appear to have been commercially successful. You can raise a storm yourself by telling your better-half that she will have to get along on one bonnet a year.

H. T.—Here is an idea for you, then: "Lunch Ready. You don't have to wait. We pay men to do that." I hope your restaurant will be a success.

L. S. T. (NEWPORT, MON.)—It is no uncommon thing for one species of bird to imitate the song of another, when they have the opportunity of developing their powers of imitation. The shrikes, for example, enjoy a remarkably retentive memory, and are able to reproduce the sounds emitted by other birds whose nests are near their own, although, on account of the frequency with which they interpolate the copied song with their own notes, their identity may be easily discovered.

E. G. Z.—It is no uncommon thing for second cousins to marry.

M. S. T.—Delighted to hear that "THE WRECKERS OF SCILLY" is so much appreciated in your part of the world. It really is a very excellent story, and well worth following up.

H. G. — There are 2,000,000 trade unionists in the United Kingdom.

K. L. T.—The biggest system of the kind in existence is the distribution of water power in London.

JESSIE wishes to induce me to start a campaign against match-making mammas. She appears to be of an independent spirit, and most strongly objects to the idea of a mother putting her daughters on show, as it were, like so many cattle, offering them to the highest bidder.————I really don't think that JESSIE has any real cause to complain in this direction. My sympathies are really with the mothers. Mothers-in-law are, as a rule, treated with far less respect than is their due. In their capacity as guardians and chaperons of their daughters, they place themselves in most delicate and uncomfortable positions in order to bring about results which their daughters, single-handed, could never accomplish—at least, except those of so independent a nature as JESSIE.

R. S. V. P.—Probably you mean the river Tinto in Spain. The stream petrifies the sand in its bed, and stones that by chance touch one another are rapidly united into one piece. It is impossible for fish to live in this water.

N.—The word "lady" literally means "loaf giver."

GUARD wishes to know which is the longest straight piece of railway line in the United Kingdom.————That between Thirsk and Northallerton on the North-Eastern Railway. It is between five and six miles in length.

G. P.—Theoretically speaking we ought to drink from one-third to two-fifths as many ounces of water as we weigh in pounds. That is to say, if you weigh a hundred and sixty-eight pounds you ought to drink from three and a half to four pints daily.

L. H. EDWARDS (DUBLIN). — I am delighted to hear that your four-months-old baby-girl already appreciates *Pearson's Weekly*. One of its missions is to keep people quiet and out of mischief.

MABEL has been married only twelve months. She married after a three-years' engagement, and thought at the time that her husband really loved her, but she writes to me in a heart-broken way to say that since marriage his affection has cooled considerably, for "he does not only forget to kiss me before breakfast, but he never thinks of kissing me at night. I am afraid that we are going to be even more unhappy, for Reggie says I'm silly, when I mention this to him."————Really I do not think you have much ground to go on in your complaint. Surely, a moderately affectionate farewell after breakfast on his leaving the house, and another on his return, should be sufficient guarantee of his sincerity. For, after all, you must remember that mere demonstrative affection of this sort is no criterion of the depth of love. If your husband has neglected you no worse than this, you are, indeed, a happy woman.

GERTRUDE TROTTER writes to say that she does not consider the key of the Jumbled Story "half such pleasant reading as the correct story published in full."————The publication of the complete story was dropped because it occupied too much space, and was objected to by the readers who did not enter for the competitions. However, G. T. will have no occasion to complain in the future, for the Jumbled Stories will in future be supplanted by another form of competition, which, I feel convinced, will prove as popular.

NEW preparations for the preservation of boots and shoes are always pouring into the market, but the really good ones are scarce. A bottled mixture produced under the peculiarly appropriate name of "Moonshine," seems to be quite a good thing in its way. It appears that oil is the chief constituent in its manufacture, yet it is so chemically treated that when applied to leather it rapidly dries and leaves a polish. In fact it does for your foot-covers what *Short Stories* does for your intellect.

MR. HENRY MARLES, of 72, Cobden Road, Brighton, is a man who is capable of seizing an opportunity. The recent development of affairs in Africa has resulted in his producing a capital little penny puzzle, consisting of a sheet of metal cut out in the shape of Africa and scored over with a number of slots through which are thrust the legs of a little lead lion—legs which are larger at the bottom than at the top. It is symbolic of the British lion in Africa. The object is to get him out.

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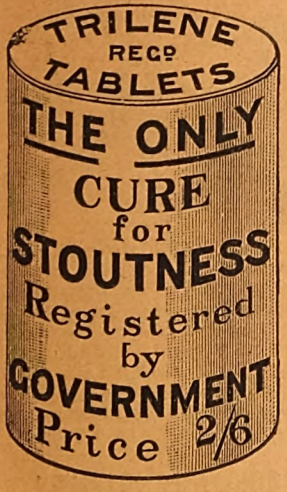

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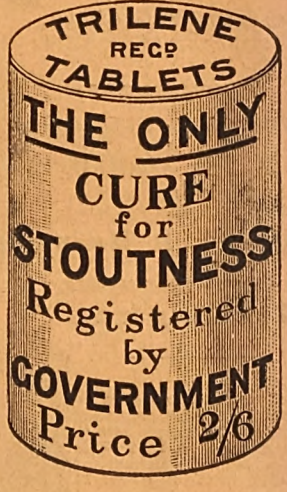

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87, Alexandra Road, Norwich.

"GENTLEMEN,—I have had some boxes of your Tablets for my wife, and she has derived great benefit from them.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Illustrated Family Novelist, November 30th, 1895, says: "A great many women who are plump by nature worry about their stoutness. However, there are some perfectly safe remedies for embonpoint, among them being the Trilene Tablets, which are not only safe, but absolutely beneficial to the general health, and speedily produce the desired effect."

MR. TAYLOR, Church Farm, St. James, Halesworth, says: "I have lost quite 2 stone since taking your Tablets."

"6, Brighton Terrace, Hull.

"MRS. JOHNSON has much pleasure in saying she has derived great benefit from your Tablets."

"3, Castle Road, Deal.

"MRS. J. PEARSON is glad to say she is much thinner."

Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.

MISS S. J. PRITCHARD says: "They have done me good. I am 21lb. lighter already."

"Bretton West, near Wakefield.

"MISS L. LANGFIELD has taken a box of Tablets, and is already 7lb. lighter."

MRS. HUTCHINSON, 46, Irwell Street, Widnes, Lancashire, writes: "I have taken three boxes and am reduced a stone."

A. D. BILLINGS, Bell Inn, Aldershot, writes: "Have derived great benefit already. Less in size and weight, and breathing greatly improved."

25, Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.

MISS M. FLAVELL says: "I have lost 2 stone, and am much better in health."

Extract from *Bury and Suffolk Times*, June 15th, 1894: "Miss Atherton sings and dances as piquantly as ever, and is a marvel of agility, considering how much flesh she has put on of late. Her friends should induce her to take a course of Trilene Tablets, about which I hear wonderful things. One portly acquaintance of my own by merely a few weeks' use of these little Tablets, has reduced his bulk perceptibly. I am assured the Tablets are harmless and tasteless, and that the Trilene Company in Finsbury Pavement, London, are doing an enormous and ever-increasing trade."

MR. GILLESPIE, 50, Chancer Road, Forest Gate, Essex, says: "I have lost just 3 stone."

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MR. JUBB, Chemist, says: "My customers speak highly of your Tablets."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.

MR. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17½ stone, and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

MR. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17 stone, was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15 stone."

Aspern, 29, King's Hall Road, Beckenham.

MISS S. WOODHOUSE writes: "I have much pleasure in stating that your Tablets are really a safe cure for stoutness; they have cured me, and I am a perfect figure now."

MRS. GIBBON, of Radford Cottage, Bitterne, says: "I have derived great benefit from your Tablets, especially abdominal."

The Lady, October 8th, 1896 (giving advice to a reader who complained of stoutness), says: "The Trilene Tablets help to reduce stoutness, if taken daily; they are made of purely vegetable ingredients, and are quite harmless."

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 426. FOR WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 27TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

IT

was said of the first Napoleon that one of the canons by which he regulated the correspondence of his high office was this: "A letter that is not answered answers itself." And in many instances this is, no doubt, true. "Silence," we say, "gives consent." Often, again, it means refusal. Much depends on the form of the appeal; and much on the relative positions of the two parties to the communication.

REALLY

business-like people, however, in business affairs, will seldom adopt any of these formulæ of indifference, whether of princely or popular origin. A neglected letter is, in some respects, like a neglected chill, or a neglected headache, or a neglected physical ailment of any kind. Each of these, indeed, is a message—a message from Nature. And it

DOESN'T

do to trifle with her communications. She is too powerful, and we are too puny; and, when our indifference ruffles her, she has a way of calling us angrily to account. A post-card will often answer a long letter: "A stitch in time saves nine," and attention to a slight physical ailment, or apparently trivial obstruction, may alike save unnecessary suffering and useless regret.

MATTER

in the wrong place, is a famous definition of "Dirt." Equally is it true (very often, at all events) of Disease. A sluggish liver, an impaired circulation or recurrent indigestion; a bilious attack or a sick headache; nervous disorders and functional irregularities—each of these is often simply caused by "Matter in the wrong place." Of each how often has one heard it said: "It really doesn't matter!" And yet they all do: they are "Matters that do matter!" They are Nature's *MESSAGES*; and one of the best specifics—one that is always found to *ANSWER*—is a timely purifying dose of **Beecham's Pills.** They are to be had of all Chemists; so that, for the purpose, at all events, of obtaining a supply, wherever you may happen to be

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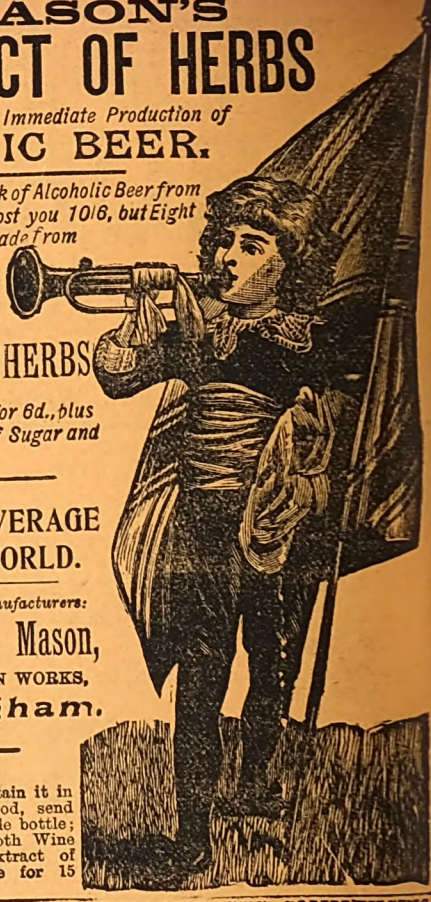

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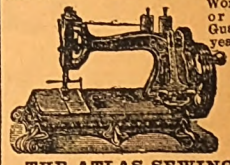

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EDITED BY ARTHUR PEARSON OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY

SHORT STORIES

No. 426] For the Week ending February 27th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

UNAWARES.

WHEN I was introduced to her, I was standing in the balcony of the swimming tank at Santa Cruz, watching the "greenery-yellery" water beneath, and the black human frogs awkwardly gambolling therein. I dislike being introduced to people at or in swimming tanks, but as Mrs. Richbody introduced her, I had to be civil. (Mrs. Richbody has a very good cook—much better than the chef at the hotel where I am staying.)

So I found her a chair, and we sat down.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw her hitch her chair a little closer to mine as she adjusted her skirts.

Before she had spoken six words I murmured to myself: "Ah, that explains it. You are a German."

"Explains what?" she asked sharply.

"You are a German," I repeated. "Pray go on. I am interested in your remarks."

"Most foreigners take me for French," she said.

I merely smiled, and dropped the ashes of my cigar into the upturned eye of my tailor in the tank below, who had had the impertinence to forward me his little account from the city.

"Most foreigners," she repeated.

Caroline frowned, and made a delicious little pucker in her white forehead. (I call her Caroline now; all this was five days ago.)

"The best blood you have is German," she said.

"I think not," I replied; "my grandmother was a Frenchwoman."

"So was mine," she said softly.

The silence was broken only by the barking of a human seal in the tank below—a poor imitation, and much more vulgar than the original.

At length Caroline: "I'm sorry you dislike the Germans."

"I don't. As individuals, I have many friends among them, but as a nation——" I blew a light whiff that vanished into thin air.

"You're not very entertaining or very complimentary; indeed, you're rather rude, and I think I'll go," she said.

She rose and gave her dress a shake.

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"Don't go," I said mildly. "I said nothing——"

"I agree with you," she answered cheerfully, and sat down again with a satisfied smile.

Now, I confess, that just for a moment I felt foolish. Never a man, never a child, and seldom a woman, has made me feel foolish. And this woman *had* made me feel foolish—for a moment. I was annoyed, and, I fear, showed it, for I gave a little start (I was so surprised at her audacity, you know), and dropped my lighted cigar into the swimming tank. It fell on the bald head of my tailor (Stultzwurzel), and made him call out. That was some satisfaction.

"I think we'd better go and take a turn on the beach," said I, rising; "the air seems warm and stuffy here."

"Not at all," she replied, settling back snugly and tapping the toe of a very small tan slipper with the parasol.

"It seems very comfortable here to me. But, perhaps, you suffer from headache?"

"No," said I; "that's not the trouble. My nose is out of joint."

I was proceeding to light a fresh cigar when she interrupted coolly:

"I don't like smoking, Mr. Legend."

I looked at her in amazement.

"But you are German," I said; "surely all Germans——"

"Have you ever been in Germany?" she asked.

Now here she had me again. No, I have never been in Germany, but I wasn't going to confess it without a struggle, so I evasively replied: "I have been in Schleswig-Holstein."

"That's hardly Germany" (this rather disdainfully).

"I'm glad to hear you confess it," said I; "I've always maintained that Schleswig-Holstein is a piece of Denmark which the Germans stole."

"It's false," she burst out with flashing eyes. "Ever since the time of Charlemagne, Schleswig-Holstein has been—but what's the use of arguing with you? You're prejudiced, with French blood in your veins, and you'll never appreciate the Germans."

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"I think more of them than I did ten minutes ago," said I, gazing at her admiringly. Her colour had risen with her excitement, and with the heel of that little tan slipper she was vehemently beating the floor.

"Thank you," she said, recovering her good humour. (There's nothing fetches a woman like a compliment.) "And, after all, Mr. Legend, it's a matter of perfect indifference to me what you think about the Germans."

"Quite so," said I. "But I like to get at the truth on any subject I investigate, and as you seem well posted, perhaps you'll let me come round this evening and get some more information from you."

"I don't know about that on such short acquaintance," she said. "Nobody's vouched to me for your respectability, and one meets all kinds of queer people at the seaside."

I pointed to Mrs. Richbody, who was on the floor just below us, anxiously watching her only boy take a swimming lesson.

"If that lady vouches for me will you let me come?"

"Of course; I'm staying at her house."

"Mrs. Richbody," called I.

"Yes," replied the anxious mother, with one eye on her darling.

"Am I respectable?"

"What?"

"Am I respectable?"

Little Algernon Richbody gave a yell as he lost his footing in two feet of water and disappeared. His mother screamed also, only louder, and I could get no attention until Algernon had been hauled up from the bottom and carried off howling to his dressing-room.

I hate small boys. What they were ever made for, I can't imagine. Small girls have some *raison d'être*. They may grow up to be pretty women.

Mrs. Richbody came panting up the stairs, and I repeated my question.

"Respectable? Why, yes; as much so as any of my cousins, I suppose," she said.

Caroline turned her head away quickly. I thought she even blushed, but she has such a fine colour, anyway, that I couldn't be positive of this.

"May I come to dinner this evening?" asked I humbly.

"Nobody's vouched to me for your respectability."

Mrs. Richbody glanced at Caroline and smiled. Caroline gazed steadily at the tank below, and I believe Stultzwurzel thought she was smitten with him, for he immediately attempted a double somersault dive and landed flat on his stomach. This idiotic caper splashed the green water all over the new coat he had just made for me, and I vowed I wouldn't pay him for a year.

"You told me yesterday you were going to Oakland this afternoon to attend Mrs. Moneyton's garden party," said my cousin.

"That was yesterday," said I.

"Then my chef is away for a week's holiday, and no dinner that Bridget could cook would be any attraction to you."

"You seem to think it's chiefly the dinner that brings me to your house," said I crossly, for by this time I was aware that Caroline was smiling—and not at the tailor.

"You've often said so yourself," replied my cousin in a plaintive tone. "I'm sure whenever you come I always try to have that white soup you like so much. But Bridget can't make it."

"Oh, confound—excuse me—bother your dinner," said I, now desperate; "I can get white soup—such as it is—at the hotel. I want to come and dine with you to—to study German."

"Get a grammar," suggested Caroline.

"One can't get the pronunciation from a book," said I. "To catch the true inspiration of that glorious tongue, one must have the living teacher."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Richbody doubtfully; "you certainly don't deserve to come, but I'll leave it to Caroline. What do you think, my dear?"

Caroline hesitated. My heart sank to my boots and I felt the queerest little dryness in my throat. The human seals stopped barking as if by pre-arrangement, and there came a moment of complete quiet, such as sometimes occurs amid the noisiest scene. In the silence I heard Caroline say softly, but very distinctly, "I think we might let him come."

As I said before, that was five days ago. And she now calls me Tom.

L. Du Pont Syle.

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MY FAMILIAR AND I.

I possess a Familiar. This is much more satisfactory than to be possessed by one, as some of my friends seem to be. I acquired my Familiar in India, where they are wiser than we in many things, though we do not believe it.

But how, or where, or when, I came by this person you will not care to hear, for you will smile at my preface as well as at my story. He showed me many strange things in this world and the other, and proved himself such an amusing and devoted friend that I would not have exchanged him for an angel. Since I became his owner, I have eschewed society to some extent, finding no one more entertaining than my invisible imp of darkness, but this evening the whim took me to return to some of my old haunts. A card for a reception at Mrs. X——'s lay on my dressing-table, and I rose and got into my evening clothes about half-past nine, much to my Familiar's displeasure.

"Why not take me?" he suggested. "If you will let me go, I will give you a rare treat. Listen—here's a bargain. Each person whom you see I will show you in a veritable scene in his or her past. Come, I've done nothing so good as this for you. It will pay you to take me! You will have a succession of surprises. You know you enjoy new sensations, and as for myself I have seen nothing of society here, and I doubt not I shall feel as thoroughly at home as if I were down below."

I took him. As he belonged to me, and was in a measure my slave, he would have been obliged to stay behind had I willed it otherwise, but, feeling in just the mood for the kind of entertainment he promised me, I acceded. I cherished few illusions about my friends, and I could dispense with what I had left. They are uncomfortable property, anyway.

The rooms were crowded, as usual. Mrs. X—— always has a crush. She is a pretty, plump little woman, with a caressing smile and—but why describe her? You know her, as does everyone. I made my way to where she stood, by a big palm, in a dainty white gown, which had, however, to my surprise, long sleeves to the wrist. I say to my surprise, for Mrs. X—— has a famous arm, if I might say so, and she is very proud of it.

"You are looking at my ugly sleeves!" she cried, with a beaming smile. I held her pretty fingers in mine as I greeted her. "Is it not wicked? That stupid John spilt a cup of hot bouillon on me at lunch, and my poor arm is frightfully scalded. It may be cruel, but I dismissed him. I simply cannot keep the clumsy creature after this last exploit."

Suddenly Mrs. X——, smiling, faded away, and I saw her in a *négligé* in her dressing-room, her white face distorted with fury. Her husband's hulking figure was just passing out of the door, which crashed loudly behind him. She turned up her sleeve slowly from the wrist. On its white surface were the purple marks of brutal fingers.

And then Mrs. X——, waving her great fan of snowy ostrich feathers, stood by me again.

The Familiar laughs. I hear him distinctly, but I——

"Are you ill?" asks Mrs. X—— solicitously; "pardon, but you seemed so white just then—perhaps the heat——"

"Yes, it is the heat," I reply hastily; "if you will excuse me one moment, I think I will go out in the air."

"I like society," said my Demon blandly in my ear; "let us go in society often, will you? I have not seen so many people I could take to my heart since we came over."

I made no reply. I fancied I was hardened and cynical enough to meet any such revelations with composure, if not, it was time I should be.

Returning to the drawing-rooms, I was buttonholed by my old friend S——. He was excessively gay, and looked prosperous. "Well, where have you kept yourself?" said he; "I want you to come down to Guildford and dine with me on Sunday. I tell you I have the sweetest wife and baby in the world. Want to show you the boy. Why didn't you marry, yourself? Oh! there's nothing like marriage, old fellow. Yes, the world uses me finely—making lots of money. Ta-ta till Sunday."

A moonlit sleeping-room. A little child crying long and loudly in its cradle. A woman's form lying, half-dressed, with flushed face, across the bed. A brown stream of brandy from an overturned decanter trickling across the carpet.

Not at present, S——. No marriage for me. And my Demon echoes sagely in my ear; "No marriage for you!"

What? There in the chair, talking to a bejewelled, bewigged old dame, is M——, stouter than of old, but with that same air of perfect rectitude, that expression of dignified frankness that is so engaging; and, after all, a bank manager should be a portly, solid-looking gentleman to inspire the trust and respect of depositors. I will go over and speak to him.

Before I can reach him, he is in a small, dark room with heavily-barred doors: the safe is open, he is fingering a pile of envelopes irresolutely; his face is sickly, yellowish, evil. So, so. The die is cast, and my dear M—— is no longer an honest man. . . .

No. I stop in disgust. I do not care to grasp his hand in mine. I will go home. I have had enough of my fellow-men. Bah! I loathe them all—all! Let me get out of this—the sooner the better.

"Oh, do not go home," pleads my Demon plaintively. "I was just beginning to enjoy myself so thoroughly! This is a great city, and I tell you I never met pleasanter people at home. Don't go yet, there's a good fellow!"

But I turn resolutely, sick at heart. In the hall I catch a glimpse of myself in the great mirror, and pause. I am ghastly white, which is not, perhaps, strange, and—*what!* . . .

She is lying prone on the polished floor, senseless from the blow of my cruel words, in the circle of light cast by the rose-shaded lamp, and I—I pause to look at her just one moment, and then I turn like a coward and steal away.

We got home somehow, my Demon and I. He has been trying to console me. He tells me it is much pleasanter here than in some places, but my pistol is lying temptingly close to my hand on the table, and I rather think before dawn that I shall have left life and, perhaps, my Demon both behind!

Annie Aldrich.

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Among my dearest memories of Italy is that of the evenings I used to spend in Venice with the Cavalier Cicogna, as he was known upon the stage. We usually sat in the garden of the Osteria until late into the night, sometimes *tête-à-tête*, sometimes in the company of old Captain Amati.

Here one could sit quite cool and comfortable, and, when the moon came up over the tall chimney-pots and its silver lines threaded the dense mass of leaves and tendrils and dallied with the bottle of dark Trentino which stood on the mottled marble before us, this very garden became a little world full of poetry. Then was the place well suited to the tales of the Cavalier Cicogna.

One which he had told us repeatedly, as was his custom, ran as follows:

"Are you familiar with Farli? No. Well, it does not lie on the regular route of tourists, and I am not surprised that you are not acquainted with it. But you know it by name, captain, do you not? And you have no doubt heard of Signor Campobassi—but only casually, eh? I knew him well. He was a very agreeable comrade, and it grieved us all to lose him. The ladies adored him, for he was a slender, finely-formed fellow, with the most beautiful eyes in the world, and a moustache, as if the Madonna herself had meant him for a tenor. We men liked him because we had in him a true friend, and one who always stood ready to help with his purse or his dagger, and who had no trace of haughtiness about him, although he was the favourite of the public. He was one of those exceptional men who have not an enemy.

"But I forgot. Farli is in the vicinity of Rome, at the foot of the Abruzzi Mountains, a small but rich and very flourishing town. It was in the fifties that I went thither with a newly-formed company.

"Farli had a very spacious new theatre. We pleased the public, did a thriving business, and, accordingly, were well suited to stay there. But it was our *primo tenore*, Signor Campobassi, who awakened the most interest. Our impresario smiled contentedly whenever he chanced to mention him, and said, with a knowing look: 'That was the best hit I ever made.' I can still remember well to what straits he had been put for a tenor. He refused to lay out much money for one and tenors, as a rule, are high in their prices. Then, one day, as we were sitting in the café, Campobassi appeared, inquired for the director, and asked him to try his voice. He said he was a peasant's son from the neighbourhood of Areggo, but even as a child he had had such an ear for music that he knew by heart all the airs he had ever heard. It was the opinion among his acquaintances that he could sing finely, and so he had thought that he might make his fortune in the opera. Now he had heard that Signor Mario was looking for a tenor, and so he had made haste hither to offer himself.

"Our impresario was a cunning fox and shook his head gravely at this. 'It would be a great deal of trouble to coach you,' he said. But Campobassi replied that on this account he would be content with a very small salary.

"Signor Mario still shook his head, but he took up his glass, contemplated for a while the dissolving bits of ice, and finally drank the remainder of his sherry with an air of decision.

"'Well, we will try it,' said he. 'Colleagues, if you have any desire to be present at the rehearsal, follow me.'

"We were all curious enough, so we started for the theatre in spite of the midday heat. There Campobassi sang a couple of airs from the most familiar operas, and the more he sang the more significantly did Mario wink at us. His fat, round face fairly shone and glowed for joy; nevertheless, at the end he said rather coolly: 'You will make us much work, Campobassi, but I will give you a trial.'

"As a matter of fact, the trouble he made us was very slight. He had such an extraordinary musical ear that he retained correctly the most difficult passages if they had been sung before him only once. In addition, he had a natural facility for acting, so that he was less awkward than many tenors of long experience. It is true his performance lacked artistic finish; but the crudities in his singing were atoned for by the stupendous "material"—a voice which surmounted everything and was yet of the purest and most beautiful quality. Such a tenor had not been heard for many a day in Farli, and people thronged the theatre only for the sake of hearing him. Campobassi was soon the idol of the

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Farlese. If two men were found quarrelling anywhere, one might be sure that Campobassi was the subject of the dispute; and if a maiden, lost in reverie, appeared to see nothing, one might stake one's life that she was all the while seeing and hearing Campobassi.

"One forenoon, after rehearsal, we were sitting under the arcades of the Piazza dei Signori, drinking our coffee. We had been chatting about everything possible and impossible, and one of us at last turned the conversation to the subject of favourite parts. Each one named his own. I, 'Doctor Bartolo'; Pedrocchi, 'Rigoletto'; Mario said jokingly that his favourite opera was the one in which he had least to do; Campobassi was silent.

"At length we pressed him to confess his own preferences, but he shrugged his shoulders and replied, laughing: 'My favourite part? That is probably my own secret.'

"'No secrets amongst colleagues,' grumbled Pedrocchi.

"'No secrets?' was Campobassi's answer. 'Well, perhaps I will play you my favourite part to-night.'

"'Oh, the *Trovatore!*' we exclaimed, for we were to bring out the opera on that day for the first time in Farli. Campobassi shrugged his shoulders again, and we broke off the conversation at this point, as our *prima donna* came towards us under the arcades.

"On the evening of the same day, the *Trovatore* was placed on the boards. All that Farli possessed of aristocracy and distinction was present at the theatre that night. Not a seat was vacant. The great expectations which were cherished concerning Campobassi's performance were not disappointed. Here he could give himself free rein, and his voice rang through the house, not like a tenor—no, like a choir of tenors. The applause would not cease, and Campobassi was called out repeatedly.

"At last came the Stretta. Now the audience would surely be thrown into ecstasies; and we had not deceived ourselves. Wreath after wreath was flung from the boxes, all the people stamped their feet, clapped, and cried '*Viva!*' and '*Da Capo!*' Finally, Campobassi, smiling, made a gesture to signify that he would repeat the Stretta. The storm was laid, and it grew suddenly so still in the theatre that one could have heard the buzzing of a fly. We all stood there behind the scenes, and beheld Campobassi step forward to the footlights, a departure from custom which did not strike us oddly, for tenors are allowed many liberties.

"But what was that? He was saying something in an undertone to the orchestra, and the musicians, who had already begun the opening bars, broke off in their playing. Instead of the notes of the Stretta, we heard Campobassi speak—speak words which made the blood stiffen in our veins, which threw such a spell over us that we were unable to stir from the spot, long after Campobassi had finished his speech.

"I can remember it as vividly as if it had all happened yesterday. 'Honoured patrons and citizens of Farli,' he began—and probably at this point he made one of his consummately graceful bows—'I thank you for the affection you have shown for me; the more, since this is my farewell appearance. After to-night you will, I fear, hardly care to hear me again. I beg you will all remain quietly in your seats; for then, upon my honour, not a hair of anybody's head shall be molested. Any movement can only lead to mischief, for my men are patrolling the corridors and all the exits are guarded; nor can help come to you from the direction of the stage, for the enlarged chorus which has to-night sung so valiantly consists, for the most part, of my own people, and they also are well furnished with weapons

"I am Fra Angelo, whom some call a brigand, and whose name is certainly well known to you. I, too, am armed, as you see, and these pistols are well loaded. But far be it from me to inflict any injury upon you who have shown me so much consideration—my word for that. At this very moment a member of the chorus has already taken our honoured impresario in charge; that I shall not exact tribute of my colleagues you will naturally infer. On the other hand, honoured patrons, I have often provided entertainment for you, and it is on that account justifiable that I should require some recompense from you—more especially since our impresario has paid me an honorarium which my sense of shame will not permit me to name. So have the kindness, good people, to deliver your watches, rings, chains, purses, and the like with all alacrity to those who will now pass from seat to seat.

"The exits are guarded, as I have remarked before, and the more generously and quietly you perform your part the quicker will this business be accomplished. In the meantime I will ask the orchestra to play some favourite airs, which may serve as an agreeable distraction for those who have discharged their obligations.'

"In truth, the orchestra did commence to play, and, as we learned later, everything passed off as Fra Angelo had wished. As a matter of fact, all his threats had been superfluous, for the name of the famous bandit had alone sufficed to render everyone helpless.

"Fra Angelo supervised the entire transaction from the stage, said a few words of thanks when it was ended, then turned towards the flies. As he passed us he clapped me laughingly on the shoulder and said: 'Did I not tell you, Cicogna, that I should play my favourite part to-night?'

"With that he vanished, and we rushed terrified out into the open air. The audience streamed out at the doors in unwonted haste, the first among whom had already summoned the guardians of the so-called public safety. A few moments later troops trotted through the streets of the town, but of Fra Angelo and his men not a trace was to be found."

Emile Peschkau.

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POST-CARD COMPETITION.

No. 6.

£2 2s. is offered to the reader who sends in, on the back of a post-card, the best four-line verse, each line ending respectively in "Meant," "Tories," "Bent," "Stories." Competition closes on Monday, March 1st.

POST-CARD COMPETITION RESULT.

No. 4.

£2 2s. has this week been forwarded to Mr. M. C. Craney, 129, Lillington Street, Pimlico, S.W., whose post-card bore the anagram: "Pearson do tip it to M.C.C."

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SUMMARY.

Prologue.—The Hon. Ernest Wentworth lies dying at his estate, Chisholme Park. His wife, a light, pleasure-loving creature, falls under the mesmeric influence of Armand Lemaitre, who, by force of will power, compels her to rob her husband. While in the act of extracting a bundle of notes from a bureau she is interrupted by the appearance of her husband, who enters the room in his bed-clothes, silently points at her with his fore-finger, and then falls down dead. She shortly after leaves for Paris to join Lemaitre.

Nineteen years elapse. Edith Wentworth, who was adopted when a baby by Lady Hilton, is living at Hillcrest Lodge. Among the guests for Christmas are Cécile Delisle, a school-friend of Edith's, Professor Queech, Jack Heathcote, and Captain Arthur Musgrave. At York, on the journey down from King's Cross, Cécile observes that the carriage next to theirs contains a man and a woman. At their destination, a few miles further on, she notices a strange man there alone.

Lemaitre, alias Dr. Danton, arrives at the house as a guest, and exercises an influence over Edith that arouses the jealousy of Arthur, who strikes Danton, and agrees to fight a duel.

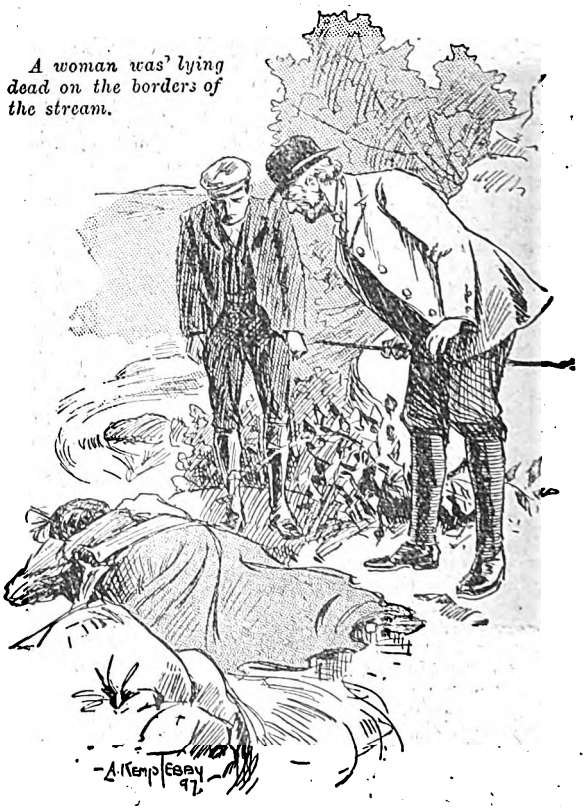
CHAPTER III.

Cécile and Inspector Wheeler.

There was little doubt that a murder had been committed. The whole county of Yorkshire was in agitation about it. It was the theme of the local and of the London papers alike. Scotland Yard was at its wits' end. The whole thing was as mysterious as possible.

Here is an extract from one of the Yorkshire papers when the body was first discovered:

"Everyone living anywhere in the neighbourhood of either York or Seaborough knows Thorgill Beck. It is one of the biggest, the most dismal, and the most desolate of the great ravines which cut up the bleak, flat wolds into gullies between York and Seaborough. In it there appears to be only one inhabitant, the farmer, Wilson, whose finding of the body has now put his name into everyone's mouth. His little farm (if that can be called a farm which consists of little more than a thatched cabin and a few patchy acres holding sheep of the kind known as black-faced half-breeds) fills the valley. The farmhouse stands at a point not far from the spot where the piers of masonry and iron girders of the railway viaduct come down from a considerable height into the semi-darkness of the ravine. Assisted by his thrifty wife and a couple of young sons, Farmer Wilson manages to eke out a living by his half-yearly trips into the outer world behind a flock of the 'half-breeds' and his two sagacious collies. The gully is as wild and inhospitable as can be. Through it flows, from west to east, Thorgill Beck, a black, impetuous streamlet, usually strewn with leaves scattered upon its rough waters by the winds which howl down the echoing cleft. In the depths of the hollow, which is the habitation of the bittern, snipe, and wild duck, the vegetation is unusually rank, consisting of hazel-bushes and holly-trees, while over the banks of the stream droops the weeping willow. A few hardy firs, intermingled with an occasional bright-hued spruce, straggle up the slopes; but as the softer turf merges into the heather of the bleak moorland above, all trace of other vegetation dies away, and the brown and purple ling stretches away for miles over



A woman was lying dead on the borders of the stream.

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the wolds in one unbroken expanse of dull colouring, which wraps hill and dale in the same neutral tint.

"It was early on Christmas morning, on coming out to look after the sheep, that Farmer Wilson's youngest son made the ghastly find. He ran back and roused his father with the intelligence that a woman was lying dead on the borders of the stream. The farmer immediately went out and found the body lying half in and half out of the swollen and angry rivulet. On drawing her higher up the bank he found the head and face a mere featureless mass of broken bone and flesh, so that even her nearest relative would have been unable to recognise the lady. It was plain, however, from the character of her dress, that she was not a woman of the lower class, though, on the other hand, she had no jewellery upon her person. A handkerchief in the pocket of her torn and bedraggled dress bore the initials 'J. L.' The lady's neck was broken, as well as one leg and one arm.

"It is said that Scotland Yard is at present quite unable to account for the presence of the woman in Thorgill Beck. The broken and excoriated condition of her body may be explained on several hypotheses. She may have leapt into the streamlet higher up the Beck, and been dashed by the raving torrent against the rocks as it bore her down before depositing her on the land; or she may have been first murdered and then thrown into the Beck from its banks; or, again, she may have leapt, or been thrown, from the high railway viaduct above—though this supposition certainly seems wild. It has been discovered that there is no trace of poison in her stomach; that she was not shot; that there are no marks about the body pointing to the commission of a murder. There is, indeed, a deep cut all round her throat; but this has apparently been caused by the collar of her dress eating into the enormously swollen flesh of the throat, puffed out by her immersion in the water. This tragic affair remains, therefore, for the moment wrapped in perfect mystery."

So said the *Seaborough Post* in its issue of the 30th of December.

It was not till the fifth day of the new year that Cécile Delisle's eyes fell upon this report. She always had a liking for the reading of such details in the newspapers, and would often sit for hours over a few lines of a report telling of the tragedy of some life. Then, with the left eye quite shut, and the other looking far away with a strange intensity, she would grow forgetful of everything around her, till someone roused her from her reverie.

For the past few days she had been distracted by the great ball, and the whirl of gaieties at Hillcrest Lodge, and had not read a paper. She had put aside several, however, as they came in, with the intention of absorbing their contents when she found time. The ball was on the 3rd, and on the morning of the 5th she sat alone in the library, reading.

As soon as she had got to the end of the article in the *Post*, she rose, stood for a minute with her pretty brows knit, walked rapidly upstairs, along a corridor, and stopped at Lady Hilton's boudoir.

"Come in!" cried Lady Hilton in answer to her tap.

Lady Hilton sat before the glass, while a maid behind her combed down the long white hair.

"Why, you, Cécile, dear?" she said, drawing Cécile to her with her arm round her waist. In an incredibly short time the old lady had grown to love the girl.

"I want to know—something," said Cécile. "Tell me—what is the meaning of 'Scotland Yard'?"

"Scotland Yard, dear? Why, what a question! Isn't that where all the policemen and people live, Mary?"

Mary combing down the silvery fleece, said:

"Yes, my lady, I b'lieve so."

"That is it then, dear," said Lady Hilton. "The policemen live there."

"And the detectives?" asked Cécile.

"I should imagine so, dear. But why?"

"Nothing. I was reading about it, and wanted to know. Where is it?"

"In London, I think. It *is* in London, isn't it, Mary?"

"Yes, my lady."

"It is in London, dear."

On the opposite side sat Cécile.

"I thought so," said Cécile, "but I wanted to be sure. Good-bye."

She dropped a kiss on Lady Hilton's cheek, and was gone.

She returned at once to the library, took paper, and wrote:

Sirs,—I cannot write fluently English for a long time without effort, and do not mean to try. But if you send a detective to the over address where I dwell now, I think I can tell you something of the affair of Thorgill Beck which will interest you particularly.

Yours truly,
Cécile Delisle.

She addressed the letter to "The Detectives of Scotland Yard," put on a stamp, and went and dropped it in the letter-bag in the hall.

All that day and the next she was unusually silent, and Jack Heathcote, who came to her with the proposal that she should join a party going out skating on the lake in the park, received an answer which rankled in his bosom for hours.

"Englishmen have no idea what skating means," said Cécile.

"No—I suppose not—that is—no, I suppose that is so," stammered Heathcote. "In that case I shall stay behind."

"No, do not stay. There is Edith going, you see—and Captain Musgrave—and the Dr. Danton—and the Hon. Lily Grandcourt, and Lieutenant Pendragon; and there is Miss Newton looking toward you to be her escort. You are—what you call it?—'smitten' a little with Miss Newton, I think?"

"Ah—well—hardly that, you know. Fact is, I always had a fancy for Celtic ladies—French people, you know; and I think, if ever I marry——"

"Go—do," said Cécile. "Miss Newton is waiting for you. The Professor Queech cannot skate: you must take his place this once."

Jack moved off to Miss Newton, and Cécile took up her newspaper and walked to the quiet brown library.

She had not been sitting there half-an-hour, when a footman entered with a card. Cécile looked on it, and saw: "Inspector Wheeler, Detective Department, Scotland Yard."

"Let him in," she said.

She arranged two chairs, one on each side of a small table, and immediately afterwards the inspector was ushered in.

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He was a big, heavy man, with a clean, fresh face, thoroughly Saxon in colouring and cut. He was dressed in plain clothes, a brown tweed; and sat heavily in the easy-chair, twirling his hat.

On the opposite side sat Cécile, with her elbow on the table, her thumb under her chin, and her forefinger supporting her temple.

She began:

"Have you found out anything about the affair of Thorgill Beck?"

"Little or nothing, miss."

"You come from London now?"

"No, miss: from Seaborough. I was sent down to look into this matter, you know. They telegraphed to me from Scotland Yard that you might have information for me. That is why I am here."

"First of all, you will have some lunch, perhaps?"

"Thank you, no, miss. I have just had something."

"Very well. Then we will go into this affair together."

Inspector Wheeler smiled a little to himself. His intention was to obtain information, not to "go into the affair" with a young lady.

"You say you have found out 'little or nothing,'" Cécile went on. "What does that mean to say?"

"Well, you know, we have formed some sort of opinion about the case. But nothing more."

"You have seen the body?"

"Oh, yes."

"And where is it now, the body?"

"Why, buried, of course."

"So soon; in this cold weather? But I should like to have seen it!"

Inspector Wheeler's eyes opened wide. At her first question he had discerned that this was no ordinary pink-and-white young lady, but her *penchant* for seeing dead bodies surprised him.

"You are surprised, then?" said Cécile. "But why? A lady is not necessarily of wax, I think. I have seen dead bodies, many. You know the Morgue in Paris? I have seen them there. Twice, when I was a child at a convent school, I ran away to go to the Morgue. You should not be surprised."

"Well, miss, it is of no consequence. If you will tell me what information you have——"

"But first—is it too great a secret to tell me what 'opinion' you have arrived to?"

"Of course," said Inspector Wheeler, "it was either a murder or a suicide; and the fact that the body was robbed leads us to suppose that it was a murder."

"'Robbed,' you say?"

"Yes, miss."

"Of what?"

"Ah, that we don't know. But she was a lady, you know, her dress showed that; and yet there was not a single piece of jewellery found on her."

"But look at me," said Cécile; "I am a lady, yet I think you will not see a single piece of jewellery on me."

"Well, that is true, miss," said the Inspector ponderingly. "Of course, it is only a theory, you see. We are not sure that she was robbed."

"You *may* be sure, however," said Cécile quietly; "for she certainly was."

"*You* know that, miss?"

"Yes—I know."

"How, miss?"

"She had on a ring, a locket, a bracelet, and a gold watch, which have disappeared. Therefore I conclude, with certainty, that she was robbed."

"But, good Heavens, miss," cried Inspector Wheeler, "how do you know all these details? Did you know her when alive?"

"No. I *think* I *saw* her once, when alive; but only for a moment. I did not notice any of her jewellery. The details of the ring, the locket, the bracelet, and the watch I gather from reading the published facts."

"Well, that's more than any of us have been able to do, then. You ought to be a detective, miss."

"All detectives should be French," said Cécile.

The Inspector smiled.

"And they should all be women," proceeded Cécile.

The Inspector chuckled.

"And they should all, from childhood, be trained in a convent, where they rub with nobody but women," went on Cécile.

The Inspector roared with laughter.

When his merriment was over, he said:

"But about these rings and things—are you sure of what you say?"

"Quite."

"Then how, miss?"

"You had the lady's body in your hands," said Cécile. "You know that she was married."

"Oh, there is no doubt of that."

"Married without a wedding ring?" she asked, with lifted eyebrow.

"Ah, but that is no proof, miss, that she had it on at that time. Women, for instance, may pawn a wedding-ring."

"I know. But this lady had on a rich and fashionable dress. And she would have pawned her locket, or her bracelet, before pawning her wedding-ring. She had not, in fact, any pressing need of money."

"Well—I suppose you are right. But however did you know of the bracelet—and the—the locket? And—the watch?"

"Read this." Cécile handed him a paper some days old, and pointed to a sentence. The Inspector read:

"The fourth finger of the left hand as well as the right wrist were nearly bare of flesh."

"Yes," said the Inspector, "the fact is true enough as stated there. But the whole body was bruised by the rocks, you know. And it is only natural that one part should be more bruised than another."

"But the *peculiarity*, Mr. Inspector," said Cécile, leaning forward, "of those two parts being mentioned *together* as being specially bruised. The parts on which one wears the wedding ring, and on which one wears a single bracelet. One naturally concludes that the ring and the bracelet had something to do with the bruising—*if* she had on a ring and a bracelet. But we have already proved by a different line of thought that she did have on a ring. Therefore, Mr. Inspector, we must conclude that she had on a bracelet."

"Yes, miss—I see what you mean. I see it. That is certainly very clever thinking——"

"As for the locket," Cécile went on, "I can't think, really, how anyone could not guess that. She certainly did wear a locket. Think of that deep cut into the swollen neck. The papers say it was caused by the flesh closing over the neck of the dress. But a woman, surely, never could have thought so absurdly. The neck of a dress would never have had that effect. The deep cut was caused by a *string* tied round the neck, and something, you may be sure, hung by that string. That something was a locket."

"How do you know, miss?"

"Because I am a woman. I saw the lady, you know. She was French; if I know anything of people from their look she was, or had been, an actress. She had a light character. She was fond of jewellery. It was a piece of jewellery, a locket—certain."

"And how do you know she had a watch?"

"It is clear, Inspector, that *you* are not a woman!" laughed Cécile. "Don't I tell you she was fond of jewellery? That she had on a valuable bracelet? The first thing a woman fond of jewellery buys is a watch. If she has on rings, lockets, bracelets, you may be sure she had a watch before any of them. *Undoubtedly* the murdered woman had a watch."

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"Well, miss, you beat everything I ever heard," said the Inspector. "You know, then, that she was murdered?"

"Don't you?"

"I suppose so, now you have proved that she was robbed."

"But she was not robbed by the same person who murdered her," said Cécile.

"No? And how do you know *that*, miss?"

"It seems to me so evident! And evident from two quite separate considerations. In the first place, a person who murders another in the open air, and then robs that other, does it in a hurry, *always*. But this lady was not robbed in a hurry, you see."

"Is that so, miss?"

"But yes—it is so. One knows that from the fact of the handkerchief been found by you in her pocket—the handkerchief marked 'J. L.' The robber must have searched her pocket surely; he must have found the handkerchief, and taken it out, and finding it of no value, he actually took the trouble to replace it in the pocket. He was not a murderer."

Cécile, as she spoke, had that far-away look of scrutiny in the right eye, the left being almost closed, her face perking upward.

"Yes, miss—that certainly seems sound," said Inspector Wheeler. "I follow you at every point. And what is the other consideration, miss, by which you know that the murderer was not the same man as the robber?"

"The cut round the neck!" said Cécile, "the finger bare of flesh, the wrist bare of flesh. The string supporting the locket, which has disappeared, must have remained round the throat for some time after death in order to give time for the neck to swell round it. The finger, too, and the wrist must have had time to swell, for it was the effort to get the ring and bracelet off which tore away the flesh. She was robbed many hours after she was murdered."

"I follow you, miss. But, in that case, how do you know that she was murdered at all? She may have jumped into the streamlet of her own accord, mayn't she?"

"From where?" asked Cécile, with a quick glance at the Inspector.

"From the bank of the streamlet, miss, or from—from the railway viaduct."

"Not from the *bank*," answered Cécile, again with the far-away look. "for you say 'stream*let*,' all the papers say 'stream*let*.' 'Let,' I think, means 'little,' and 'stream*let*' means 'little stream.' The 'beck' is not a great rushing river. It would crush and bruise a body thrown into it from the bank, among the rocks in its course. But it would not have the power to snap the limbs. It could not break the neck."

"True enough," mused the Inspector, "true enough. But may she not have jumped from the railway viaduct?"

"Yes, that is where she came from, hence the broken limbs. But she did not *jump*. Do not think that. She was *thrown*—by a very great force—by a very strong man."

"You are quite sure of that?"

"Quite sure of *that*. It is perfectly clear. People, you see, when they are about to commit the suicide by leaping from a great height, leap *downwards* more than *outwards*. It is of the downwards that they are thinking. That is their aim. But this lady was shot far outwards—horizontally."

"I should like to hear your reason for thinking that, miss?"

"She was found near the wall of the viaduct, was she not?" said Cécile, "and she was half in and half out of the water, I think? But that was not the *position* and the *place* where she first fell into the ravine! She was *carried* there, from farther up, *by the stream*."

"How do you arrive at that, miss?"

"Oh, but that is clear, Mr. Inspector. Consider the swollen condition of her whole body, of every part of her, of her neck, her fingers. This was caused by the water. The *whole* of her must have been at one time under the water, and there for hours during the long night. The streamlet in bearing her down towards the viaduct must have jammed her against a rock, and kept her swinging there, *all* of her immersed for hours. But before morning she got free, and was flung half up on the bank. The point at which she first touched the stream was, therefore, a good way up from the viaduct. So she did not jump. She was *thrown* by a very strong man. She was murdered!"

Cécile looked round upon the Inspector, and smiled a sweet smile.

"Well, miss, all I can say is," said Mr. Wheeler, "that you have given us great assistance in this matter. The difficulty is to lay our hands on the murderer and the robber."

"The *robber*, at any rate," said Cécile, "is easily found."

"You don't mean Farmer Wilson, miss?"

"Yes, I mean him," nodded Cécile.

"Well, do you know, I had that very thought myself? But I assure you that you are wrong there. I have been to Thorgill Beck, you know, and seen Wilson. He is a most harmless, decent fellow—one of the religious sort. Of course I pumped him well, without accusing him straight out. But he hasn't the things, I assure you."

"Does no one live in the Beck but him?"

"No one, miss."

Cécile knit her brows.

"*Some* one has them, you know," she said.

"Well, that we will think out later on. Meanwhile will you tell me the actual information you have to give, of which you wrote to Scotland Yard?"

Cécile briefly told him of what she had seen in the train on the Christmas Eve—the woman draining the brandy-flask in the train, the bent back of the man in the waiting-room with the blood-red hairs of the rug on his light-coloured coat, the sound like a scream as the train dashed over the wolds in the falling snow, and the dark object that seemed to rush past the carriage window on the outside. Then she told of the journey's end; how at Seaborough she had looked into the window of the carriage which the French lady had occupied, and found it empty; then looked again, and seen a squat, heavy man, with bronzed face and long goat beard, in mean clothes, stand as if by magic there.

This was her story.

"Do you think," asked the Inspector, "that the big man who was with the lady could have got out at the little station between York and Seaborough without your seeing?"

"Yes—he may. And yet it is strange, too. I was not looking out, I think. But I was sitting near the window; I should have seen."

The Inspector rose to go, and bowed. Cécile held out her hand.

"Good-bye," she said. "You are sure you will not have some lunch?"

Mr. Wheeler declined, and retired backwards.

"And, Inspector," she called after him, "look out in your search for a *very* strong man—an unusually strong man! And get that locket—I know it will guide you." Then she added to herself: "Or, I think *I* shall get that for you."

Mr. Wheeler bowed and was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

The Duel.

Professor Queech found himself involved in a desperate affair. For the first time for forty years he felt that he was being distracted from the study of musical sounds. A hundred times a day he mopped with his handkerchief the beads of sweat on the top of his hairless scalp. Miss Newton, observing him, thought that he was screwing up his courage to the proposing point, but a far more momentous matter it was which was agitating the Professor—a matter which involved the life or death of two men.

Danton, not finding anyone else handy, had asked the

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Professor to be his second. The Professor had first been astounded, then indignant, and then had begun to preach; but, seeing the thing inevitable, had been attracted by the novelty of the situation, had felt his own self-importance inflated, and finally, with many murmurs, consented. He, the man of art and of science, and of peace, in his old age, was taking part in an illegal act.

So when Harry Pendragon presented himself on behalf of Captain Arthur Musgrave before Dr. Danton, Danton referred him to the Professor. And many were the formal interviews between Lieutenant Pendragon and Professor Queech.

"The final question to be settled between us," said Pendragon, at their last interview in the conservatory, "is the question of weapons."

"Ah, just so—just so," answered the Professor, mopping his scalp.

"You are the challenging party, you know," said the soldier, "*you* choose."

"Well, now—well—let me see," said the Professor, looking sideways and downwards through the corner of his eyes, "the question is, of course, which weapon is the least dangerous?"

"I cannot help you in your decision, sir."

"Well, well—no—I suppose not. This is a deplorable affair, Mr. Pendragon!"

"Pray, choose ——"

"A deplorable affair, sir. Between us now, talking as friends, can't we do something——?"

"I am afraid you are wasting both breath and precious time, sir," said the officer coldly. "To say that an affair is deplorable hardly makes it less so. Pray choose."

"Swords, now—cold steel—that I consider a most dangerous, a most dangerous weapon——"

"Do I understand you to choose swords, then? Very well, say swords."

"No, no; pray be not hasty, sir! I was remarking that nothing could be more hurtful than a weapon like the sword. The ingenuity of man in that respect has been appalling. There have been two-handed swords, double-edged swords, swords of every curve and calibre. With regard to two-edged swords, I can tell you a fact not, I believe, generally known——"

"But that is not the point——"

"No, sir; the edge, the edge. Two-edged swords, now——"

"Is it swords, then, Professor? All right, I agree."

"No, sir, I cannot but consider you precipitate in this matter. I did not say swords. Pistols, now——"

"All right——"

"The pistol. No one can deny that the pistol is a most deadly and diabolical contrivance. And here again the ingenuity of man has displayed itself——"

The Lieutenant beat his cane against the balcony with impatience.

"Professor, do you choose swords or pistols? I cannot stay here all day. We shall be observed. It must be one thing or the other."

"Well, say pistols—say pistols," cried the Professor in desperation. "The pistol is an engine that may miss its aim; the sword cannot."

Pendragon bowed, and walked away.

But both the seconds were equally inexperienced in the arrangements of duelling details. At nearly the last moment it was discovered that no one had thought of procuring a doctor to attend the spot. It was Professor Queech who remembered it. He ran at once to find Pendragon.

"Lieutenant," he said, "we cannot let them fight without a doctor, you know."

"No, certainly—that is a good thought," said the other. "What is to be done?"

"A doctor from Seaborough, now——" suggested the Professor.

"We mustn't think of that, sir! Remember that this is an illegal act in this country, and there are four people already in the know. We cannot admit any strangers. My principal would not hear of it."

"Then what are we to do? This may be a lucky occurrence. Here is the very loophole we might have sought out of this deplorable affair."

"It is singular that you should still be thinking of loopholes, Professor Queech!" said Pendragon; "our principals are not children, but men in earnest. With regard to the doctor business I think we had each better have a talk with our principal himself. I shall go now to the captain; you go to Dr. Danton; and presently we can compare notes."

It was then near midday. The duel was to take place at four in the afternoon.

* * * * *

All this time Cécile's brows kept knitting, knitting. What was there in the air? Those secret talks between Danton and the Professor, between Pendragon and Arthur, and, above all, between the Professor and Pendragon were all duly noted by those eyes that saw everything. The Professor and Pendragon! Had the hussar, then, suddenly taken an absorbing interest in the theory of musical sounds?

She knitted her brows. She looked thoughtfully upwards through one eye, but there was no clue to guide her to the truth.

She had a journey in her head, and on the first sunny day, when the frost was biting keenly in the pure air, she stood suddenly over Edith, where she lay reading a novel on a couch, bent down and kissed her.

"Bye! I am going to Seaborough!" she said.

"Cécile, dear! Why, how sudden!" cried Edith, sitting up. "And how *very* old-maidish you look in that broad seal cape, and those—you dear!—those old, torn gloves! If it were not for the sealskin cap, no one would suppose you a girl of twenty! You look like a little, dear, old Russian old maid—sweet, sweet Cécile!"

There was a long lovers' kiss, and then Cécile tore herself away and said:

"Yes—I am going—to Seaborough. One will be back soon to one's own love! The trap and John are waiting in the cold for me. Bye!"

"But what for, darling?"

"Nothing. Amuse yourself with the—you know who, I think—till I come——"

"Oh, here, Cécile, I say." Edith was up, and rushing after her in a moment. "Darling, what do you think he said to me just now?" She whispered into Cécile's ear, and they both laughed.

"Why does the goose not say that he loves you and be over?" said Cécile. "He lacks *la spontanéité!*"

"But, Cécile, he has known me for so short a period. One must have time, love."

"Bah! A soldier should be bold and abrupt. If he waits long, then will the huge doctor carry you off, wholly."

"Sh—h—h! you make me shudder, dear."

"My Edith! poor little one!" Cécile looked at her for a moment with a mother's pitying eyes, then waved her hand, and ran down the stairs to the hall.

As she entered the trap she saw Jack Heathcote standing a little way off on the lawn, eyeing her with hungry eyes. She called him with her hand. Jack came running up.

"You would like, I think, to come with me to Seaborough?"

Jack said a quick "Oh, rather!" to his knowing heart, and climbed to her side in the trap.

The horse began its run to Seaborough.

"You will have to spend some hours by yourself in Seaborough, waiting for me," said Cécile when they were halfway. "You will find it dull, I think."

"I? Not at all," answered Jack; "but are you going anywhere, then?"

"Yes—I am going on a short railway travel. You must

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not say anything of it to anybody at the Lodge. I have a reason for wishing it to be a secret."

"Oh, very well, quite so. But mayn't I come too?"

"No, sir."

And so Jack was left alone at Seaborough station, and Cécile sped alone westward in a train, until she reached the small station midway between Seaborough and York. Here she got out, and asked the station-master:

"Where can I get a carriage for the hire?"

The station-master sent with her a porter to a little tavern, where she soon procured a trap.

Having mounted on it, she said to the driver:

"How many miles to Thorgill Beck?"

"What, where the murder was done?" said the man.

"Yes."

"A matter of about nine mile, I should think."

"How long does it take?"

"There and back?"

"Yes."

"I could do it for you inside three hours."

"Very well. So we will be back here by half-past one." She looked at her watch. "Make your horse put his feet to the ground. I will pay you double."

They set out—through the town—then out upon the bleak and bitter wolds, Cécile's chin buried in her fur, her face screwed up shrinkingly at the bleak and parching wind. It was a hard and bold journey for her to take. And why did she take it? She hardly knew. Her stubborn, inborn inquisitiveness, and some deep instinct or presentiment which she could not fathom led her on.

The trap drew up at last at the top of a steep footpath covered over with stones and rubble which led down the hill-side. She got out half frozen.

"The path's rather steep, miss," said the driver, "take care you don't slip. Had I better come and help you down?"

"No, I will contrive," she answered. "Wait you here for me a quarter—half—an hour."

She jerked freely down the slope, and disappeared behind a bluff of rock. At the bottom she came to a fairly smooth path, winding among the bracken and heather along the length of the gully. Above, to the east, she saw the high railway viaduct, and toward this she walked some distance. Farmer Wilson's shanty was partly sheltered by the viaduct, and partly by a shoulder of the hillside, which retired a little at that point from the valley. The little house, with its one-slope roof, nestled sheer beneath the perpendicular rock of the crags. Cécile tapped at the door.

Farmer Wilson, with round blue eyes and open mouth, came at once, gazing at her, thinking her a visitant from the other world.

"Wa'a con a' doo for 'oo, mum?" he asked.

Cécile shot a keen glance at the simple and honest old face, and was satisfied.

"You can give me a glass of milk, sir," she said, "and a bit of bread-and-butter. I have come a long way; my driver told me you live here."

"Walk in, mum; walk in. A coald day over the woalds, a'm thinkin'."

Cécile was soon ensconced by the log-fire in the dingy outer apartment of the *cabane*. Presently, an old lady with white hair combed low over her forehead brought in, with many smiles and curtesies, a brown mug of milk, new milk, from the farmer's one cow, with brown bread and a lump of cream cheese on a plate.

"And you two live alone here all the time?" asked Cécile.

"Aye, mum," said the farmer, "us, and the two lads, 'ee knoa."

"Your sons?"

"Aye, mum."

"Good boys?"

"O aye, soa-soa, 'fur as thot goes."

"How old?"

"T' youngest is fifteen; Jock's seventeen by now, a'm thinkin'——"; he appealed with a look to his wife for confirmation. She was still standing curtesying and bowing.

"And you two live alone here all the time?"

"Well, farmer, I cannot stay long, as my man waits me with the carriage. Your milk and cheese are excellent," said Cécile, quietly laying a sovereign on the mantel, and rising. The farmer, too, rose.

"Thoo's welcome, a'm sure, mum. T' day's bitter cold o'er t' woalds——"

"Still, one must go," said Cécile. "You have here a very solitary life, Mr. Farmer, a pinched life. Good-bye: I hope your boys give you much comfort and satisfaction."

"O, aye," said the farmer, looking sideways on the ground, "they are soa-soa. A' moon't complain. T' elder has gi'en his heart to t' Lord——"

"His what?"

"His heart, 'ee knoa—his heart to t' Lord. But he's a bit lazy loike, and o'er fond o' dallying in bed o' morning. But a' doan't complain."

"He does not rise very early, yes?"

"Noa—t' poor lad. His mother says his lungs ain't that o'er strong."

"And the younger? He, I hope, is a good son?"

"Oh, as far as that goes, a' doan't complain, 'ee knoa. He is a child o' many prayers. In toime, a' hope he'll see the error o' his ways, and turn to t' Lord. Present, he's a bit sullen loike, and bad-tempered at toimes, and fond o' wandering, and cruel to t' cat——"

"Well, good-bye, Farmer. I hope your sons will be all you wish. But where are they now?"

"They? Oh, Jock's behind the wall there in bed with a bit o' coald. Tom, t' yoonger, 's up the beck looking after a few head o' stock, such as they are, 'ee knoa. Can't I come wi' thee a little way?"

"No, pray do not trouble. I know the path. Once again, good-bye."

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The farmer held open the door and stood looking after her as she went up the path of the beck till a winding hid her from view. When he turned back into the room he said to his wife, who was looking at the bright sovereign in her palm:

"Thot's a seemly young deam, now, woife? Shoo's fro' foreign parts, I'm thinking. And a bitter day o'er the woalds she'll ha' o' it, too."

"Sic a sweet lady 'a never did see in a' my days!" said Mrs. Wilson with enthusiasm.

Cécile, meanwhile, wound up the path until she came to the steep defile by which she had come down. But instead of climbing up she walked on past it, higher up the gully.

By her side brawled and foamed the black beck among its rocks.

Cécile's eyes went through all the ravine, as far as they could see, with keen outlook, peering behind every rock, searching every thicket.

At last she heard a bleat. And thither she directed her stealthy step.

In a little opening among a clump of holly trees, she spied a little flock, thick-fleeced, and browsing.

A dog ran out to her with a low growl, but she bent down to it, patting and pacifying it. It was appeased, and ran back under the brushwood into the glade, wagging its tail.

When Cécile had crept near, she peered through the growth of bramble, and saw a boy standing with his back towards her. His head was bent down; one arm, stretched somewhat behind him, rested on a rock. From the other hung a large, one-bladed penknife, open.

With utter stealthy slowness, noiseless as a cat, step by step, Cécile approached him. Once, as a twig snapped beneath her feet, Tom half turned his head, but did not see her. His whole attitude was one of listless pensiveness. The boy seemed deep in thought. All at once Cécile was close behind him. With a sudden jerk she had the knife tugged from his fingers, and almost before he could turn to face her, she had said, with rapid breath:

"Tom! the ring, the bracelet, the watch, and the locket!"

It was a perfectly ghastly and pallid face which the boy turned upon her; and a cruel face, too. His fist was raised to strike—a heavy, gnarled fist for one so young. But Cécile's fist, too, was raised—and in it the knife with its bright, sharp blade. The next moment Tom was on his knees, with chattering teeth and staring eyes.

"Tom! the ring, the bracelet, the watch, and the locket!"

He thought he saw before him a spirit—a spirit armed with all knowledge and all power.

He was a very tall boy, with a rather brutal face, and small scowling brow. As he knelt, his head reached almost to Cécile's bosom. But he crouched cowering before the little woman.

"You will give them—*now?*" she said, the knife still imminent over Tom in her hand.

Tom gulped a "Yes."

"You may get up, then."

She followed him out of the glade, back to the path, and still further up the gully. Tom walked on sullenly before, with bent head, and eyes sidling backwards every now and then. Cécile held the knife.

The boy, at a cleft which ran zig-zag on to the face of the rock of the gulley, turned sharply to the right. Cécile followed him.

He stopped when he had reached a spot where another cleft opened at right angles to the first, and faced her.

"Who art thoo?" he said.

"The *two* rings, the bracelet, the watch, *and* the locket," answered Cécile, gazing steadily into his eyes.

The boy flinched before this omniscience, his eyes drooped; he turned and went down the second cleft, Cécile behind him.

He stopped once more at a spot where there was a flat stone leaning half on the rock-side and half on the mould. He stooped to it, lifted it, and nodded his head sullenly in the direction of a small hole which the stone had covered.

"Pick them up," said Cécile.

"There they be," answered Tom. "Pick them up, if thoo wants them."

Cécile held out her gloved palm.

"It is cold," she said. "I cannot wait here all the day long. Put those things into my hand—the *two* rings, the watch, the——"

Tom stooped with sudden alacrity; and then, slowly, one by one, he put the things upon Cécile's palm.

"Now lead the way back," she said.

He went on before, swinging sullenly with his long legs, pulling twigs out of the rock-side in shame-faced braggadocio. The jewellery was in Cécile's pocket; the knife in her hand.

At the bottom of the steep ascent she called: "Stop!"

Tom stood before her, looking on the ground, munching a blade of grass.

Cécile dived into her pocket for her purse, took out five sovereigns, and held them out to him.

Tom, munching his grass, and looking on the ground, smiled, but made no other movement.

Cécile lifted his heavy red paw, put the money into his palm, and closed his fingers over it. Tom's hand fell back to his side, holding the gold.

"To-morrow," said Cécile, "or some time soon, I want you to come to Hillcrest Lodge—remember the name—and ask to see Cécile Delisle—Cécile—Delisle. You must try to come, see. Will you?"

Tom, looking on the ground, smiled.

"I will keep the knife, lest you stab me as I turn my back. *Would* you stab me, Tom? I hear you are very cruel to the cat, and you treated that poor lady's body shockingly, you know. But would you stab *me*, Tom?"

Tom, looking on the ground, smiled.

"Here, take the knife," said Cécile.

He would not take it; she lifted his other hand, and put the knife into it.

"Good-bye, Tom. Do not forget to come. I like you, you know. You can kiss my hand."

She held out her hand, but he would not kiss it. She

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took hold of the back of his head and ducked it, and made him kiss her hand. Then she ran, toiling, up the hill. At the first bend she looked back, and waved her hand to him.

Tom had taken off his broad-brimmed felt hat, and was furiously waving it round his head. Cécile laughed aloud, and three times kissed her hand to him, then turned the corner, and vanished from Tom's sight.

She reached her trap, and drove back over the shivering wolds to the little station, and from thence arrived at Seaborough a little after three.

A few minutes before four she drove up the lawn of Hillcrest Lodge beside Jack Heathcote in the trap. The day had already begun to darken.

* * * * *

It was to be war to the death. The afternoon sun, just setting, saw the four men together, one of them with deadly hate gnawing in his heart, the other with deadly jealousy and immeasurable contempt.

Down through the deeply-shadowed park, at the back of the Lodge, led a path among the mighty old trees, then over a bridge, which crossed a good-sized stream, then on again by a shooting-box of red stone in the forest, then through another dense growth of oaks, elms, and beeches. Here the road forked, and one of the forks, about a mile from the Lodge, led into a very large lawn or open space, shut in by a palisade of huge tree-trunks, and having at one end a broadish sheet of water.

At the extremity opposite to the water was a stone bench, and in the centre a sun-dial.

This was the spot determined upon for the duel, and here at about half-past three arrived Professor Queech, feeling as if he were going to execution; ten minutes later, Danton; and ten minutes after him, Pendragon. Before the stroke of four, Arthur, too, sauntered in, and threw away his cigar.

The question as to a doctor had been settled by a suggestion of Danton.

"He proposes," the Professor had said to Pendragon, "that only one of the pistols be loaded. There will therefore, in that case, be at least one life of the two certain to come safe out of this deplorable affair, sir."

"And how do you propose to arrange the details?" the hussar had asked.

"You, sir, will load one of the pistols, and place the two in a hat held behind your back; I will then take one, and give it to my principal, and you will give the other to yours."

"But suppose," said the Lieutenant, "that the one who has the loaded weapon only wounds, instead of killing the other—we shall still want a doctor?"

"No—it appears not. Dr. Danton says not. I tell you, sir, this is a dreadful business. He says that if the Captain obtains the loaded pistol, there is no chance of a practised shot like the Captain, expert in war, failing to hit a vital spot in so large a man as himself; while if he, Dr. Danton, obtains the loaded weapon, he assures me that there is not even the least chance of a failure of aim. He seems to have acquired a horrible and fiendish coolness and dexterity in the matter of pistols."

"Is that so?"

"It is a dreadful thing, Lieutenant Pendragon. He has fought *many* duels, it seems, and always with the same success. It is appalling, sir, to think of. At all events, here is no need for doctors, but for grave-diggers—unless some higher Power interposes ——"

Even the soldier sighed.

And so, as the sun went down, the four men met in the glade of the forest.

There was little talk. The disposal of the body was already a settled matter. There was a broadish sheet of water at one end of the glade.

"It is very cold," said Arthur to Pendragon, "pray don't keep me bothering about here."

"Are your nerves steady—your hand?" the Lieutenant said in a whiser.

"My dear boy, don't be absurd," drawled Arthur. "I am not a child. Isn't it *confoundedly* cold?"

The ground was hard and white, itself stiff-fixed in the rigour of death.

Pendragon took from the pocket of his overcoat a pair of Colt's pistols. One of them was already loaded.

A general movement ensued from the stone bench towards the middle of the opening.

There was a sinister, yellow gleam in the eyes of Danton—a rigidity of stone in his pasty face. He moved ponderously forward, with his imperial between his thumb and forefinger.

"I choose the pitch, you measure," said Pendragon to the Professor.

He looked about, and stood on a spot where the ground ran level.

Pendragon gave the other to Arthur.

"Here," he said.

The short legs of the Professor went stalking out. One, two, three—fifteen—paces.

Where Pendragon had stood, Arthur took his stand. Danton followed the Professor and stood where he stopped.

Midway, Pendragon and the Professor met for the ceremony of the choice of weapons. Pendragon took off his hat, and deposited the weapons in it. Then he put both hands behind his back, holding the hat in them. The Professor went behind him.

Pendragon waited.

The Professor stood on tiptoe and whispered from behind, close to the Lieutenant's ear:

"Oh, this is a shocking thing, sir! What shall I do?"

"Choose—quickly!" cried Pendragon.

Professor Queech gingerly took up one of the weapons, and holding it from him, bore it to Danton. Pendragon gave the other to Arthur. Then each second stood a little way from his principal, on opposite sides of the straight line between them.

Danton put one arm behind his back, and held out the pistol at full length with the other, pointing at Arthur's breast. Arthur, too, pointed at Danton.

"Deuced nuisance!" said Arthur to himself, "I feel shivery all over—such a *confoundedly* cold day!"

"Are you ready?" sang out Pendragon.

"Yes!"

"All right!"

"Then—one—two—three—*fire!*"

Arthur pulled his trigger. His aim was straight for the heart of Danton. But the pistol merely clicked.

Danton had not fired. He stood, with a bitter smile, covering his antagonist with the pistol, for full half a minute. Then he lowered it, and cried out:

"May I speak with Captain Musgrave for a moment in private?"

"Certainly not," shouted Arthur, "if you have anything to say, there is my second."

"No—I cannot speak to him. I must fire."

"Speak to him, Arthur—for God's sake, man!" said Pendragon, coming near, trembling in every limb.

"What can he have to say to me?" asked Arthur, with lifted eyebrows.

"Never mind—do!—I beg you!—like a dear chap, do now!"

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"It's a deuced nuisance," said Arthur. Then he lifted his voice: "All right—meet me half-way."

Half-way he and Danton met.

"I agree to spare your life," said Danton, "on the condition that you leave Hillcrest Lodge to-night, and give me your word of honour never to see or hold any communication of any kind with the lady who is the cause of our quarrel during the rest of your life. Do you consent?"

"My good sir, you are quite certainly a d—— fool," said Arthur, his face the very expression of scorn. "I need not tell you that such a proposition would never have occurred to a gentleman—not even to a French gentleman."

"You decline then?"

"Yes."

"Then resume your place."

The two men returned to the appointed spots. Arthur stood with his arms by his side. Danton levelled his pistol, covering the heart of his rival.

* * *

Jack Heathcote lifted Cécile out of the trap. She threw him a nod and a smile, and ran into the hall, nearly bouncing into Miss Newton's arms.

"Oh, I beg pardon," said Miss Newton, "have you come from outside? I was looking for that tiresome Professor. He promised——"

"No, I have not seen him," said Cécile; "isn't he in the house?"

"He can't be found anywhere. Isn't it too tiresome?"

Cécile ran in, longing for Edith. In her eagerness, as she turned the angle of the corridor, she collided sharply with the Hon. Lily Grandcourt.

"Oh, pardon!" she cried. "I bump with everybody! Do you know where is Edith?"

"I am afraid it was my fault," said the Hon. Lily. "Where *has* Mr. Pendragon vanished to, do you know?"

"What, he, too?" said Cécile. "That is the second——"

She stopped short. A sudden thought seemed to take her.

"Where now is Captain Musgrave—can you tell?" she asked.

"No—I fancy he is playing truant, too."

"Is Dr. Danton in the house, then?"

"I rather fancy not," said Miss Newton; "I think I heard someone asking for him just now."

"Wait—I must go," cried Cécile.

She ran back out into the hall, down the steps, and out into the snow, which was some inches deep. She bent low down, going quickly over a wide area, examining the ground with her eyes, like a bloodhound sniffing everywhere for the scent of death.

Presently, near the borders of the forest, she cried:

"Yes, this is the way they have gone! Oh, I was silly not to have known it!"

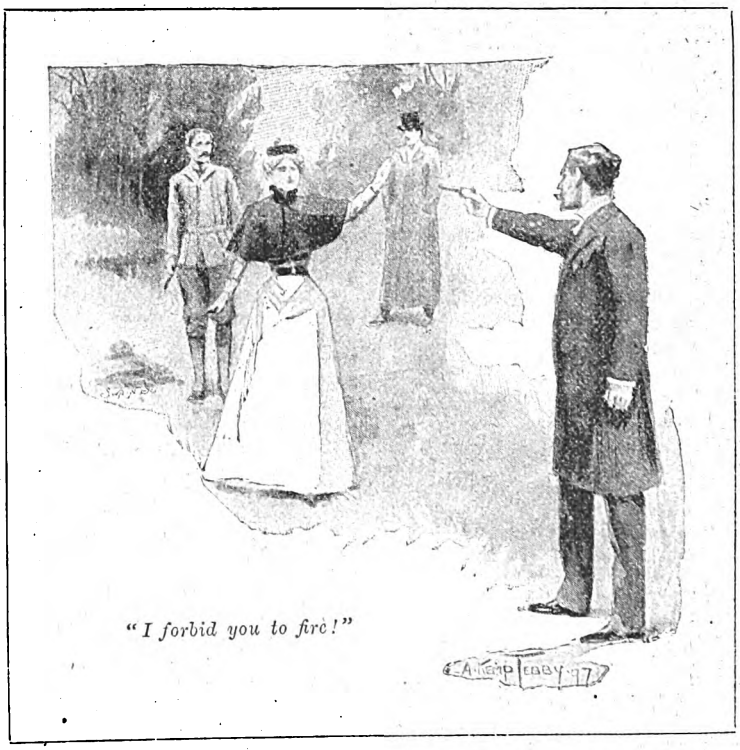
She started running with the lightness of a young roe down the pathway through the park, following the foot-prints in the snow.

* * * * *

Danton levelled his pistol, covering the heart of his rival.

The dusk had deepened, almost to gloom. But he saw his man well, and he was sure of that unerring hand.

He laid his finger to the trigger.



"I forbid you to fire!"

Clear through the still and frosty night rang out, sharp and shrill as a clarion, the sudden and piercing cry:

"*I forbid you to fire!*"

A figure, with lifted arm, stood between Danton and his prey.

The two seconds ran forward.

Danton's shoulders gave a shrug. His arm dropped.

"Duelling is a crime in this country," cried Cécile. "I refuse to move!"

"Oh, this is a beastly mess!" said Arthur to himself. "I can't stand *this*, I think."

Pendragon had Cécile by the arm.

"You really must, you know," he said. "This is *very* inconvenient. You must go, really——"

"No—don't go—stay here," whispered the Professor.

"All right—let her alone," called out Arthur. "Here—I agree to your conditions. I can't stand this dreadful mess with women."

He left his post and approached Danton.

"You agree?" said Danton.

"Yes."

"On your honour?"

"On my honour."

Arthur put his hands in his pockets, and sauntered away. But his heart was breaking.

(*To be continued.*)

NOTICE.—In the next number of SHORT STORIES *will commence a series of stirring historical tales, entitled "Deeds that Won the Empire." The stories will run through at least a dozen numbers, and among the subjects treated will be the Battle of St. Vincent, the Capture of Quebec, the Storming of Badajoz, etc.*

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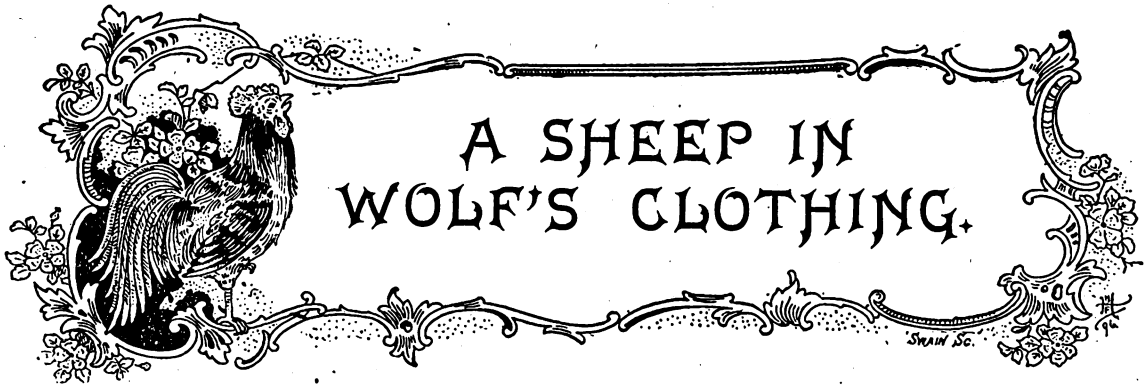

A SHEEP IN WOLF'S CLOTHING.

The pull is uphill for almost three miles along here, and the horses plod along slowly. The dust is just as deep; but now, instead of blowing off to leeward, as it did a while ago, it hangs close round the stage in a thick, dense, reddish-yellow cloud, almost shutting off the view from the passengers inside, if they cared to look out.

But the beauties of Nature hold their interest only slightly just at present. The dust occupies their attention to a large extent. It fills their mouths, and eyes, and nostrils, and clings to their hair and ears in much profusion. It is disagreeable—very—and the man who has enough spirit left to try and keep up the conversation is voted an ass by his fellow-passengers. They were all very friendly only a short time ago; but they hate each other with a bitter hatred just now—all on account of the dust.

A mile or so back the sun shines brightly on the cañon road, making it look like a long, yellow ribbon; but just ahead the shadow of the mountain on the west, which seems to close the upper end of the pass, cuts the light off in an odd, abrupt way, and presently we shall be in comparative darkness, for the edge of the heavy timber is only a little distance before us.

Somehow the dust doesn't rise very high, or else the driver and the passenger on the box don't mind it, for we can hear them talking. Old Ben, through some unseen but easily imagined influence, has relaxed from his usual taciturnity, and is quite communicative to the beardless, boyish-looking young chap who had got on at Alpena and is sharing the box with him.

As the stage reaches the level and rolls into the shadows of the mountain and the tall pines, Ben points with the whip to the mouth of the narrow pass leading out of the cañon a quarter of a mile away, and remarks:

"See them two big rocks—road runs b'tween 'em? Uh-huh! Wal, right that—mebbe a couple rods 'r so fu'ther on—was whar I was held up one day in th' summer of '76."

"Yes?" said the passenger voice interrogatively. "Would you mind telling me about it?"

Ben chirped to his horses and began:

"Wal, 'twuz this a-way. That mornin' th' 'xpress-box was loaded plumb full o' hard stuff th't hed t' go through that day. Now, jes' 'z luck'd hev' it, one o' the gyards—we had them days—turned up missin' 'bout th' time we was readt t' start fr'm Eldorado in th' mornin'. Berry McNeill, th' other gyard goes arter 'im, an' fin's Mr. Man laid up with a gash in th' head fr'm a beer-bottle—be'n scrappin' night b'fore.

"Th' agent an' me was thinkin' pow'ful 'bout who we c'd git t' take Hauser's place ef he was sick, w'en hyar comes Mac, whistlin'.

"'Say, fellers,' says he. 'Hauser got plunked with a bottle las' night, an' is layin' on his downy couch with a headache. Reckon I c'n go it b' my lonesome. I got Hauser's sawed-off gun.'

"We both kicked a whole lot, but Mac, he'd made up his min', an' was boun' t' hev' his own way. B'sides, we didn't hev' no one right handy t' go 'long, so we hed t' give in, an' Mac, whistlin' one o' his everlastin' toons, piles up on th' box, an' we pulls out. They wa'n't no passengers.

"Wal, we kept our peepers skun right sharp, but ev'rythin' went lovely till jes' long 'bout hyar. Then Mac says: 'Ben, I b'lieve they's some cusses layin' for us up b' them rocks—I think I seen a feller's head, jes' now.' Say I: 'Mac, y're full o' hop. I seen it, too, an' 'twa'n't nothin' but a hawk, crossin' the road.'

"I stirred up the critters a bit, howsomever, but jes'z we turned th' rocks, somebody jumps out fr'm both sides an' nails th' leaders, an' they was so many guns starin' intuh my face th't it made me ashamed o' myself. Mac cut loose wi' th' sawed-off shot-gun, an' then begun wi' th' Winchister, gittin' two fellers an' skinnin' up some more—but they was too darn many of 'em, an' they c'd shoot, too, so Mac he never got no chance t' pump that gun dry. He oughtn't t' hev' shot, nohow, but he allus was a nervy cuss—more nerve'n sense. I use ter say. 'Mac——'"

Half-a-dozen dusky forms leap from the road-side—the big cowboy who got aboard early in the afternoon, and has been dozing and swearing in a sleepy way about the dust, is suddenly wide awake, and we, on the inside, get a good look at the muzzles of his two big revolvers. We hear Ben ejaculate: "Wal, this do beat all!" and then we are invited to get down into the road, where the pleasant-faced, boyish-looking young man who got on at Alpena proceeds to business, and politely, courteously, but firmly withal, relieves us of our spare change—and more, too.

* * * * *

That is my part of the story. Of course, there were quite a number of other people present, including the youthful highwayman and his capable assistants, and they also have a claim on the above narrative. I did not mean that I owned it; what I tried to say was that that is the only one of the events from which come this veracious tale that I took part in, and I think it has been shown that my part was entirely a passive one. Perhaps we had better call that portion of the story the gentlemanly road-agent's, because he got about everything else there was to get. The rest is Hallegan's.

Hallegan and I were travelling together, and it was his foresight—or, rather, an odd notion of his—that enabled us to resume our journey to Denver after the

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road-agent incident. This odd notion was in the form of a thin chamois incole, which he wore in his left boot, and which, in addition to a card giving directions for the disposition of his body in case he should suddenly be called hence while among strangers, contained a fifty-dollar bill. It was an ordinary fifty-dollar bill, but when Terence flashed it before my dazzled eyes in the hotel at Merrill that night I was quite sure that it was larger and more valuable. It took us to Leadville anyway, and that was all we could reasonably desire.

But for the rest of the story:

It was about two years after the road-agent affair, in which we lost almost everything but our good names and the clothing we wore, when one day I was thunderstruck to receive Hallegan's wedding-card. It was the first time I had heard from him for a year, and had anyone else told me Terence Hallegan was a marrying man I should have derided him; but when Terence himself, in his own peculiar chirography, directed to me an envelope containing such startling news, all set forth in the highest style of the engraver's art—well, it was too much, and I went down into the camp, where surcease of sorrow was obtainable in quantities to suit the purchaser, and where there was a full score of Terence's friends and acquaintances to toast his memory and condole with each other. And grief was our lot until the day of Jewett "struck it" in that hole he had been pegging away at over on the other side of the gulch, and excitement reigned supreme.

In the midst of the confusion, telegrams came and went, flying—brought and sent by special courier to and from the office at Sunrise, nine miles away; and one day came one for him who sits here burning the nocturnal oil. It was from Hallegan, who was now living in Chicago, and summoned me to hasten to that city, where I was needed to assist in closing in transactions involving the sale of some mining property in which Terence and I were interested.

Terence met me at the station. He looked remarkably well, even for a person whose health and spirits had always been of the very best, and I told him so, adding that in deponent's opinion he must have drawn a capital prize in the matrimonial lottery.

He smiled happily, and took my arm to walk outside the train enclosure, as he said:

"That I did—that I did, me boy; just wait till you see her, and you'll be sure of it."

He called a cab, gave the driver some brief instructions, and leapt in after me. We rode for several minutes in silence; then Hallegan turned to me in a rather embarrassed way, and said, in a strained tone:

"Billy, me boy—it's very near dinner-time at our house—and there's no time for—explanation. Only—if you think you've seen—my wife—if her face is familiar—please don't mention it, or act as though you noticed it. I'll explain after dinner."

I acquiesced wonderingly, and wondered yet more after I had met Mrs. Hallegan, for I was quite positive that I had never seen her before, and there was ample opportunity during the course of the excellent dinner we presently sat down to, to study her. She was slightly above the medium height, and of a perfect, though rather slight, figure. Her hair and eyes were dark, setting off excellently her clear olive complexion, and her features were all that an artist could desire. She was hardly what one would call a beautiful woman, however. "Handsome" would be the better word—or, perhaps, "striking." There was something about the firm set of her mouth when not speaking, and the rather masculine chin—in which, oddly enough, there was a charmingly feminine dimple—that caused this effect, I think. One would never have taken Mrs. Hallegan for the daughter of the little, white-haired, sweet-faced old lady who sat opposite me, and who she addressed as "mother."

No, I had never seen her up to half-an-hour ago, so I gave up studying her and fell to wondering what Hallegan was going to "explain."

Dinner over, the ladies rose to leave us, smiling over the broad hint Terence had just thrown out concerning a desire to smoke. As they reached the door, Mrs. Hallegan turned and bowed mockingly to her husband, whose hand was just reaching for the bell. "I hope, Sir Terence, that the cigars may prove dry company." Then, with a bright smile, she vanished.

I flopped into my chair breathlessly. Where had I seen that mocking brow? Then suddenly there came before me that little scene in the mountains two years since; the dust, the heat, the sleepy cowboy inside the coach, the dapper little chap who so politely took our money and watches. *He* bowed just that way when he finished his work and departed. "Her brother," I thought—"black sheep, blot on family escutcheon. How much they resemble——"

"Well, me boy?"

Hallegan was looking at me quizzically through the smoke, we having lighted our cigars meanwhile. I suppose I looked embarrassed. Of course, it was all rot; the idea of there being any connection, however remote, between the stately creature who had just left us and the little rascal who engineered that hold-up!

Hallegan spoke:

"Billy, me boy, I won't make a short story any longer than is necessary. You remember the little fellow who held us up two years ago?"

"Of course I do."

"Yes, very likely. Well, I fancy I'd better begin at the beginning.

"Three years ago, a young fellow named Wilson, who had been employed as cashier by the L. and A. Stage Express Company got into trouble over his accounts. The manager—Robinson—charged him with a shortage amounting to several thousand dollars. There was an investigation, and, on the strength of certain circumstantial evidence which need not be stated, as it is immaterial, backed by the testimony of Robinson, the manager, Tweedy, the superintendent, and Frank Robinson, son of the manager—who, by-the-way, had always been Wilson's bosom friend—the cashier was convicted on trial, and sentenced to a long term at Cañon City. Strange to say, he offered no testimony and made no defence, except his plea of 'not guilty.'

"Well, it killed him. Inside of a year the worry and disgrace, along with the hard work and close confinement—he had never been very strong—had wasted him to a shadow, and when, at last, he knew he couldn't live very long, he sent for his mother and sisters to come to him.

"His mother was too ill herself to travel, and one of the sisters—a cripple—was obliged to remain with her, but the elder sister went.

"She found him dying—dying in prison. It was the first she had known of his trouble, and, naturally, she was terribly shocked.

"He told her the true story of the affair, that young Robinson, between whom and himself had existed a sort of Damon and Pythias friendship, was the guilty one; and how, when some of the stockholders got wind of the shortage, the two Robinsons and Tweedy, who

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was a brother-in-law of old Robinson, had conspired to shield the guilty man by sacrificing an innocent one who would not defend himself. The confession made by the dying man was not altogether a voluntary one. His sister, who had known nothing except that he was innocent, caught a hint of the truth from him when he was raving in delirium—the rest she made him tell her.

"After young Wilson's death, his sister went quietly to work to see what could be done to prove her brother's innocence and to place the guilt where it belonged, but soon found that nothing could be proved. The Robinsons were too strong for her.

"About this time Mrs. Wilson and her youngest daughter were obliged to go to South Dakota on account of ill-health, leaving the elder daughter, who was studying medicine, here in Chicago. Not long after this the hold-ups on the different lines of the L. and A. began. For the first few times there was only one road-agent—a little chap, but a nervy one, who got talked about by the papers a good deal—but pretty soon there were others, until a band of about eight or nine had organised, under the little fellow's leadership, and they made life a burden to the L. and A people. It made no difference what precautions the company took, or how many guards it employed, the road-agents were too smart, and the boldest kind of hold-ups were successfully made—and, by Jove! it 'busted' the company's business.

"The L. and A. wasn't a heavy concern, of course, but had always made a good deal of money. The frequent hold-ups on its lines, though, proved a settler. It wasn't long before nobody would ship or travel over any of the L. and A. Company's lines unless actually obliged to, and the company was kept pretty busy settling the losses of its customers. Then came the crash, and somehow people began to suspect that the Robinsons had not run things as they should have been handled, and the stockholders investigated. Old Robinson died in disgrace shortly afterwards. The young man took all he could lay hands on and skipped, but was caught at Santa Fé. He's where he should be—at Cañon City. Tweedy got off on a technicality.

"About seven or eight months after we were held up, a stage full of fellows, including myself, was stopped and relieved one afternoon, about ten miles from Milliken, on the old Mule-shoe Trail. The young fellow was one of the robbers—I knew him in spite of his mask. There were only four of the road-agents on this occasion.

"They pulled out, leaving us orders not to touch our arms (which they had stacked on the ground) for twenty minutes, under the penalty of getting shot. But one of our party was a devil-may-care chap, and no sooner were the bandits gone than he walked right over to the pile of guns and picked his out, remarking that he 'didn't believe there were any road-agents around just then.' And there weren't.

"Well, the result of this fellow's foolhardiness was that we concluded it would be money in our pockets to get on the trail of those four road-agents, so we started after them, separating a little distance from each other. We followed them all the afternoon, but couldn't find a trace.

"You know how the old Mule-shoe Trail is? Well, the driver had gone on, agreeing to meet us on the other side of the Shoe—it is only three or four miles across.

"I was just about making up my mind to join the other fellows, and had stopped to think of the best way to cross the creek, when I heard a queer sound, like a woman sobbing. I looked cautiously around, and there, within two rods of me, was the young road-agent, crying as if his heart would break. There was nobody else there, it was plain to be seen, so I quietly sneaked up and requested him to throw up his hands.

"Did you ever hear a woman scream at the sight of a mouse? That's just the way this young fellow screamed when he saw the muzzle of my gun—and I, as soon as I saw the scared, tearful face turned to mine, knew as well as I know now that the famous bandit known as 'Foxey' was only a woman.

"She seemed to trust me, somehow, and pretty soon I had the whole story from her. Then I sat down and talked to her like a brother; and the result was that next day the road-agents missed their leader, and, inside of a fortnight, Miss Jean Wilson was back here in Chicago at her studies again.

"I need not say that this gentle bandit, who ruined the business of the L. and A. Company, took not one cent. of the proceeds, and never permitted any of the band to interfere with Uncle Sam's mail. The latter fact accounts, in a measure, for their success, for Uncle Sam is a bad man to interfere with. The former fact, I think, had to do, to some extent, with the strong hold which 'Foxey' had over his subordinates, although they must have had a good deal of faith in his demonstrated ability as an executive. The band was broken up not long after 'Foxey's' disappearance, and three of the men were caught; but they didn't know any more concerning their mysterious ex-chief than did the public at large."

"And—and Miss Wilson is——"

Hallegan's eyes twinkled: "Is waiting for us. Let us join her," he said.

R. L. Ketchum.

RESULT OF JUMBLE STORY.

No. 29.

The first prize of £5 goes to A. S. Holland, Worcester College, Oxford.

The following receive £1 each: Mrs. Leithead, 11, Lower Bridge Street, Chester; T. M. Hughes, 60, George Street, Altrincham, Cheshire; W. Pontin, Stubbington, near Forcham, Hants.

£2 has gone to Mrs. G. F. Healey, 3, Montrose Terrace, Ranelagh, co. Dublin.

THE KEY.

Title: "FAR ABOVE THE STAIRS."

76	9	112	101	15	5	114	30	61
7	1	111	83	25	120	125	29	106
70	12	50	126	18	43	103	41	31
86	2	104	68	60	17	36	46	54
23	107	89	108	71	57	121	92	98
33	84	62	132	51	42	44	53	95
6	3	59	117	38	20	58	49	96
19	10	77	81	100	56	85	45	94
11	52	24	130	87	40	127	90	91
97	28	16	116	14	69	55	63	27
37	13	115	39	64	35	119	79	93
82	102	109	26	80	22	131	65	4
99	113	72	32	105	74	124	88	
34	123	73	48	118	75	66	128	
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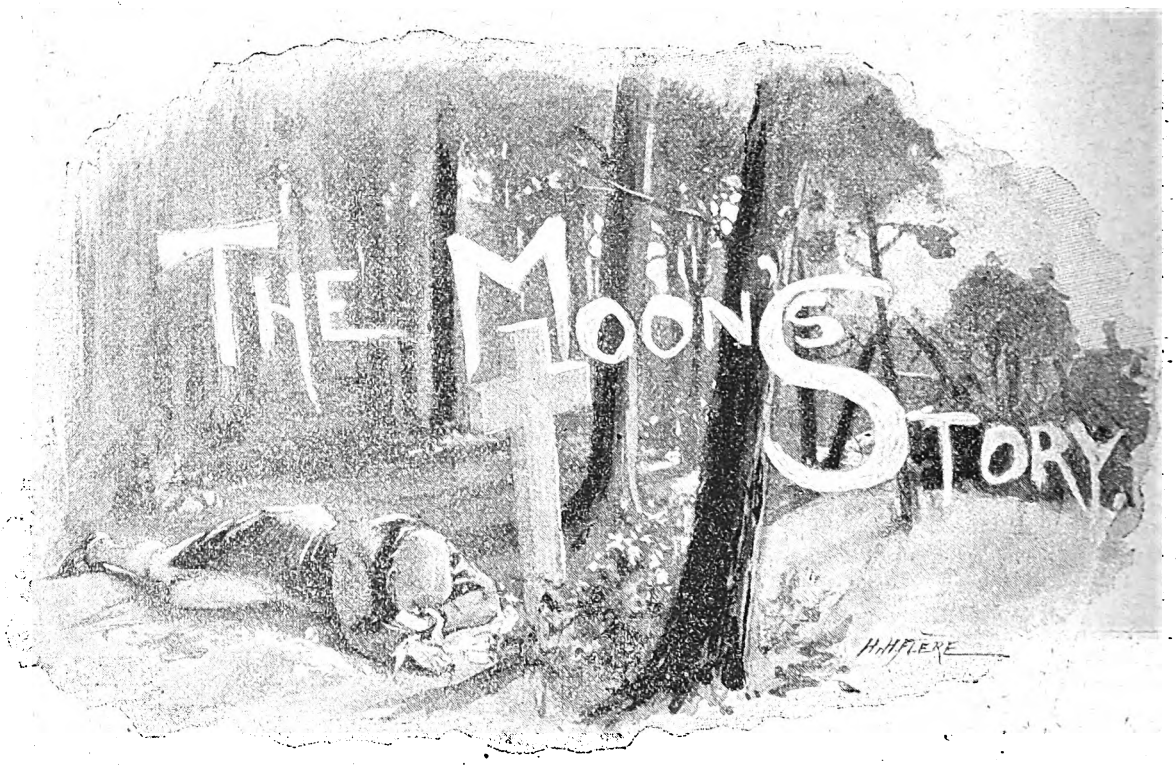

"Never morning wore to evening but some heart did break."

YES, I am very, very old—so old that at times I almost lose count of my own years.

Many centuries I have thrown a pale light over your world, for I am marvellously fond of it—of its beautiful fields and forests, of its quiet hills and mountains, of its lakes, rivers, and valleys; I love them one and all, and they look, oh, so fair when wrapped in my pure embrace, that seems to sweep off all the glamour and heat of the merciless day. Is it not so, ye human spirits? Does not an infinite peace fall upon you when you stand in the night, and lift your tired faces to my softening rays?

Ah, if you did but know the secrets that I could unfold, the tales I could tell, of sad partings and bitter tears, of sweet vows, now, alas, forgotten and dead! But fear not; it is the dearest part of my lonely old life to see lovers wander trustfully out under my light, and whisper the old story that, though I have heard from times immemorial, never falls with less sweetness on my listening ear. Yes, the old man in the moon has ears, though you do not know it—large, sharp ears, that hear every foolish whisper that you guard so secretly. But he is a kindly old fellow, and very rarely betrays confidence until your eyes are closed in everlasting sleep and no word of his can harm the cold stillness of your hearts.

We all have favourites, I suppose; so I shall not be blamed if I plead guilty, and own that some forms linger longer in my memory than others.

It is a woman I am thinking of now, a beautiful girl such as we all used to know and love long ago, a tall, lissom creature, with the passion of the South in her eyes, and the beauty of heaven in her face. She wore soft, clinging gowns of white, that fell in straight folds to her feet, with high satin puffs on the shoulders. Her night-shaded hair lay in waves over her ears something as they wear it to-day but with a difference. She was nothing like the end-of-the-century girl, "the new woman," so to speak, who cares so little for moonlight, sentiment and love; her every movement was replete with that exquisite clinging womanliness that seemed then as much a part of the woman as the air she breathed. She would come on the porch of her homestead, and in the still of the night wander through the grounds; never alone.

As I have said she was supremely beautiful, with the beauty of those days; and so she had lovers by the score.

I have often wondered what subtle charm it was that brought all men to her feet, a magnetism that none could resist, but it was there, and, strange as it may seem, I have never known her face to flush with an answering thrill. She seemed to be wearing her life out dreaming and waiting for a love that should answer the craving of her soul—a love I feared she would not find in your world of unsatisfied desires. Her own heart was lying dormant, waiting for the touch of a magic hand, and at last it came, as it must to us all some day.

How well I remember the night! It was an early summer. I had risen slowly to my full height, and the garden lay beneath wrapped in a dead whiteness that seemed to make even the sleepy flowers lift their heads, thinking that dawn had crept upon them unawares.

She came at last, stepping out into the fuller light with her old regal carriage. By her side was the dark figure of a man, his head hidden in the shadow, but his face uplifted, and in her eyes I read the look I had

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been watching for so long—deep and heavy, but warmed with a glow that seemed to transfigure her features. It was the birth of love, and he had found a glorious cradle in her heart.

They moved slowly onward, and I saw him bend and whisper to her in very soft, low tones. She smiled, and reluctantly took the white jasmine that had been lying in her hair and held it towards him.

"Do you not like the odour?" she questioned wonderingly. "I think it is the sweetest of all flowers," she continued, and with a quick gesture she raised the blossom to his face.

There was a dead silence for a moment, then a heavy frown swept over his brow, and with a fierce gesture he tore the flower from her hand and, throwing it upon the ground, placed his foot heavily upon its delicate white petals. The crushed perfume was wafted to me, and seemed to dull my senses. Only dimly did I hear her faint cry of astonished wonder, and his quick apologies, for as I looked down at the dark face of the man, the scent of that jasmine was recalling a scene in a far-off country. I saw a lonely grave under tall pine trees, and, shaded by their branches, a man's form in mad anguish across the turf—in his clenched hands a wreath of white flowers. I can smell the faint, deathly perfume even now, and hear his sobs, rendered heavy by the stillness of the night. Then, as suddenly as the picture came it faded, and I was again looking at the garden, at the stern face of the man of this hour, and it was not strange; they were one and the same!

Ah, the pity of it. I would have cried aloud to warn her; but, as is my wont, according to Nature, remained silent, and she passed on in innocent happiness.

Well, the days crept on all too swiftly for her. Each evening seemed happier than the preceding one; every power that she possessed was strained to the utmost to win the lightest regard; and, strange to say, one as sensitive as she to impressions failed to notice that his heart did not speak through the words of love breathed so carelessly in her ear.

A little contents a woman when she is blinded by her own all-absorbing affection; and so Daphne was happy! And when, one evening, I saw him clasp her in his arms and ask her to be his wife, I knew that, come what might hereafter, that moment of incomparable ecstasy would outweigh all future sorrow. Almost in shame, I saw her wrap her white arms round his throat, and lift a face stamped with a great love that neither time nor change could efface.

Perhaps her heaven was then; who can tell? I only know that it did not last. There were a few happy weeks, and then the old restless look, that I had seen before, settled down on his face, and I knew that her frail hold upon him had snapped and her misery had begun.

Poor child! hardly a month had passed since their betrothal, when he murmured vague excuses, pleaded business, etc., and was off to his home, promising to return ere one moon had come and gone.

Ah, the frailty of man's vows!

She waited patiently, as the long days passed and grew into weeks and months, her faith in him never failing—the pure, strong faith of a dumb brute that is seldom rewarded.

He came not!

Each night I would watch her wander into the garden, always alone now; her face paler and very thin, in her eyes a strange, questioning look of fear—a fear she would not acknowledge even to herself.

The summer was well-nigh gone, when one evening, near the end of August, she came as usual to the garden. I was startled at the terrible change in her face; heavy shadows lay under her eyes, and the pallor of her skin was intensified by the black hair which had been caught up in a careless knot at the back of her head, held only by a slender gold dagger; hanging thus loosely round her brow, it seemed to make more pronounced the sadness lurking there.

She wandered down to the little lake which lies at the end of the garden, and stood, her hands clasped listlessly before her, gazing at the dark, still water. Hours may have passed, minutes or seconds—I took no heed of time—when there was a quick step on the grass, and a man's form emerged into the fuller light. The sound seemed to arouse the still figure; slowly Daphne raised her head and looked into his face. She did not move, but over her brow came a great wave of joy.

She held out her arms mutely; then with a gasping cry rushed forward and flung herself upon his breast. Her whole soul seemed to pass into that one embrace; she lay sobbing and whispering his name again and again, in painful ecstasy; her white hands caressing his throat and hair with touch tender as a mother's. But the man was silent, and the moments

Gazing at the dark, still water.

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He stood leaning against the bench.

passed. Then I saw him lift her arms from about his neck and put her from him, gently, but with stern determination.

"What is it?" she whispered, her fingers still clinging to his, her eyes questioning his face: "Paul, tell me!"

"Tell you," he said roughly, and even in the dim light I could see the great whiteness of his brow, "aye, that is it. There is only one thing left to tell you now—that I am a cowardly scoundrel, and that I have come to ask you to give me back my promise, to set me free." He spoke quickly and brutally, as if he feared his own strength.

"To set you free," she repeated, in a low, moaning tone. "I do not understand." Her hands dropped, but her eyes still dwelt on his face.

He shifted awkwardly, but could not speak.

"What is it that you mean?" she reiterated.

"For Heaven's sake, Daphne, do not make me say it again," he burst forth impulsively. "Is not once enough?"

Then she seemed to awaken to his full meaning.

"It is enough," she said passionately; "but Paul, Paul, I cannot believe you; my ears have deceived me." She took his face between both her hands and forced him to meet her gaze. "Tell me again," she whispered feverishly, "with your eyes looking into mine. No, you need not be afraid, I am not angry, only unbelieving. Oh, my love, it is not true."

He was silent; her eyes burnt into his. "Speak," she repeated pleadingly, "is it true?"

He tore his face from her hands and turned away. "I cannot," he muttered despairingly; "you will never forgive me."

"Forgive you," she said, stepping towards him, her face aflame with sudden anger, "it is true, then—true that my lover of a few short months is weary of his pretty plaything so soon, is ready to cast it away because it pleases him no longer. Great Heavens! what have I done to endure so terrible a humiliation? What awful fate forces me to love a man so base?"

"You cannot say anything that will be too hard for me to bear," he said sullenly; "I have condemned myself enough."

"Enough! Could it ever be enough?" she cried in fierce passion. "What condemnation would be too hard for you—you, who came here, and, day by day and hour by hour, won my love with your false words, only to cast it aside when the novelty wore off, as if it were a worth'ess thing? Did you never think, in your careless pleasure, of the heart you were breaking, and the life you would wreck?"

He turned to her pleadingly. "I can only ask you to forgive me."

"Never mention that word to me again," she cried fiercely. "Forgive you! I do not wonder that you shrink before me; it seems one look from my eyes would be enough to lay you dead."

"If I could have died, I would have done so long ago," he said sadly. "Could you know what it was to have the being you loved best on earth cold and still in your arms, you would not speak of death."

"I could have looked with peace upon your dead face," she answered calmly, "rather than have known you as you are—to have had my idol shattered."

"Did you make an idol of me, Daphne? Ah, child, I know how far I am from that, and when I think of the pain I have caused you through my brutal selfishness, I feel that the grave indeed would be too good a place for me."

"Why did you do it?" she cried despairingly. "Why did you do it? I loved you so!"

"Aye that is it," he answered gloomily. "Love, that one passion, is the root of half the woe in the world; it drives us mad, it tears away our peace of mind, it shows us the fulness of happiness only to intensify the misery that is sure to come; it——"

She interrupted him with a quick, anguished gesture.

"Do not speak against it," she said slowly. "It has brought me misery, I own, but it has also taught me what life was. I cannot hear you malign the only pure sentiment left on earth."

Her voice sank in a sob; he looked at her intently for a moment, then, taking one of her hands in his, "Daphne," he said, "I have done you the greatest wrong man can do a woman, and there is no excuse for me; but I want you to listen to my story—to let me tell you why I hate the name of love."

"Some other time," she murmured faintly. "I am tired now."

He took her hand quietly, and led her to a rustic seat,

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stubborn determination in his face; she knew those lines well, poor child, and did not make further protest; her hands only clasped each other convulsively, and she whispered: "Tell me quickly."

He stood leaning against the bench, gazing out into the darkness a few moments; when he spoke, his voice sounded harsh and unnatural.

"It is not a pretty story," he said, "nor is it one that is easy for me to tell, feeling as I do the ignoble part I have played towards you. It only shows me in darker colours, and will serve to thoroughly disenchant you—at least, I pray so. I have been a weak, pitiful coward all along, Daphne, and, as you said, should be ashamed to stand here before the greatness of your faith and purity."

He paused. "Go on," she said feverishly, "tell me everything."

"It is the old, old story of a man's mad love for a woman," he continued. "In my case she was not particularly good or beautiful; but I loved her. Heavens! talk of worship, of wild, slavish idolatry! I felt it then. She held my heart in her small fingers, but she treated it gently; she, too, loved me. Well, I will not make it long; for one short year we lived in paradise on earth. The world seemed too small to hold our happiness; we were drunk, mad, with the sweetness of our life. It could not last. I have often thought of those mournful words from Annabel Lee, how true they are! 'The angels, not half so happy in heaven, were envying her and me.'"

He sighed heavily, and Daphne with mute agony covered her face with her hands; but he did not heed her, he was lost in selfish pain of his own.

"Yes, they envied us," he went on, "envied poor human mortals even a taste of heavenly bliss; for Death came down one evening and laid his cold hand upon her brow and chilled her in my very arms.

"She was stricken with a terrible fever, and in twenty-four hours lay dead on my breast. Good Heavens! if I could have died, that moment would have killed me. But no, I lived on, to lay her still form in the grave, to call eternally upon her name, and hear only the mad echo of my own voice; to pray wildly for the mercy of death, and have it denied me. I was punished in that moment for all my sins, past and future." He paused a moment and let his eyes rest on the crushed, pitiful figure at his side.

"You once wondered why I bore such an aversion to flowers," he continued. "She worshipped them, and on her grave were great wreaths of white jasmine. Their odour even now drives me mad." He shivered and drew his hands across his eyes. The dark water rippling at their feet was the only sound to disturb the absolute silence, and his voice died away. He went nearer and took one of her hands in his.

"Daphne," he said gently, "my life is buried in that grave. For seven long years I wandered like one possessed from clime to clime, trying to find peace and rest, but in vain; then I met you, and as I looked at your beautiful face I felt that I might again know happiness, and that, in a new love, I could forget the past."

"Do not go on," she interrupted piteously; "I know the rest."

"You know the most of it," he said firmly, "but not all. I strove to be true to you, but when I held you in my arms, her face seemed ever to come between us; when I whispered words of love her voice seemed to be crying out in reproach. I could not rest or sleep, for at night her mournful eyes were gazing at me in the darkness like two lost souls; I was haunted, possessed; then I thought if I could go again to her grave and see the spot where all that remained of her loved body lay, this terrible phantom would leave me. You know how restless and dissatisfied I was then, how I pleaded groundless excuses and hurried away. But it was all of no use." His face paled, and he moved further away. "I can hear her voice now," he whispered distractedly, "calling, calling, always ringing in my ears. I can see her face. See!" he grasped Daphne's arm roughly, and drew her nearer to the lake, "see two great eyes, her eyes, looking at me, looking in reproach? Oh, Heavens, it will drive me mad!"

He covered his face with his hands in shivering terror.

He grasped Daphne's arm roughly.

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The woman's voice broke the oppressive stillness.

"We are quite alone," she said calmly, "your senses are deceiving you, I see nothing. This scene has lasted long enough, we are both overwrought," she pressed her hands hard against her breast. "You must go now," she continued, still calmly; "but first, I give you your full freedom. God knows I would not hold you to your promise a moment after this."

He caught her hands. "Can you forgive me?" he whispered brokenly, "can you forgive me, Daphne, for spoiling your life?"

For a moment her eyes dwelt on his with the light of her great love shining through them.

"Yes," she answered gently, "I can forgive, and I will not utter one reproach. I think God has laid a heavy enough punishment upon you already for your infidelity. We will never meet again; take this and go." She drew from her trembling finger her diamond betrothal ring, and held it towards him in the dim light.

"I cannot take it," he muttered, shuddering.

She drew her head up haughtily. "I certainly will not keep it," she said, and she laid the glittering trinket in his hand.

"Then let it go where it belongs," he said roughly, and with a sudden passion flung the gem into the water, where it fell with a splash and vanished from sight, leaving only a tiny eddying circle to speak of its resting place. For a second Daphne gazed at the spot with wide anguished eyes; then a moaning cry of agony rang out on the evening air as she flung herself heavily upon her lover's breast, wrapping her bare arms passionately round his throat in eternal farewell.

Merciful Providence! that such misery should endure for the innocent! I listened painfully to her faint voice whispering his name over and over; I saw her trembling hands push back the dark hair from his brow and gaze long into his face, her lips quivering with anguish, and —I cursed mankind.

He, too, was touched, for he held her tenderly, and repeated again: "Forgive me."

And again she answered: "Yes, freely and fully."

He raised her bent head and pressed a last cold kiss on her brow. "Good-bye," he said brokenly. "Good-bye," she repeated after him mechanically; but she did not move from his embrace, and it seemed hours that she lay there in still silence. I began to have a terrible fear of I know not what, when she at last raised her head and tore her arms from round his neck.

"Go, now," she said, in a husky voice, "go quickly."

He lingered.

"Go," she commanded again, passionately this time, "and I will pray God to bring you peace and rest." She pressed her hands against her eyes heavily; and when she at last dropped them, the sound of his footsteps had died away, and she was alone.

Her hands went instinctively to her side, as a spasm of pain contracted her face, and her lips grew quite blue. She stood thus in silence for some moments, when a twig breaking somewhere aroused her. She suddenly stretched her arms out wildly to the unresponsive air. "Paul! Paul! Paul!" The very stars seemed to shudder, as with a gasping cry, her heart broke, and she fell heavily forward on the damp grass—her head hitting against one of the huge stones that fenced in the lake, her long hair dripping into the slumbering waters.

Crushed and broken like a delicate flower by the ruthless hand of man, she lay there; and in infinite pity I guarded her until the first messenger of dawn came and drove me away.

The next night I rose and looked down upon the garden. All was still as death; no dainty figure moved in and out among the trees, and a dire foreboding came over me; impatiently I shone over the great, still house; all was dark within. No sound of life came to allay my fears. At last I found a crevice in one of the lower casement windows, and crept in. The room was dark and heavy with the scent of flowers. At first I could see nothing, but soon my light fell upon a bier draped all in snowy white. Upon it lay a form composed for Death—a beautiful, motionless figure, covered with perfumed blossoms. It was Daphne.

Her tired hands were crossed upon her breast, her sad eyes closed for ever. Never more would they look in joy or sorrow on the world wherein she had learnt her lesson of misery; even the wreath of jasmine, twined by loving fingers in her hair, could not mar the peace of her eternal sleep; and in my infinite pity I let one small ray of the light she had loved fall across her lips like a kiss.

All was still, the ghostly silence of a death chamber, when suddenly the door was opened, and a man's form groped through the darkness of the room. I caught one glimpse of a face drawn with terrible remorse, before he flung himself down beside the quiet form and bent his head. I almost felt her form tremble beneath his touch, but the heavenly calm of her face changed not. She was at rest; but upon his darkened brow I seemed to see branded the shadow of two graves—one newly-made, and soon forgotten.

A man's heavy sobs broke the stillness. I hid my face behind a cloud and saw no more.

Leigh Ford.

Jumbled Picture Competition.

No. 1.

Cut out the figures portrayed in the sketches contained in this number and paste them up to form one picture. £2 2s. will go to the reader whose attempt is considered the cleverest, and a bottle of *HOME NOTES BOUQUET* to each of the five next. Date of closing: Monday, March 1st, 1897.

How to Make an Income of £5 a Minute.

The income of the Duke of Westminster is over five shillings a minute, day and night, all the year round.

This may be something of an eye-opener to many people, but there is really nothing very extraordinary in it.

We are prepared to pay £5 *a minute* to the four persons who collect the greatest number of coupons from *Short Stories, P.W.*, and *Home Notes*, during 1897.

True, we should only keep up the rate for about twenty minutes, but think of your sensations during that blissful period.

The way to secure this tremendous income is simplicity itself. You collect the coupons published in *Short Stories, P.W.*, and *Home Notes*, and in January, 1898, we will exchange these slips of paper for gold, provided that your collection is big enough.

Full particulars have already been published, and will appear again shortly.

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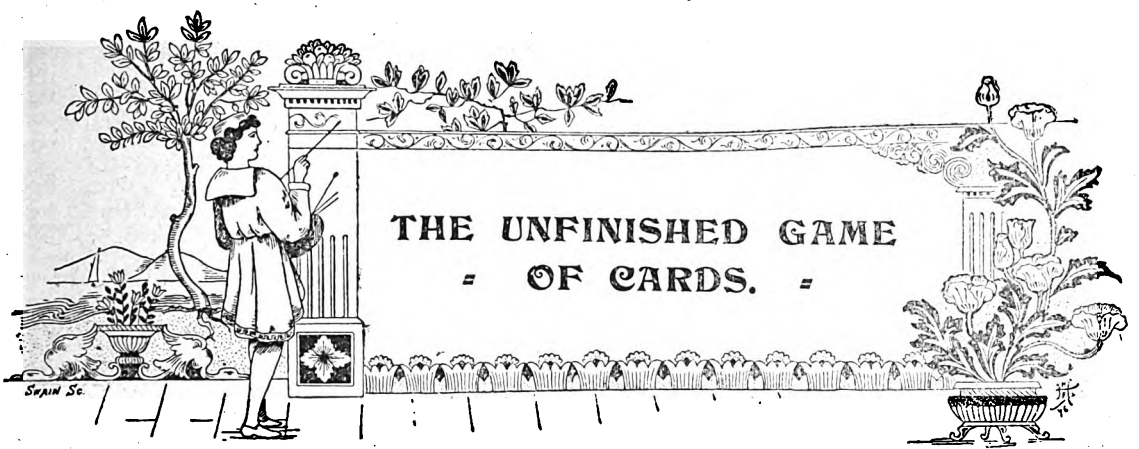

The old château, dark against an after-sunset sky, and veiled by tall reeds, which, from my low point of view, seemed high as itself, loomed up before me. It was big and square, this château, with towers, and toppling chimneys, and many windows. About it stood a guard of ancient trees, some in full leaf, others half-dead, and others again, quite dead, but still on duty; in one was a ragged eagle's nest, with the old birds hanging over.

What silence! What loneliness! An old house, deserted and fallen to decay; a strip of marsh, intensely green in the pale yellow light; a wan and weary moon, gazing at the world through a purple mist. A water-bird started noisily from among the reeds and flew shrieking over my head out of sight; a moment later I heard its wings dip in the still water half a mile away.

I wedged the sharp prow of my skiff into a thick growth of reeds, and sprang ashore. The black mud oozed up around my ankles. I began to revile my curiosity.

The Angelus came faintly from the little village across the water; an unseen creature—a frog, possibly, or an insect of some kind—set up a mournful droning; then an owl chimed in with its melancholy note. Oh, the country sounds at twilight, how they sadden one!

After quitting the marsh I found myself in a wild tangle of vegetation. At my feet lay the trunks of fallen trees and pieces of broken marble in the tall grass—this was the pleasure-garden of the old château. Yes—can you believe it?—a pleasure garden, with trim walks and terraces, where tender-eyed beauties strolled in shady alleys and lovers made verses by the side of splashing fountains—the scene of fête, and frolic, and love-making under the eighteenth century's amorous moon.

On close inspection the old building looked even darker and more forbidding. I climbed the broken steps. A bat flapped its wings in my face angrily, as if resentful of my intrusion. I paused and listened. The Angelus had ceased—all was silent.

To enter by the great door was impossible—it was fast locked. Just over my head was a window with a stone balcony. To gain the balcony by means of tangled vines and break through the window seemed an easy matter, and in fact was soon done.

How shall I describe the room in which I found myself?

A great salon, cold and dark and damp as a vault; the faint light sifting through the broken jalousies serving only to emphasise.

I took a step forward and a cobweb caught me across the chin. Something scurried along the floor, my heart rose in my throat, though I knew the creature to be a rat. I stretched out my hands in the darkness and grasped mouldy rags. Pshaw! If one were a coward one would turn and run.

When my eyes became accustomed to the gloom, I saw that the room had been almost royal in splendour. Fragments of decayed damask hung from tarnished cornices; full-lipped, round-limbed goddesses, with faded wreaths in their dingy hair, and green mould upon their bare breasts, smiled down from frescoed walls, smiled upon the rats and spiders, and—and—one knows not what else!—as sweetly as upon the beauties and cavaliers of Louis's court one hundred years ago. The furniture was mostly of the time of the Grand Monarch. There were chairs and sofas, mirrors, and tables; but, alas! their gilding and glory had depart-d. Rats nested in the upholstery, spiders slung to the walls, a pall of mould, dust, and cobwebs lay over all. A harp stood in a corner, I touched its strings, and they gave out a sound like the groan of a soul in torment. Upon a table of rare workmanship lay cards and coins of silver, from the position of which I guessed that a quartet had been interrupted at whist; upon a second table stood glasses and a decanter of dark-red wine.

A slight noise attracted my strained ear. Forced by that instinct which forbids us to turn our backs to the unexplained, I wheeled about, and beheld a small feathered thing, a tiny owl, sitting on the window-sill, staring at me with inquisitive eyes of pale green fire.

We scrutinised each other for a moment in silence; then the wind began to shake the hangings, and the owl raised its wings and flew away. There was but one door in the room; this probably led to the entrance hall. I stepped forward boldly to open it, and started back again in sudden alarm; my heart stood still, there was a nervous, creeping sensation at the roots of my hair. The door swung open with a creaking of rusty hinges, and revealed to me the shape of something in human guise, standing out from the blackness beyond.

Holy Virgin! Ah, how I deplored my alienation from the saints. To call upon them now would be impertinent—also, quite useless!

The something approached, and proved to be a young girl—a young girl—and I had been afraid! She was elegantly dressed, tricked out in all the coquettish splendour of the court of Marie Antoinette, in rose-coloured brocade, white lace, fine as a spider's web, high-heeled slippers, jewels, paint and powder. For the rest she

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was beautiful—dark-eyed and red-lipped—but with a look so hopeless, so wistfully sad, that my heart went out to her in very pity.

"Madame," I murmured, bowing low.

She turned her burning eyes upon me, and paled beneath her rouge.

"Eugène!"

"Madame, pardon; I am Jean François Louis de Blanchard, officer in the Guard, at Paris. I am——"

"Enough, monsieur, 'tis I who must beg pardon. I mistook you for the blackest villain who ever drove bargain with the devil, forgetting that the chains which bind him are never loosed, even for one night."

"Heydey! And what is all this?"

My fair damsel stood back, and made way for an ancient dame, upon whose palsied head sat a velvet cap, with nodding plumes, and an ancient gentleman, in velvet and lace, with decorations upon his breast.

"Grandmamma, grandpapa, this is M. Jean François de Blanchard. Monsieur, Mme. la Comtesse and M. le Comte de Saint-Germain."

The old couple, thinking of that fine breeding which conceals emotion, were surprised, but received me with great courtesy.

"Ah, monsieur," said the Countess, "it is with much pleasure that I give you welcome. It has been many years since I have entertained guests in this house."

"Welcome to Château Saint-Germain," said the Count.

"And now, Valerie, ring for candles."

"You forget, grandmamma."

"Ah, true, true. I am old, monsieur, and the sight of a young and happy face has made me forget that things are not what they used to be. You must get the candles yourself, my child. They are in the inlaid cabinet under the oval mirror. On second thoughts, get only one, for M. le Diable alone knows where we shall get more when these are gone. Monsieur, may I ask if you are related to the Chevalier de Blanchard, a man of genius and a wit in the old days at Versailles?"

"Possibly. There are many of my name."

"*Ouais!* What a fool I am! The chevalier must, of necessity, have been dead these many years; and without doubt he was confessed and absolved. Alas, alas! I shall never see my old friend again—never again. But time passes—Valerie, the candle."

"Permit me," said I, producing my match-box—a silver bauble, the gift of *la belle Heloise*—and striking a light. The ladies turned pale.

"Monsieur!" cried the Count, in a voice that trembled. "Are you the devil in disguise, dogging our footsteps?"

"Heaven forbid!" and I made the sign of the cross.

"A thousand pardons. Do you play whist, monsieur?"

"Monsieur, I do."

"*Bien.* A dummy is unsatisfactory. Come, madame; come, Valerie. We are losing time. We were three points on the new game, I think, Valerie? Monsieur, will you kindly take the chair opposite madame?"

The Count took the cards and we began. *Dieu*, what cards! And what silver! The former were black with age, and the latter incrusted with green canker and old coinage, none of it of more recent date than 1780.

Truly, my situation was a strange one. Here sat I, Blanchard, of the Guard, playing whist with whom? With what? At least my entertainers were noble. The old couple seemed to take pleasure in the game; madame's small eyes glittered as she raked in her winnings; monsieur, when fortune favoured him, chuckled and showed a mouth full of fangs. Sometimes they disputed a point with warmth, but through it all she was still the *grande dame*, and he the gallant courtier. Once during the evening he took from his waistcoat pocket a gold snuff-box, with portrait of Lambelle; he gazed on the face with reverence, and then offered me snuff.

In the intervals of shuffling and dealing, they questioned me eagerly though guardedly about the doings of the world.

"Is there much gaiety at Versailles?"

"Alas, no, madame."

"At Paris?"

"Ah, yes, Paris is always gay."

"Oh, Paris, my beautiful city. The best years of my life were spent in Paris, monsieur."

When the conversation turned upon the military affairs of the day, I observed that the face of the Count betrayed a lively emotion—tears rose to his eyes. "I, too, have been a soldier," he muttered.

All this time Valerie said not a word, but sat, quietly enough, at my right hand, with her great, gloomy eyes fixed upon something which I could not see. Could it be that she still thought of Eugène?

The one candle flared and flickered, and lit up the faces of the players with an uncanny light, and cast monstrous shadows upon walls and ceiling; the wind moaned about the house and shook the ragged hangings. Behind my back I heard a rat gnawing at the harp-strings. I played badly—very badly. The politeness of madame was put to the test, and—to her honour, let me say—it stood the strain. But, tell me, could you play whist with a mind divided between the vague shadows that lurked under sofas and chairs and in dark corners and—a beautiful woman?

The Count was dealing and the Countess yawning behind her painted fan. I resolved to rouse the young girl from her reverie, and, leaning towards her, whispered:

"You are preoccupied, mademoiselle."

"Monsieur!"

"Trust me."

"Ah, my friend, you know not what you ask."

"Mademoiselle, you are thinking of that villain Eugène—is it not so?"

"Hush, in the name of Heaven. You cannot understand, monsieur. I loved him—oh, how dearly I loved him! I was reckless, I was mad. I would have given life and salvation for his sake, and—*mon Dieu!*"

"Monsieur, the deal is yours," said the Count.

The next deal was Valerie's; the next the Countess's. I seized the opportunity to resume the interrupted conversation.

"You do not love him now?"

"Love him? Ah, love is a tender flower; when trodden upon it dies, but in its place spring poisonous weeds which never die. Hatred and revenge—these are the weeds that overrun my heart, monsieur."

"Revenge?" I laid my hand upon my sword. "But tell me where this villain is to be found, and, by all the saints in the calendar, you shall be revenged!"

About the lady's lips there played a smile which disconcerted me; she touched my hand with her own, which was cold, cold as a grave-stone.

"Friend, put up thy sword. If the saints would only hear me I would pray through all eternity that thou and he might never meet; but, *ma foi!* the good saints have forgotten my very name. As to vengeance, we will leave that to the devil, monsieur."

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"Valerie, monsieur, *attendez!* Are you aware, monsieur, that you have trumped my ace?"

And so the night wore away. We shuffled, dealt and played, lost and won; madame scolded me, and I made elaborate apologies to madame; between whiles I talked with Valerie behind her fan.

"Mademoiselle," I said, "I would die for you. Is there anything in the wide world that I can do to serve you?"

"Yes; give me the rose that you wear."

It was an insignificant flower pinned on my breast by a village girl, but she seized it eagerly, laid it against her cheek and pressed her lips to its drooping petals. I interpreted the action in my own way, and my heart leapt within.

Was it love that I felt for this strange creature with the painted face and powdered hair? Was it her beauty, or her unknown wrongs, or the mystery that surrounded her that attracted me so powerfully? Upon my soul, I neither knew nor cared! I feasted my eyes upon her face and form. She filled my heart and mind—all else was crowded out, even Heloise.

It was very late, the wind wailed like a banshee, the Count nodded in his chair, with mouth open and eyes turned backward—*parbleu*, he did not look handsome! The Countess sat and gloated over her winnings with an expression on her yellow old face that curdled my blood.

"Shall we not finish the game, madame?" I asked. But she did not reply.

Valerie rose from her chair with rustling of her silken gown and crossed to where the harp stood. I followed. She swept her hand across the strings and began a little chanson, something about love and idleness and a shepherdess in Arcadia—and stopped in the beginning.

"It was a favourite of mine when I was in the world," she said.

"You love the world, then?"

"I am sick with longing for it."

I led her to the window.

"Valerie, there it lies. Let us go and enjoy it together."

She did not answer, she did not even hear; she stood with her arms held out to the full moon, and her face bathed in its light.

"Come away," she said at length, almost fiercely; "I cannot bear it."

"Valerie, you have not answered me. Here is the balcony, there is my boat, the moon is overhead; let us go, my beloved."

"It is impossible."

"I am rich, I have a noble name, and, above all, I love you—I love you, Valerie! Come, let us leave this haunt of evil spirits. Ah, love, life is so short at best, let us be happy while we may."

"I implore you——"

"Valerie, why do you hesitate! Are you afraid?"

She made a gesture of disdain.

"Afraid? Is fear, then, the one thing that keeps us from our desires? Ah, you have not learnt life's lesson well. I tell you it is impossible, and that is enough."

"It is not enough. Love is strong, Valerie, and whatever the spell that binds you, I swear that I will break it."

She covered her face with her hands and sobbed; I stole my arm about her waist, and laid her head against my shoulder.

"At least, my sweet, nothing shall drive me from you," I whispered.

She broke away from me and stood with her arms folded upon her breast; she fastened her burning eyes upon mine; there was a look in them that was almost hope.

"Do you love me, then?"

"With my whole soul."

"How much would you resign for my sake?"

"Life—everything—my hopes of Heaven."

"What would you dare for me?"

"Death itself."

"Are you at peace with God, monsieur?"

"Alas, I fear not; it is many years since I confessed."

At this moment there was a knock at the door; no one seemed to hear it. The girl crossed the room—ah, with what grace!—and filled a glass with the dark red wine. A second knock; I observed that the hand of Valerie trembled as she gave me the brimming glass. A third knock; I raised the glass to my lips, and nodded across its brim to the woman I loved. I am a judge of wines; the bouquet of this was indescribably delicious.

"I drink to an eternity together," I cried.

Here the door swung open heavily, with a creaking of rusty hinges, and upon the threshold stood a young and fair-haired man.

He made a courtly bow. "Pardon," he said, in a low voice full of melody, "but the cock has already crowed for day. We must be travelling. Ah, I see, monsieur is about to give a toast. Do not let me interrupt, I beg. I assure you, monsieur, the wine is excellent."

The Count and Countess had risen and stood as though waiting. Their old faces wore expressions of profound despair, their arms hung lifeless at their sides. The money and cards lay in disorder upon the table. The candle burnt dimly, flaring up now and then with a spluttering noise. It could not last much longer.

With a cry, Valerie sprang forward and dashed the wine-glass from my lips. It fell to the floor with a crash.

"Do not touch it!" she cried. "For the love of God, leave this unholy place at once. Forget all that has happened, if you hope for salvation!"

The strange young man smiled mystically.

"Mademoiselle is unselfish," said he. "But come, we delay," and he held wide the door, while the Count, the Countess, and Valerie passed through.

"Farewell, monsieur," said the Countess, and waved her hand.

"Farewell," said the Count.

But Valerie never said a word. Not once did she look at me, but passed on with her head upon her breast, out into the darkness.

Then the young man turned to me with a smile of charming frankness.

"Monsieur, permit me to say that I am glad of this meeting. We are not strangers, but old comrades. Do you remember that night at Biarritz, when you won five hundred thousand francs from the Marquis? I was there and applauded. I was also present at the duel next day—unobserved, of course. And now a word in your ear, *mon ami*, you are *épris* with Mademoiselle Valerie; you wish to see her again; *bien!* I will help you. Be here at the château one year from to-night—last night, I should say. Madame la Comtesse will be glad to receive you. For your sake, I regret that she does not entertain more often. And now, *au revoir!* I do not say farewell, since we part to meet again." He bowed and closed the door.

There was a curious charm about this strange young

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man—the air of a poet, a diplomat, a great general. I liked him. I cautiously opened the door and peered out. Darkness and silence.

"Valerie!" I called. "Valerie!"

My voice reverberated along the deserted halls; rats scampered away, terrified. This was all I heard, except—ah, no, I imagined it—the sound of a muffled sob a great way off.

I took the candle and searched the house—room after room, corridor after corridor; all were furnished, but all had the air of having been long untenanted; everywhere rats fled before my invasion. At length I returned to the salon.

My candle had spun a winding sheet; it flared up for the last time and went out. I threw open an eastern window, and, lo! the pale dawn was coming up across the water, and the wind had died into a soft breeze that smelt of the morning! Oh, the blessed day! How welcome after such a night!

As I pulled my boat across the water, I looked back at the old château. There it stood among its guardian trees, veiled by a thin mist which ascended from the marsh like steam. The first rays of the rising sun had tinted the mist a pale rose colour, the marsh was visibly green, the song of a bird in a bush by the water's side enchanted my very soul. I felt almost light-hearted. But, oh, Valerie! a year is so long, so long!

Arrived at the little village I sought the curé, a pious man, well read in the history of the province. At my request, he told me the story of the château on the island. This is it:

"In the year 1785, the only living representatives of the powerful and wealthy family of Saint-Germain were the old Count, his wife, their granddaughter and heiress, Valerie, and Eugène, their nephew and next of blood. The Count held some high post at court, I believe. Valerie was *dame de compagnie* to the Queen; and I have no doubt that they were all quite as worldly as most people of their rank and day. Eugène was a villain, a *roué*, a man entirely without honour; and yet, they say, he was loved by his beautiful cousin. Ah, my son, I count the love of woman no compliment since she can give it to a man like this.

"Well, the Count—or, possibly, the Countess—for some reason unknown, lost favour at court, and it became necessary to quit Versailles. This island, the ancient seat of the family, was their place of refuge. It is said that these people, accustomed as they were to a life of gaiety and dissipation, found the château rather dull. Whist was their one amusement; the old people had a great passion for the game, and they often played all night till dawn, it is said.

"It appears that Eugène was heavily in debt. He appealed to his uncle. Help was refused; then, in desperation, he drove a bargain with the devil." Here the curé crossed himself. "This was the unholy compact: *Great wealth in exchange for three souls.* It was the part of Eugène to put out of the world three souls—three souls unrepentant and unshriven. This is what they say, my son. All I know is that one morning the servants found the Count, his wife, and Mdlle. Valerie sitting round the card-table in the grand salon, cold in death. The Count was in the act of trumping his opponent's ace; the Countess had fallen forward on her nose, her fingers still clutching the cards; and the eyes of mademoiselle—she had beautiful eyes, I am told—were turned towards the vacant chair. That this chair was vacant is a significant fact.

"The wine had been drugged with a subtle and instantaneous poison, and, it is said, has never been removed; the decanter still stands on a small table in the grand salon. Well, Eugène, guilty or not, inherited the old man's wealth, but never returned to the island indeed, though many years have passed and generations come and gone since that fatal day, those gloomy halls have never echoed the footfall of mortal man. The peasants shun the place, for there runs a tradition that to pass one night there—the night of the anniversary of the crime—is to lose your soul.

"And now comes the strangest part of the story. Upon this anniversary—the time of year is not clearly known—from dusk till dawn, the devil"—the pious father crossed himself again—"allows those three lost souls to revisit their mortal habitation and divert themselves with their favourite game, and, it is said, they always leave a game unfinished for fear lest the privilege be withdrawn.

"That is the story. I cannot vouch for it; I can only affirm that, once or twice, I have seen strange lights glimmering across the water. But your scientists have many ways of accounting for such phenomena. The fate of those three was sad, indeed. If they had lived a few years longer, they would have met another as sad, perhaps, but more noble, for the Saint-Germain were loyal. Ah, well for me, I do not fear the dead, and the bones of these have been dust a hundred years in the great vaults under the château. May Our Lady plead for them!"

The curé ceased speaking, and I told him my story. He listened with great interest.

"My son," he cried, seizing my arm, "you will not return to the island? Do you know who it was who tempted you?"

"I know."

"Then, for the love of Our Lady, and all the saints, be warned! Valerie, whom you say you love, is—at this moment—burning in Hades!"

"Love is stronger than the fear of Hades."

"My son, my son, may Heaven protect you, for you stand in danger of losing your soul!"

"Father, it is lost already!" And I staggered out of the house into the street like a man in a dream.

N. A. Cox.

Be Sure Your Handwriting Will Find You Out.

OF recent years Graphology has developed to a remarkable pitch. Exhaustive study in the subject has resulted in its being classed as one of the arts. The true character of a person may be discerned in a few strokes of the pen, where attempts to discover it have failed in every other direction. You may think yourself a really nice sort of person, and your friends and acquaintances may think so, too, but you ought not to rest satisfied until you have had the opinion of the most expert graphologist of the present time. This will cost you the nominal expenditure of six penny stamps and a stamped and addressed envelope, all of which must be enclosed in an envelope with a specimen of your handwriting upon an unruled sheet of paper with your usual signature and full name and address, and forwarded to these offices. The truths which will be revealed to you need not necessarily be flattering—it depends upon your real character. Those who have faith will be delighted; and those who are sceptical will be surprised.

GRAPHOLOGIST,

PEARSON'S WEEKLY Buildings, Henrietta St., London, W.C.

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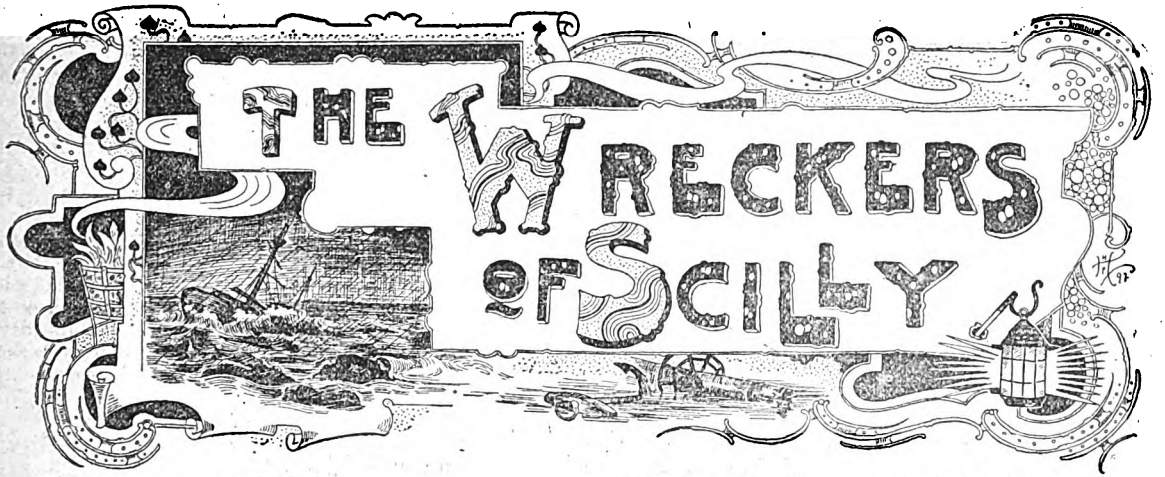

SUMMARY.

The scene is laid at St. Agnes, one of the Scilly Islands. The inhabitants live by the booty obtained from vessels wilfully led to destruction by false beacons. The only two exceptions are Nigel Prideaux and Damaris Nance, his sweetheart. Manuel Nance, Damaris' father, is Nigel's greatest enemy. The *King Hal*, a warship laden with Spanish plunder, is lured to destruction, and wrecked off Troy Town. All hands are either drowned in the sea or killed by the inhabitants, except Sir Francis Seymour, who is rescued by Nigel. Damaris takes food to the survivor, who falls in love with her. Nigel secures Sir Francis' escape. Manuel Nance decides to give his daughter in marriage to one of the sons of Governor Layton, and for this purpose sends one of his men to convey the offer. The big dowry which is to accompany the girl creates dissention among the Governor's six sons, and they decide to swim across to the island on which she lives, the first arrival to become her husband. Damaris, however, strenuously objects to the marriage.

CHAPTER IX.

The Wedding Day.

It was an unforgettable day that dawned for St. Agnes on the 26th of June, 1539.

A bank of cloud, dark, with ragged edges, lay in the south-west when the sun rose to shine on the placid sea, and the grey, thatched cottages set in the deep-coloured grass of the island. But it was so distant, and the breeze had such a gentle, murmurous note, that even the islanders most versed in weather lore took no heed of it. The blue Atlantic lapped the stones of St. Warna's Bay with a cooing sound that was of itself a lullaby.

But the shattered hull of the *King Hal* still stood against the rocks of Troy Town as a witness to the fickleness of the beautiful sea; and the fresh splinters and bits of iron, fragments of clothes, half a boat, and much else which littered the strand gave further testimony in the same direction.

Once again Damaris woke to hear the pleasant sound of the chink of gold. The sun beamed in upon her and made a crimson pool where its rays settled on the Turkey mat which was set over the hay upon the floor. But the sound of the gold filled the girl with a chilly terror. She knew well that it was her marriage portion that was being reckoned; and she feared that heaven might not befriend her after all.

No sooner did she begin to bestir herself than her father entered her room. There was that in his face that saddened Damaris yet more than her own presentiment.

"We shall part, my daughter, shall we not, with some sorrow?" he said.

"I know not wherefore we should part at all, dear father," replied the girl, and, but half-robed as she was (for she had not called to her nurse), she put her arms about Master Nance.

"Oh, cheer thee, cheer thee! A day will make much difference to my little Damaris, I warrant. By St. Nicholas, thou'lt like thy lot of matron full as well as thy dull days here!"

"I will not wed him, father—I will not wed him—though he marry me with chains," she sobbed.

"As touching that, my obstinate maid, time shall show. But, mark thee, I'll not endure thy moodiness. An thou art not Mistress Layton the younger ere nightfall I'll cast thee forth from thy nest here. By the thunder which trumpets the good things coming for us of St. Agnes, I rejoice I have but one daughter to plague me with her ingratitude and humours. I warrant, my wench, if thou dost not display thy sweeter parts—and thou hast them—thy husband is not one to beg thee to be gracious. There be they who flog their wives

Put her arms about the smooth neck of her favourite Nell.

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into dutifulness, and, marry, it answers well with dispositions like thine. So no more of this; thou art to be wedded this afternoon, and thy friend, Father Harris from Tresco, has the word to be here to tie the knot."

While he spoke the face of Manuel Nance reflected the working of his mind. For the moment he had forgotten his determination to wash out the memory of some of his past crimes by a more lawful future. His veins had swelled, and it was all he could do to keep from striking Damaris in his unmanageable passion.

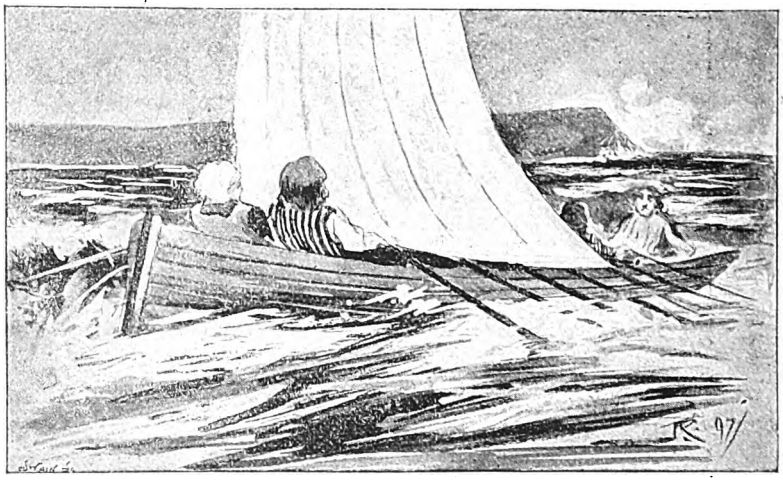
He returned to his room, and the girl, very sad at heart, finished dressing herself as best she could. She would go forth into the open—that was the most effective balm for distress. Under the blue dome of heaven and with the cool air fanning her, she ever regained her spirits in a measure.

Her steps took her towards her kine, and, to the amazement of the patient beast, she put her arms about the smooth neck of her favourite Nell and cried upon its coat.

"Come weal, come woe, dear ones, you and I must part!" she sobbed.

Then she left them and wandered on in the bright morning sunshine, with the happy twitter of birds about her and the glitter of the sunlit dew on the grass.

And so at length she reached the little inlet wherein Nigel's boat, *The Nell*, rocked lightly at anchor but a fathom from the cliffs.



Did not therefore desist from pulling through the bay.

"Here will I bide till he comes!" she said to herself.

Nor had she long to wait. For the night had been a restless and weary one for Nigel, and he yearned for the events of the day to begin even as Damaris feared them.

When he saw that she had been weeping, he took her in his arms with a passionate pressure, and kissed her cheeks where they were stained with the passage of her tears.

"Thou wouldst not have me give thee up?" he asked anxiously.

"If thou didst my heart would break—for I have but thee," she whispered.

"Good, my Damaris. Then I am content. Hearken. In an hour or two all the men folk start hence for Hugh Town, to bring over Master Layton with a flourish. I am to be with them; but that will I not be. Come hither, my Damaris, and peep into my fairy cave."

With that he led her to a well-dissembled hole between some granite boulders, and showed her his store of provisions, with a spare sail, cushions for his mistress, an extra rudder and pair of oars, knives, a pistol and much else.

"By the aid of these, my precious, and God's help, we will leave St. Agnes behind us and adventure upon the broader mercy of the world."

"But how, Nigel, shall it come about?"

"Listen. To avoid going with the rest, I will straightway put out as if I were after the mackerel. For the time I will be by Annet, where I can see them make their start. They will say hard things of me, but for that, my sweet, of course we care not. But when they are well across—then with both my arms and all my life I'll row hitherwards. Wilt thou be here to join me?"

"If I be not dead, look for me. Even my curse will for once be kind."

"'Tis well. Thus met, we will not soon be parted, my life's blood. And dress thyself, dearest, for a journey instead of a bridal—though it will be both in one."

There was already an echo of uproar in the village when Damaris regained her father's house. It was not often there was even a funeral in St. Agnes—save such as the men of the *King Hal* had: a wedding was, of course, rarer still. The women and girls were, therefore, hard at work, some mixing paste for the cakes of the wedding feast, and some gathering flowers to bespread the shingle where young Layton was to tread on landing, and at the door of his bride's dwelling.

The men, too, were in high spirits. It had been noised about that Master Nance himself would soon follow his daughter out of the island. He was not loved; and he would not be much lamented. Moreover, would not his pastures and house, as well as the wealth that was in it, accrue naturally to them? This was an established custom in St. Agnes. The emigrant might take away as much as he could carry in a boat—the rest was for those who stayed behind.

There was further the exciting thought: Who should be their chief when Nance had gone? Some held that Pender should take the dignity, but others were of opinion that the office should be filled by a regular election, which might raise another than Pender to the sovereignty.

Master Nance summoned them all together, as he was wont, and gave them his instructions. They were, without exception, to accompany him—in the big sailing-boat, which was only used on great occasions, such as the boarding of a ship on a distant rock, or to fight a Spaniard or a Frenchman whom they could take at a disadvantage. In this way the Governor of St. Mary's would have due honour paid to him, and Master Nance himself would be fitly homaged.

So busy were they, and full of chatter, that they did not much heed the lowering nature of the sky. This had changed greatly since the dawn. The clouds had browed thick from the south-west, and there was a lurid tinge to them which told of the storm of which they were heralds. The closeness of the air also argued of a possible outbreak of some severity.

Master Nance himself was concerned with the care of a certain important little oaken case, in which were the five thousand pieces of gold, without which he feared he might not bring back the bridegroom.

At length all things were ready, and the men trooped

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down to the shingle by Perkilla Bay. The boat was ready, but it was marked that those who had taken charge of her had delayed to unbind the sails. They stood looking about them—at the sea and the sky, as if uncertain what to do.

"Devil take them!" exclaimed Nance, when he noticed this, "what is the hindrance?"

"'Tis the day, Master Nance, I'm of opinion," answered one of the men; "we be like to have a capful, by the look of it."

Then for the first time that morning Nance, too, gazed about him as a mariner should.

He frowned when he saw the shape of the south-west clouds and the colour of the sea south of the Gugh.

"Holy fiend!" he exclaimed, but he said no more.

"Oh, it may not be so bad," continued the man who had drawn his attention to it. "And for me, who have no wenches to get husbands for, it matters not."

But Nance heeded not this stroke of satire. He was still intent on the heavens. At length he turned away, with a forced laugh and a heave of the shoulders.

"I trow," he said, "if we be fated to make well through it, no puff of wind shall arrest us. All aboard her, men, and ho! ho! off with her. We'll have her mainsail up in a pistol shot, and there'll be breeze enough to land us with Master Layton ere a third of an hour has gone."

"And for getting back, Master Nance, in the teeth of that?" observed Fortescue, pointing to the cloud.

"Oh, what the demon avails it to think so far ahead! That's my merry lads, slip her out quick as a flash of lightning. Who knows what shall come to pass? For me, I've shipped the tiller of my life, and mean to sit in the stern of the boat till judgment day."

The other St. Agnes men stared at their lord, but did not therefore desist from pulling through the bay to get into the wake of the wind. Nance's red face and unusually bright eyes were certainly somewhat odd, and he moved his fingers nervously, like a man who had not full control over them. But it was not until they had turned the easternmost point of the bay, and a sudden howl of wind caught them at the head of Gugh channel, that they had serious doubts about their master's sanity. The squall took them unprepared and all but drove them over. For several moments there was confusion—and in the thick of it, with the men bustling each other on to the windward gunwale, what should Master Nance do but roar out lustily their St. Warna's chorus:

"Huzza for the rocks it splits upon,
And hey for the corpse with its gewgaws on!"

He shouted it several times, embracing his box of crown pieces the while, and with his gaze concentrated upon the bellied sail.

The others, with looks at each other and low mutterings, drew away from him, so that he was left alone in the stern of the boat. As the ship plunged in the heavy swell the waves broke over him. But this did not seem to affect his delirium. He sang on, though drenched to the skin.

Some of the men were now for turning back while they had a point of wind in their favour.

"It bodes us ill," said one of these, "to go into a squall like yon" (pointing to the waves of the Sound beyond the Gugh) "with a witless man, and he with the tiller in his hands."

"Master Nance," cried another, "be you careful, we request of you."

But though they tried to argue him into giving up the helm, he would have none of them. With a flash of momentary intelligence, he bade them retake their places, and cleverly drove the boat over the tops of the waves.

"I'm master shipman here, by the Heaven that made us, and I'll brook no meddling. Are we all aboard?"

"Every man and boy of St. Agnes, Nigel Prideaux, his idiot boy, and little Obadiah excepted," answered one.

"Ah! a murrain on that Prideaux youth. Why haled you him not along of us? I have my fears of him. Zounds, and he may be with her at this moment! 'Bout ship, I say, and back to St. Agnes. I'll not endure e'en such a chance as that."

Vain was it for Pender to shout that he had seen Nigel cross the Sound towards Annet with his tackle on board.

"I'll not credit it—ye're all against me, you rats. I'm cheated by earth and heaven and Damaris and Master Layton. What cares he for me, forsooth? 'Tis the crowns he marries, not the flesh and blood of my sweet child. Marry, how I've misused her—but not"—this with a shriek that made even these well-nerved men start to their feet—"as I might have done. I'll turn me and repent."

Several of the others flew towards him to prevent the disaster that was impending. There was a riot of cursing. And then the boat, having been strongly placed broadside against the storm, was tossed over like a feather, and men and sails were all interningled in the waves. Master Nance's mocking yell of laughter as the sea broke over the boat once more was the last sound that the gulls overhead might have recorded of these doomed men of St. Agnes.

They did not all go to the bottom at once. Certain of them could swim, and swim bravely. But these were either so hampered by the others, or by the ropes and sails of the boat, or so oppressed by the fury of the waves, that they soon succumbed. They failed even to reach the reef of St. Bartholomew, which stands midway in the channel between St. Agnes and St. Mary's.

The gulls screamed above them, and one by one they gave in and died.

All this happened out of sight of St. Agnes, for the women folk had their labour to attend to, nor did the islanders of St. Mary's chance to notice what had befallen

"I'll turn me and repent."

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the ship, though some had marked its starting, and anon questioned each other as to its fate with anxiety.

Towards noon the Tresco monastery boat safely ran into Hugh Town, yet not without grave peril, and after much laborious beating against the wind. Father Harris was on board her, but he learnt that the St. Agnes men had not appeared. To St. Mary's it seemed natural that the storm should have made Master Nance return home in haste. The waves were of a fearful size, and their bellowing off Porth Hellick and Peninis could be heard two miles away.

Not until the evening did St. Agnes have any intimation of the calamity that had come upon them. With much sighing and sorrow the women had been forced to agree that the marriage would have to be deferred. Dame Cochran said so—not without glee that seemed quite ribald. She understood the sea better than the rest, and unless the wedding party meant to marry death himself, she said they would not dream of trying to return to St. Agnes in the teeth of the gale.

But towards the time of sunset, when the storm was at its worst, young Nigel landed on the island, soaked, and with the strength almost beat out of him. It had taken him ten hours to toil through a couple of miles of sea, even with the shelter of the St. Agnes coast from the wind. A little more and he would have given it up, and accepted his fate.

"Ill news!" he blurted out to the first comer who met him, and then he reeled and swooned into the woman's arms.

"Look here," cried Dame Cochran to poor, agitated little Damaris, "here's a lively armful."

So saying, she dropped Nigel upon the floor of Master Nance's house with a laugh, and went her way.

Silently, but with agony at the heart, Damaris bent over her lover. He was so wet and pallid that she doubted not he was drowned. Had she not again and again gone to the cave where they were to meet, and each time in vain? At length she had no longer hope that they could voyage in such

Young Nigel landed on the island.

Sped homewards as fast as he could go.

a storm as prevailed. That was grievous enough. But (the later thought that it was because her lover was lost had already—when the nurse appeared—begun to stab her like a poisoned knife.

So she fell upon Nigel, and wept on his breast, and called him all the tender names and more by which he had called her, and caressed him, and bathed his cold face with her hot tears.

Until, lo! when her sorrow was at its intensest, he opened his eyes, and his lips smiled at her. Then in a moment she became as pale as he had been, and she leapt to her feet in astonishment that was half terror. But Nigel reassured her.

"Thou art the best of apothecaries, dear one."

Whereupon her tears wetted him again, though this time they were tears of joy, and when she had said many foolish, fond things, she tended him like the most careful of nurses until he was able to get up and tell her of the calamity that her father and the others had encountered.

This also overwhelmed the poor girl. But, with her head nestled on Nigel's breast—it was very damp; but what mattered that, seeing how copious were her tears?—she at length took comfort of a sort. It was worse for the others than for her. She still had Nigel, but they, poor souls! had lost fathers and husbands and sons and brothers all at a stroke.

By this time all St. Agnes knew what had happened. Little Obadiah, while playing in the surf of Perkilla Bay, where the strand shelved most gradually, was amazed and enchanted almost out of his infant wits to perceive a thing that proved to be a dead body come coquettishly towards him. At one instant it was nearly within his reach; but even while he was stretching his little bared arms towards it, the jealous sea fetched it away again. So the game lasted for a while. But anon, with a mighty heave, the Atlantic dashed it well on to the stones, and when the wave receded there it stayed.

"A pin for a man and a pin for a boy,
And two pins more for the saint at the helm."

yelled the little urchin as he capered round the body. It was sadly beaten and scarred by the sharp granite rocks, and the clothes were three parts stripped from it.

"Huzza for the rocks it splits upon,
And hey for the corpse with its geegaws on!"

Whether it was due to infantile greed, or mere curiosity, or the association of the words of the hymn of St. Warna, something impelled the little lad to examine more closely the poor drowned man who had been tossed up specially, as it seemed, for his entertainment.

Holding his breath, and with the wind in his long hair, he trod on tiptoe towards the derelict find, not without anxiety (for never before had he been allowed to finger prey of this kind), touched the arm, where it was bent across the body. Even as he did so he disturbed the equilibrium of the corpse, so that it rolled over towards him with the face fully uncovered.

The lad uttered a horrible, piercing scream and sped homewards as fast as he could go. Nor did he stop his wails until he was at his mother's knee.

It was his own father that the Atlantic had bruised and thrown to him.

(To be concluded.)

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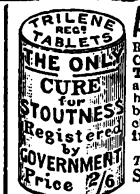

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Answers to Correspondents.

J. E. T. thinks that it would be a good plan to publish a book of reproductions of photographs of the different statues to be found in London, together with a brief account of their history.——Such a volume would be interesting to a few people. A portfolio of drinking-fountains or of railway-stations would be just as much appreciated by the man in the street.

E. W. C. B.—(1 and 2). An accident must happen to the train in which the person is travelling. (3.) The coupon must either be signed or an annual subscription to *P.W.* paid, and the newsagent's receipt forwarded to us.

HOUSEKEEPER.—The best thing to use in cleaning satin furniture is fresh breadcrumbs. Rub them over the satin until they grow discoloured, and then dust off the remaining crumbs with a soft cloth.

J. M.—Your schemes for the destruction of snakes in India are very elaborate, but I am afraid that they are not worth patenting.

I. P. has been very much struck with the number of ladies who are to be found at nearly every football match of importance. He is anxious to know whether there is any likelihood of women developing a craze for this pastime similar to that developed by the male sex. "We don't hear anything of the Ladies' Football Club nowadays," he says, "but the interest centred in the men players will, I am mortally afraid, become as morbid and unladylike as cycling."——Although there does actually appear to be an increase of lady spectators at football matches, both big and small, there need be no reason to deplore this fact. It is, after all, a healthy interest, and the play is to a certain extent rendered better by the knowledge on the part of the players that the eyes of their sweethearts and their wives are watching their movements with a critical interest.

W. W. (Gibraltar).—The different navies of the world were represented at the Chicago Exhibition by models only. There is no waterway for a vessel of 1,000 tons between Chicago and the coast.

P. B. asks if it is possible for rubies to lose their colour.——It is quite possible, although a somewhat infrequent occurrence. Should a gem of this kind be exposed to the light continuously for, say, a couple of years, it will become perceptibly lighter in tint.

GRACE.—Thanks for your letter. The trunks of trees which are covered with moss or lichen are more liable to lightning strokes than those which are not.

C. L. N. is an amateur photographer, and wants to know how he can print out weak spots in his negatives.——Concentrate the sun's rays on the dense part of the negative with the aid of a large reading-glass. Do not allow the focus to become too small, and move it slowly to and from the negative in order not to form a round spot.

J. M. W.—Perhaps the chief manufacturers of piano organs are Messrs. Chiappa and Sons Limited, 6, Little Bath Street, E.C.

MISS LANG is making preparations for a dance, and has just received the last reply to her invitations. The fact that only twenty gentlemen accepted, while thirty-seven ladies agreed to come, out of an equal number of invitations despatched, leads Miss Lang to wonder if the dancing man is becoming an extinct animal——Your experience does not seem to be at all uncommon. Cases of the same sort are becoming more frequent every year. Men are beginning to realise that, after all, dancing is but a waste of time, and they are certainly becoming more moderate in this direction. They fail to see the humour of rushing home, hustling into dress clothes, tearing off to a hall, hunting up partners, getting hot, feeding on ices, tarts, and other unsubstantial, indigestible food, talking ball-room babble, going out into the cold air at midnight, and getting up the next morning stuffy and totally unfit for work. When a man goes to a dance, it is not in human nature for him to take things calmly and moderately; consequently, he is beginning to prefer not to go at all.

MECHANIC.—There is no such company or syndicate as you mention, so far as I know, either in London or any other part of the United Kingdom.

W. W. D. R.—More than ninety per cent. of railway passengers in England travel third class. They contribute about eighty-three per cent. of the receipts.

A. S. T.—To cure broken chilblains apply a little vaseline every night till healed, and then use the following embrocation. Those unbroken should be anointed with a little of the following embrocation every night till the chilblains disappear: The embrocation is made by breaking a fresh hen's egg into a bottle, and adding to it (very gradually) a quarter of a pint of turpentine, when thoroughly mixed add half a pint of vinegar very slowly. This mixture, which will be found to keep well, should be shaken before use.

E. C. W.—The puzzle you send is only an adaptation of a very old one. Many thanks, however, for giving me the opportunity of seeing it.

F. R. M.—The next century commences on January 1st, 1901.

MR. JAMES LINGARD has sent me particulars regarding a patent balance valve saucepan cover. The object of this novelty is to prevent water from boiling over, and it does so on the same principle which guards against the possibility of a locomotive boiler exploding—by allowing the steam to escape. The address of the manufacturer is 235, Earl's Street, Longsight, Manchester.

MEAT extracts are common enough. A vegetable extract is a novelty, but it is a novelty with some sterling merit. It is made entirely from vegetable substances which, after being ground and mixed, are reduced by machinery to an extract. The stuff is very palatable and nourishing. The jars and bottles cost from 7½d. upwards, and may be obtained from Fromm's Extract Company, 61½, Fore Street, London, E.C.

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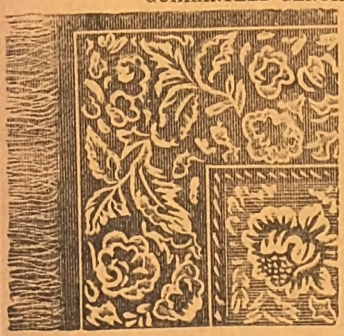

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EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

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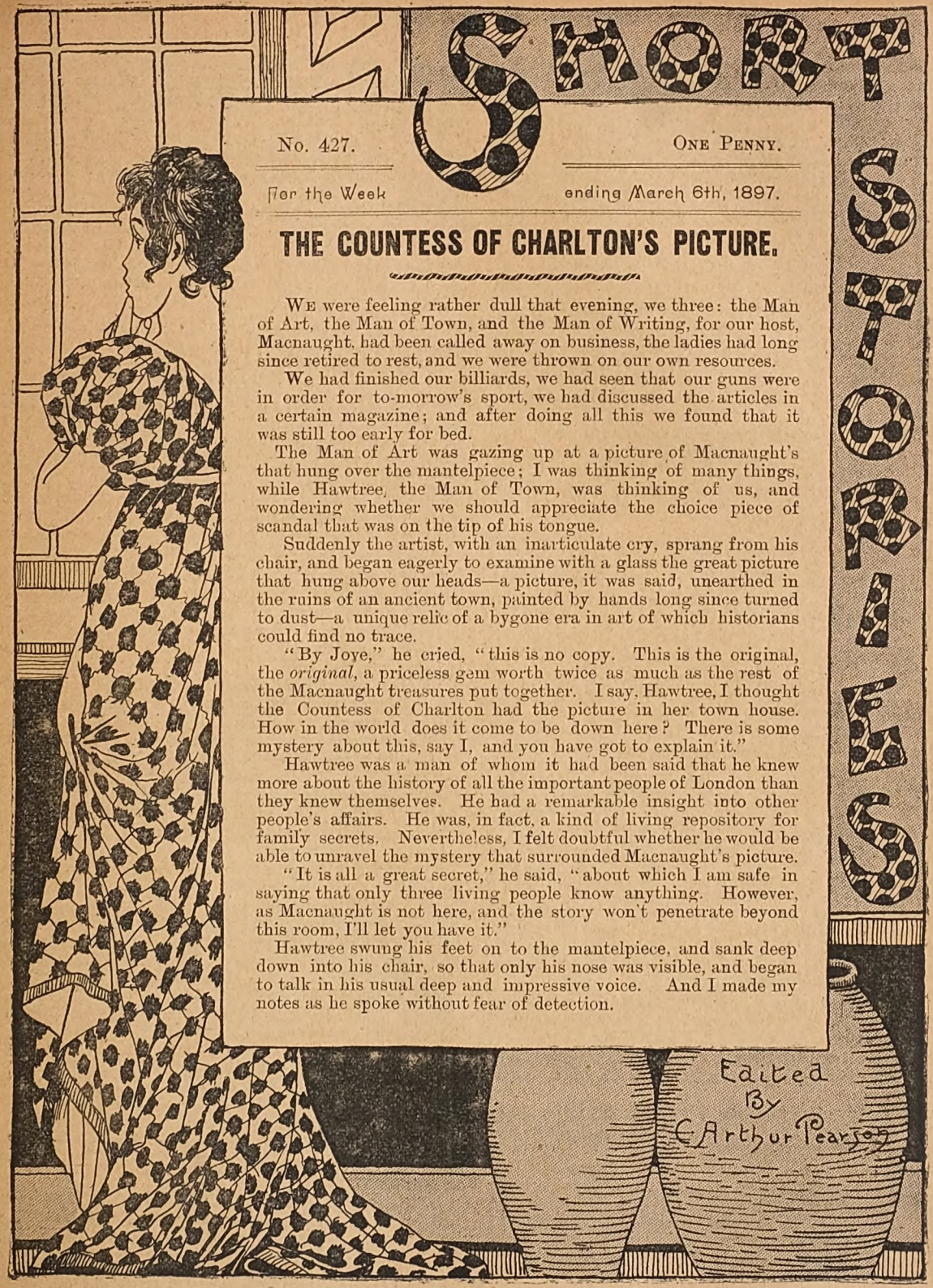

THE COUNTESS OF CHARLTON'S PICTURE.

We were feeling rather dull that evening, we three: the Man of Art, the Man of Town, and the Man of Writing, for our host, Macnaught, had been called away on business, the ladies had long since retired to rest, and we were thrown on our own resources.

We had finished our billiards, we had seen that our guns were in order for to-morrow's sport, we had discussed the articles in a certain magazine; and after doing all this we found that it was still too early for bed.

The Man of Art was gazing up at a picture of Macnaught's that hung over the mantelpiece; I was thinking of many things, while Hawtree, the Man of Town, was thinking of us, and wondering whether we should appreciate the choice piece of scandal that was on the tip of his tongue.

Suddenly the artist, with an inarticulate cry, sprang from his chair, and began eagerly to examine with a glass the great picture that hung above our heads—a picture, it was said, unearthed in the ruins of an ancient town, painted by hands long since turned to dust—a unique relic of a bygone era in art of which historians could find no trace.

"By Joye," he cried, "this is no copy. This is the original, the *original*, a priceless gem worth twice as much as the rest of the Macnaught treasures put together. I say, Hawtree, I thought the Countess of Charlton had the picture in her town house. How in the world does it come to be down here? There is some mystery about this, say I, and you have got to explain it."

Hawtree was a man of whom it had been said that he knew more about the history of all the important people of London than they knew themselves. He had a remarkable insight into other people's affairs. He was, in fact, a kind of living repository for family secrets. Nevertheless, I felt doubtful whether he would be able to unravel the mystery that surrounded Macnaught's picture.

"It is all a great secret," he said, "about which I am safe in saying that only three living people know anything. However, as Macnaught is not here, and the story won't penetrate beyond this room, I'll let you have it."

Hawtree swung his feet on to the mantelpiece, and sank deep down into his chair, so that only his nose was visible, and began to talk in his usual deep and impressive voice. And I made my notes as he spoke without fear of detection.

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"You must know, then, that this picture," said he, waving his hand to the mantelpiece, "is a priceless work of art that is as unique as it is valuable. It is impossible to say whose hand laid those marvellous colours. It is impossible, too, to say at what date the picture was painted, or for whose pleasure it was designed. Its whole history is wrapped in mystery. All that is known for certain is that it was discovered some three or four hundred years ago beneath the ruins of an ancient town, and that when it was brought to light it nearly caused a world-wide war on the question of its ownership. An English general, however, succeeded in gaining possession of it by a skilful strategy, and immediately packed it off to his family at home, with whom it has remained until it fell into the hands of our friend Macnaught."

Having finished this magnificent, if somewhat vague peroration, Hawtree looked round suddenly, barely giving me time to drop my note-book to the floor, and to disguise with a quick cough the quiet chuckle on which I had ventured.

When he had satisfied himself that I was giving him my whole attention, and that the artist was doing the same, he again buried himself in the recesses of his chair, while I stealthily reached out for my note-book and continued taking down his words as he gave utterance to them.

"It was an original notion of our friend Macnaught to make a collection, as he called it, of the unique works of art of the world. Money is a quick worker and it was not long before Macnaught found himself in possession of many treasures of which there were no duplicates in existence. Thus, that picture to the left was painted by a French artist, whose name, unfortunately, has escaped me. A genuine work of art, is it not? No sooner was it hung at the Salon, than Paris was at the man's feet, dealers were clamouring for his work, and he was generally considered the coming artist of the century. A day later he committed suicide, leaving his immortal masterpiece behind him. Macnaught immediately bought it. Again, that picture on the opposite wall is the sole remaining work in existence of an early Italian artist. The colour is worthy of Titian.

"Well, this rather curious collection that Macnaught was making was already well known, when he heard, for the first time, the full history of this picture that now adorns his wall. Immediately, the desire to own it took full possession of him. He actually made a space for it on the wall, and thought of nothing else through the day, and dreamt of it through the night. If everything else failed I fully believe that he would have murdered the owner and carried it away by force.

"The picture had remained in the family of the old general who had taken it after it had been unearthed from the ruined city. As a sacred relic it had been handed down from father to son until the fifth generation, when it was owned by its lawful mistress, the Countess of Charlton.

"At this time, when the fever was strongly on him, business made it impossible for Macnaught to journey down from this place of his in Scotland to London, to personally inspect the picture. So well, however, had its charms been described to him, my humble voice being among those that urged him to procure it at any cost, that Macnaught determined to boldly write to the Countess of Charlton, and make her a direct offer for the picture. This he accordingly did, and for six days afterwards his soul was in torment.

"On the seventh day a letter was handed to him, heavily crested, and bearing the London post-mark. It was short, and very much to the point. The Countess of Charlton, it ran, while thanking Mr. Macnaught for his offer of her picture, regretted that she was unable to accept it.

"Macnaught was furious. He raved up and down his studio, tore his hair, threatened the life of the Countess, and swore unceasingly great Scotch oaths in the broadest dialect for the remainder of the day.

"When he grew a little calmer, he sat down, and dashed off another letter to the Countess, explaining his reasons, and offering her a prodigious sum for the picture.

"The letter that came by return made him all the more determined to have his way. It was something like this:

"Dear Mr. Macnaught,—I must again thank you for your kind offer for my picture, which, I may say in confidence, I should be only too pleased to accept, were it not for the fact that it is absolutely out of my power to do so. It is, as you say, a unique work of art, and would no doubt be a grace to your collection. It has been in our family for hundreds of years as a sacred relic. When it is passed on from one generation to another a clause is invariably inserted in the will to the effect that it must, on no account, go out of the family. If this is done, the whole of the property and wealth that goes with the picture is to be forfeited. You see, therefore, that much as I would personally like to accept the money which your liberality offers, it is quite impossible for me to think of doing so.

"Yours very sincerely,

"Cecilian Charlton.

"'Cecilian Charlton be hanged,' roared Macnaught when he read this letter, 'will or no will, I ken verra weel I'll have that picture.'

"So he took a pound of tobacco, and shut himself up in his room and sat thinking of ways and means for the remainder of the day.

"Now Macnaught was a canny Scotsman, and the more he considered the letter, the more one or two points impressed themselves on his mind. In the first place, from a financial point of view, it was evident the Countess of Charlton might be termed very hard up; in the second place, she did not care a jot whether she had the picture that hung in her drawing-room, or whether any one else had it; and in the third place she was not an exceptionally scrupulous woman. And as Macnaught thought of these things several ideas occurred to him.

"It seemed to him that if, on some pretence or other, he made a copy of this picture, it would not be a very hard matter to transpose the two, and put his copy in place of the original. Then all that he had to do was to run off with his precious burden, and he would find himself in possession of one of the priceless treasures of the world, and no one would be the wiser.

"Now Macnaught was a Scotsman, and a religious man to boot, although the passion of his art caused him perhaps to do some things that he had better left undone. So when this thought of stealing the picture came to him, he sprang to his feet, and shouted:

"'Na, na, I will not sell my soul for a woman; but I will have her picture whether she cares or not.'

"So he sat down again, and thought it all over once more, and the idea of transposing the pictures stayed in his mind. And before he was half through the tobacco he had found the way."

Here Hawtree came to a pause, for he had been talking for a long while and feared that we might be dozing. So he sat up in his chair, and mixed himself a long drink, which he drank off at a gulp, so as to save future interruptions. While he was doing this I looked through my notes to see whether the story was promising. How was Macnaught to gain the picture that he coveted? He

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could make a copy, and transpose the two, and steal the genuine picture, but this he would not do. And the Countess of Charlton was not to be bribed, although she was not a scrupulous woman. I could see no way, so I implored Hawtree to continue.

"That afternoon Macnaught rode over to the town, and, going to the hotel, took an official piece of note-paper, and wrote his third letter to the Countess. In this he posed, I am ashamed to say, as an American millionaire, incidentally mentioning that he had made his money out of buttons. He had recently bought a mansion in New York, he said, and was anxious to obtain a few startling English pictures wherewith to ornament his walls. He had heard that the Countess of Charlton possessed a picture, the like of which there was none in existence. That was the very thing he wanted and he guessed that it would "knock" his friends. He would be pleased to pay, therefore, any price that the Countess would ask for it, and he added that she need not be careful as to a thousand or two. He then went on to say that if the Countess would sell the picture, he would send a good artist down to make a copy for her to keep in remembrance.

"'Personally,' said he, 'I should not know the copy from the original, and as I am shortly to return to America, no doubt you will kindly see that it is well packed. I very much regret that I am not able to come from Scotland to see you personally about the matter.'

"This extraordinary letter took Macnaught a long while to compose, and when it was finished he took it out to post it with his own hands, and then returned to the hotel to wait for the reply.

"When it came, people thought that the worthy artist had taken leave of his senses, for he did nothing but pat his chest, and chuckle mightily to himself.

"For the third letter of the Countess of Charlton said that she would be pleased to accept the American's offer, although the figure that she mentioned would have caused a start even to a millionaire. And would he please send an artist to make a copy as soon as possible?"

Here Hawtree paused to say that if we were getting tired of his story he would finish it to-morrow. But the artist remarked that he might as well finish it off now he had begun it, and since I was interested to see how Macnaught gained his picture in the end, I told him to go on.

"Macnaught," went on Hawtree, as fresh as though he had but begun to tell his story, "returned to his house, said good-bye to his friends, and taking a train to London, went to a barber's shop and had himself shaved, in case the Countess might by any chance recognise his face, and then presented himself at her door, saying that he had come from the American millionaire to paint her picture."

"Then, Macnaught," said the artist, "and the American millionaire, and the man who went to paint the picture, were all one and the same man?"

"Precisely," said Hawtree, "they were all characters in the plot that he had devised. Well, the Countess received Macnaught very graciously, and herself helped him take the picture from the wall, and place it where he might have the best light. Then he set to work, and, acting on a whim of the Countess, he made the very back of the canvasses the same, so that as the picture grew he had difficulty in telling the one from the other.

"Every morning the Countess came in and admired his work, and she seemed especially pleased when she saw how alike the two pictures were. At the end of a month Macnaught had finished his painting, and when he had allowed his picture to dry, he examined it closely, and thought that an ignorant person might very well think that the one was as good as the other.

"Then he sat down, and mopped his brow, and thought very hard of many things, for now the time for action had come. Then he sprang up hastily, lest his courage should forsake him. He took up the original painting that had been found in the ruins of the ancient city, and tore it away from its frame, and put his own painting in place of it. But he did not steal it, but merely placed it on his easel.

"'For,' said he, 'why should I sell my soul to this woman?'

"Then he sought out the Countess, and made his adieux to her, remarking that he had had a letter from his American patron asking him to request that the painting should be sent off immediately he had finished the copy.

"Then he left the house, and returned hastily to Scotland. Soon after he had arrived, the painting came to the hotel. With trembling fingers he unwrapped the parcel, and then he gave a great shout of joy. For there before him, lying snugly in its case, was the genuine picture that had belonged to the Countess of Charlton, the priceless gem of art, the thing that he coveted more than all the world.

"For the Countess, you understand, had fallen into the trap that he had laid for her, and thinking, no doubt, that to the millionaire button-maker one picture was as good as another, she had deliberately sent him, what, in her own mind, she thought to be a copy of the original picture.

"And this is the history of the painting that you see before you. Macnaught, however, did not send the Countess the large cheque that he had promised. He wrote her a letter in which he said he feared that she had very much misunderstood his former letters, for it was the original picture that he wanted, and not the copy that she had sent. He therefore was not prepared to pay her the large sum she had asked, but forwarded her the same amount that he had paid the artist, and trusted that she would find this satisfactory.

"He slipped in a cheque for five hundred pounds, and that is all that he has ever paid for one of the priceless treasures of the world. It is said that the unscrupulous Countess of Charlton fell into a fit, through chagrin and disappointment, when she read this letter. Yet she could do nothing."

"But how was it," asked the artist, "that the Countess did not bluff the matter out, and say that she had sent the wrong picture by mistake, and wished to sell him the genuine one?"

"You forget," replied Hawtree, "that it was completely out of her power to sell the picture at all. Is there anything else you can't understand?"

I looked through my notes to see if everything was quite clear. Macnaught, I gathered, had posed as an ignorant American, had gone himself to paint a copy of the picture, had transposed the two, trusting that the Countess would send away what she considered to be the copy. And in this he was not disappointed, for the Countess had fallen into his trap. So he had gained the picture, without stealing, or without hurting his Scotch conscience.

"Would you like me to go over the story again?" said Hawtree, "it is a little complicated."

"Don't trouble," replied the artist, "for now that you *have* finished I think I'll be going to bed."

Marcus Tintal.

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On the night of February 13th, 1797, an English fleet of fifteen ships of the line in close order, and in readiness for instant battle, was under easy sail off Cape St. Vincent. It was a moonless night, black with haze, and the great ships moved in silence like gigantic spectres over the sea.

Every now and again there came floating from the south-east the dull sound of a far-off gun. It was the grand fleet of Spain, consisting of twenty-seven ships of line, under Admiral Don Josef de Cordova; one great ship calling to another through the night, little dreaming that the sound of their guns was so keenly noted by the eager but silent fleet of their enemies to leeward.

The morning of the 14th—a day famous in the naval history of the Empire—broke dim and hazy, grey sea, grey fog, grey dawn, making all things strangely obscure. At half-past six, however, the keen-sighted British outlooks caught a glimpse of the huge, straggling line of Spaniards, stretching apparently through miles of sea haze.

"They are thumpers!" as the signal lieutenant of the *Barfleur* reported with emphasis to his captain; "they loom like Beachy Head in a fog."

The Spanish fleet was, indeed, the mightiest ever sent from Spanish ports since "that great fleet invincible" of 1588 carried into the English waters—but not out of them——

The richest spoils of Mexico, the stoutest hearts of Spain.

The Admiral's flag was borne by the *Santissima Trinidad*, a floating mountain, the largest ship at that time on the sea, and carrying on her four decks 130 guns. Next came six three-deckers, carrying 112 guns each; two ships of the line of eighty guns each, and seventeen carrying seventy-four guns, with no fewer than twelve thirty-four-gun frigates, to act as flying cordon of skirmishers.

Spain had joined France against Britain on September 12th, 1796, and Don Cordova, at the head of this immense fleet, had sailed from Cadiz to execute a daring and splendid strategy. He was to pick up the Toulon fleet, brush away the English squadron blockading Brest, add the great French fleet, lying imprisoned there, to his forces, and enter the British Channel with over a hundred sail of the line under his flag, and sweep in triumph to the mouth of the Thames.

If the plan succeeded, Portugal would fall, a descent was to be made on Ireland, and the British flag, it was reckoned, would be swept from the seas.

Sir John Jervis was lying in the track of the Spaniards to defeat this ingenious plan. Five ships of the line had been withdrawn from the squadron blockading Brest to strengthen him; still he had only fifteen ships against the twenty-seven huge Spaniards in front of him; whilst, if the French Toulon Fleet behind him broke out, he ran the risk of being crushed, so to speak, betwixt the upper and the nether millstone.

Never, perhaps, was the naval supremacy of England challenged so boldly, and with such a prospect of success, as at this moment.

The Northern powers had coalesced under Russia, and only a few weeks later the British guns were thundering over the roofs of Copenhagen, while the united flags of France and Spain were preparing to sweep through the narrow seas.

The "splendid isolation" of to-day is no novelty. In 1796, as it threatened to be in 1896, Great Britain stood singly against a world in arms, and it is scarcely too much to say that her fate hung on the fortunes of the fleet that, in the grey dawn of St. Valentine's Day a hundred years ago, was searching the skyline for the topmasts of Don Cordova's huge three-deckers.

Fifteen to twenty-seven is enormous odds, but, on the testimony of Nelson himself, a better fleet never carried the fortunes of a great country than that under Sir John Jervis. The mere names of the ships, or of their commanders, awaken more sonorous echoes than the famous catalogue of the ships in the "Iliad." Among them Trowbridge, in the *Culloden*, led the van; the line was formed of such ships as the *Victory*, the flag-ship, the *Barfleur*, the *Blenheim*, the *Captain*, with Nelson as Commodore, the *Excellent*, under Collingwood, the *Colossus*, under Murray, and the *Orion*, under Sir James Saumarez.

Finer sailors and more daring leaders never bore down upon an enemy's fleet. The picture offered by the two fleets in the cold haze of that fateful morning, as a matter of fact, reflected the difference in their fighting and sea-going qualities.

The Spanish fleet, a line of monsters, straggled formless and shapeless over miles of sea space, distracted with signals, fluttering with many coloured flags. The British fleet, grim and silent, bore down upon the enemy in two compact and firm drawn columns, ship following ship so closely and so exactly that bowsprit and stern almost touched, while an air-line drawn from the foremast of the leading ship to the mizen-mast of the last ship in each column would have touched almost every mast betwixt. Stately, measured, threatening, in perfect fighting order, the compact line of the British bore down on the Spaniards.

Nothing is more striking in the Battle of St. Vincent

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than the swift and resolute fashion in which Sir John Jervis leapt, so to speak, at his enemy's throat, with the silent but deadly leap of a bull-dog. As the fog lifted about nine o'clock, with the suddenness and dramatic effect of the lifting of a curtain in a great theatre, it revealed to the British Admiral a great opportunity. The weather division of the Spanish fleet, twenty-one gigantic ships, resembled nothing so much as a confused and swaying forest of masts; the leeward division—six ships in a cluster, almost as confused—was parted by an interval of nearly three miles from the main body of the fleet; and into that fatal gap, as with the swift and deadly thrust of a rapier, Jervis drove his fleet in one unswerving line, the two columns melting into one, ship following hard on ship.

The Spaniards strove furiously to close their line, the twenty-one huge ships bearing down from the windward, the smaller squadron clawing desperately up from the leeward. But the British fleet—a long line of gliding pyramids of sails, leaning over to the pressure of the wind, with "the meteor flag" flying from the peak of each vessel, and the curving lines of guns awaiting grim and silent beneath—was too swift.

As it swept through the gap the Spanish vice-admiral, in the *Principe de Asturias*, a great three-decker of 112 guns, tried the daring feat of breaking through the British line to join the severed squadron. He struck the English fleet almost exactly at the flag-ship, the *Victory*. The *Victory* was thrown into stays to meet her, the Spaniard swung round in response, and, exactly as her quarter was exposed to the broadside of the *Victory*, the thunder of a tremendous broadside rolled from that ship.

The unfortunate Spaniard was smitten as with a tempest of iron, and the next moment, with sails torn, topmasts hanging to leeward, ropes hanging loose in every direction, and her decks splashed red with the blood of her slaughtered crew, she broke off to windward.

The iron line of the British was unpierceable!

The leading three-decker of the Spanish lee division in like manner bore up, as though to break through the British line to join her admiral; but the grim succession of three-deckers following swift on each other like the links of a moving iron chain was too disquieting a prospect to be faced. It was not in Spanish seamanship, or, for the matter of that, in Spanish flesh and blood, to beat up in the teeth of such threatening lines of iron lips.

The Spanish ships swung suddenly back to leeward, and the fleet of Don Cordova was cloven in twain, as though by the stroke of some gigantic sword blade.

As soon as Sir John Jervis saw the steady line of his fleet drawn fair across the gap in the Spanish line, he flung his leading ships up to windward on the mass of the Spanish fleet, by this time beating up to windward. The *Culloden* led, thrust itself betwixt the hindermost Spanish three-deckers, and broke into flame and thunder on either side.

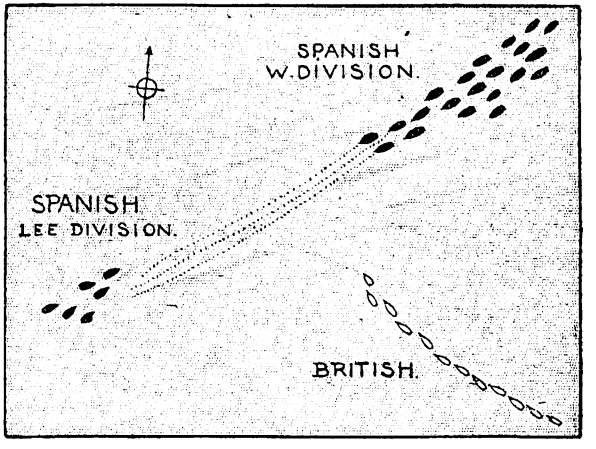
Six minutes after her came the *Blenheim*, then, in quick succession, the *Prince George*, the *Orion*, the *Colossus*. It was a crash of swaying masts and bellying sails, while below rose the shouting of the crews, and like the thrusts of fiery swords the flames shot out from the sides of the great three-deckers against each other, and over all rolled the thunder and the smoke of a Titanic sea-fight.

Nothing more murderous than close fighting betwixt the huge wooden ships of those days can well be imagined. The *Victory*, the largest British ship present in the action, was only 186ft. long and 52ft. broad; yet in that little area a thousand men fought, a hundred great guns thundered!

A Spanish ship like the *San Josef* was 194ft. in length and 54ft. in breadth; but in that area 112 guns were mounted, while the three decks were thronged with some 1,300 men. When floating batteries like these swept each other with the flame of swiftly repeated broadsides at a distance of a few score yards, the destruction may be better imagined than described.

The Spanish had an advantage in the number of guns and men, but the British established an instant mastery by their silent discipline, their perfect seamanship, and the speed with which their guns were worked. They fired at least three broadsides to every two the Spaniards discharged, and their fire had a deadly precision compared with which that of the Spaniards was mere distracted spluttering.

Meanwhile the dramatic crisis of the battle came swiftly on. The Spanish admiral was resolute to join the severed fragments of his fleet; the *Culloden*, the *Blenheim*, the *Prince George*, and the *Orion* were thundering amongst his rearmost ships, and as the British line swept up, each ship tacked as it crossed the



Position of British and Spanish fleets at 9 a.m. on February 14th, 1797.

gap in the Spanish line, bore up to windward, and added the thunder of its guns to the storm of battle raging amongst the hindmost Spaniards.

But, naturally, the section of the British line that had not yet passed the gap shortened with every minute, and the leading Spanish ships at last saw the sea to their leeward clear of the enemy, and the track open to their own lee squadron. Instantly they swung round to leeward, the great four-decker, the flag-ship, with a company of sister giants, the *San Josef* and the *Salvador del Mundo*, of 112 guns each, the *San Nicolas*, and three other great ships of 80 guns.

It was a bold and clever stroke. This great squadron, with the breeze behind it, had but to sweep past the rear of the British line, join the lee squadron, and bear up, and the Spanish fleet in one unbroken mass would confront the enemy.

The rear of the British line was held by Collingwood in the *Excellent*, next to him came the *Diadem*; the

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The party swept through on to the main deck.

third ship was the *Captain*, under Nelson. We may imagine how Nelson's solitary eye was fixed on the great Spanish three-deckers that formed the Spanish van as they suddenly swung round and came sweeping down to cross his stern. Not Napoleon himself had a vision more swift and keen for the changing physiognomy of a great battle than Nelson, and he met the Spanish admiral with a counter stroke as brilliant and daring as can be found in the whole history of naval warfare.

The British fleet saw the *Captain* suddenly swing out of line to leeward—in the direction from the Spanish line, that is—but with swift curve the *Captain* doubled back, shot between the two English ships that formed the rear of the line, and bore up straight in the path of the Spanish flag-ship, with its four decks, and the huge battleships on either side of it.

The *Captain*, it should be remembered, was the smallest seventy-four in the British fleet, and as the great Spanish ships closed round her and broke into flame, it seemed as if each one of them was big enough to hoist the *Captain* on board like a jolly boat.

Nelson's sudden movement was a breach of orders. It left a gap in the British line. To dash unsupported into the Spanish van seemed mere madness, and the spectacle, as the *Captain* opened fire on the huge *Santissima Trinidad*, was simply amazing. Nelson was in action at once with the flag-ship of 130 guns, two ships of 112 guns, one of 80 guns, and two of 74 guns.

To the spectators who watched the sight, the sides of the *Captain* seemed to throb with quick-following pulses of flame as its crew poured their shot into the huge hulks on every side of them. The Spaniards formed a mass so tangled that they could scarcely fire at the little *Captain* without injuring each other. Yet the little English ship seemed to shrivel beneath even the imperfect fire that did reach her.

Her foremast was shot away, her wheel-post shattered, her rigging torn, some of her guns dismantled, and the ship was practically incapable of further service either in the line or in chase. But Nelson had accomplished his purpose. He had stopped the rush of the Spanish van.

At this moment the *Excellent*, under Collingwood, swept into the storm of battle that raged round the *Captain*, and poured three tremendous broadsides into the Spanish three-decker, the *Salvador del Mundo*, that practically disabled her.

"We were not further from her," the domestic but hard-fighting Collingwood wrote to his wife, "than the length of our garden."

Then, with a fine feat of seamanship, the *Excellent* passed between the *Captain* and the *San Nicolas*, scourging that unfortunate ship with flame at a distance of ten yards, and then passed on to bestow its favours on the *Santissima Trinidad*. "Such a ship," Collingwood afterwards confided to his wife, "as I never saw before!"

Collingwood tormented that monster with his fire so vehemently that she actually struck, though possession of her was not taken before the other Spanish ships, coming up, rescued her, and she survived to carry the Spanish flag in the great fight of Trafalgar.

Meanwhile the crippled *Captain*, though actually disabled, had performed one of the most dramatic and brilliant feats in the history of naval warfare. Nelson

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put his helm to starboard, and ran, or rather drifted, on the quarter gallery of the *San Nicolas*, and at once boarded that leviathan.

Nelson himself crept through the quarter gallery window in the stern of the Spaniard, and found himself in the officers' cabin. The officers tried to show fight, but there was no denying the boarders who followed Nelson, and with shout and oath, with flash of pistol and ring of steel, the party swept through on to the main deck. But the *San Nicolas* had been boarded also at other points.

"The first man who jumped into the enemy's mizzen-chains," says Nelson, "was the first lieutenant of the ship, afterwards Captain Berry."

The English sailors dropped from their spritsail yard on to the Spaniard's deck, and by the time Nelson reached the poop of the *San Nicolas*, he found his lieutenant in the act of hauling down the Spanish flag. Nelson proceeded to collect the swords of the Spanish officers when a fire was opened upon them from the stern gallery of the admiral's ship, the *San Josef*, of 112 guns, whose sides were grinding against those of the *San Nicolas*. What could Nelson do? To keep his prize he must assault a still bigger ship. Of course he never hesitated! He flung his boarders up the side of the huge *San Josef*, but he himself, who was by no means robust, had to be assisted to climb the main chains of that vessel, his lieutenant this time dutifully assisting his commodore up instead of indecorously going ahead of him.

"At this moment," as Nelson records the incident, "a Spanish officer looked over the quarter-deck rail and said they surrendered. It was not long before I was on the quarter-deck, where the Spanish captain, with a bow, presented me his sword, and said the admiral was dying of his wounds. I asked him, on his honour, if the ship was surrendered. He declared she was, on which I gave him my hand, and desired him to call on his officers and ship's company and tell them of it, which he did, and on the quarter-deck of a Spanish first-rate—extravagant as the story may seem—did I take the swords of vanquished Spaniards, which, as I received, I gave to William Fearney, one of my bargemen, who put them, with the greatest *sang-froid*, under his arm, a circle of 'old Agamemnons,' with smoke-blackened faces, looking on in grim approval."

This is the story of how a British fleet of fifteen vessels defeated a Spanish fleet of twenty-seven, and captured four of their finest ships. It is the story, too, of how a single English ship, the smallest 74 in the fleet—but made unconquerable by the presence of Nelson—stayed the advance of a whole squadron of Spanish three-deckers, and took two ships, each bigger than itself, by boarding.

Nelson disobeyed orders by leaving the English line and flinging himself on the van of the Spaniards, but he saved the battle.

Calder, Jervis's captain, complained to the admiral that Nelson had "disobeyed orders."

"He certainly did," answered Jervis; "and if ever you commit such a breach of orders I will forgive you also."

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KNOLLYS' STORY.

Those who know my friend Knollys only casually are apt to set him down as a cynic, because, at times, his speech is slightly mordant and he is given to ridiculing bravery and charity as madness; but I know danger holds no dread for him, and have accidently happened on some of his many good deeds. To me he has always seemed a man of unusally lenient judgment, putting the best construction possible on the evil actions of his fellows; though his own life is beautifully clean, he takes people as he finds them, not feeling called upon to attempt to revolutionise the world.

If I am unreasonably proud of my friendship with Knollys, it is pardonable, for he is an experienced man of the world, who must be nearing fifty, whereas I am not yet thirty. Ever since he saved my life in India, at the imminent risk of his own, he holds, he feels, a certain amount of responsibility on my account, and I am only too willing to view the world under his tutelage.

But I am glad that my mother did not hear him relate the story that spoiled my dinner, which was assuredly a good one, since he ordered it. She maintains that Knollys is extremely unsympathetic; and, prejudiced as she is, she would not have observed that, under his cold exterior, there lurked a warm pity for his friend.

It had been arranged, during his short stay with us, that in two months I should join him in London; and the prospect of another delightful run across the Continent with him made me somewhat forgetful of the fact that it was his last night in this city.

He had rashly promised my cousin to visit his rose-gardens, and on that afternoon redeemed his word. When we met at the club I noticed that Knollys appeared tired. He stood at the window, apart from the other men, looking across at the plaza, and did not at first notice me.

"I suppose it was irksome," I began, "for Tom can talk of nothing but his wife and his roses. You see they are renewing their honeymoon. Their affairs looked very black for a time, but suddenly righted themselves, and their friends are suffering the consequences."

Knollys ceased to watch the wavering shadows of the trees, and turned inquiringly.

"It was a misunderstanding," I continued, as we walked out to dinner; "Tom forgot that appearances are often misleading, and she was unable to furnish a satisfactory explanation of her conduct."

"I conjectured something of the kind from what he told me coming back to the city, and it reminded me strongly of a little episode in the life of a friend of mine. And she, too, in some indefinable way—some turn of the head or the trick of the voice—recalled my friend's wife. The story might interest you."

"I am sure it would," I returned eagerly, for Knollys is always well worth hearing.

"It happened some years ago, but I think I remember the points quite well," he commenced, smiling faintly; "I am not so certain, however, that I shall be able to do the story justice, for I am not a clever *raconteur*, and you will probably surmise the end long ere I have reached it. My friend—we might call him Smith—my friend Smith was able to be of some service to a man whom he met in a foreign land. The man met with a fatal accident, a few days later, and, together with the valet, Smith volunteered to nurse him. The stranger, feeling he had a claim on Smith because of the first favour, burdened him with the pleasant task of bearing the news of his death to his wife.

"Upon Smith's return to England, he carried out his mission, and having gone once, went again. She was a very young woman, and very beautiful, and Smith was irresistibly attracted. Her husband had been a scoundrel, and, after a decent lapse of time, she married Smith. For the first four years of their marriage they were so intensely happy that it is possible they proved rather tiresome to their friends. About that time Smith began to miss money and other articles of value, and was finally able to trace the thefts to the butler. The man vainly denied the charge, and, although none of the missing valuables were found in his possession, he was discharged without a character. This mild measure was adopted because of the intercessions of my friend's wife.

"For some weeks Smith entertained no doubt that he had fastened the burglaries on the proper party, but on returning home one evening he found his wife in the library. She had opened his desk by means of a false key, and in her hands held a roll of notes. Guilt was depicted in every feature: she cowered before him—she was abject in her cowardice."

"She needed the money to save a brother," I broke in authoritatively.

"No; she had no brother nor any near relative who might need help," Knollys said, as he set down his glass. "The man, anxious to find some excuse for her, suggested this; but it was no relative. It was for herself; yet she had wanted for nothing that money could buy or love devise. He might not have conceived her sin to be so flagrant had she not permitted the servant to suffer in her stead. So far as it was possible, Smith made restitution to the man; but by her silence she had convicted herself of the most heinous of all transgressions in her husband's eyes. There was one way only in which he could explain the matter to himself. He had never believed in kleptomania until then, but it was the one thing upon which his mind centred. And she confessed she had often felt impelled to take valuables for which she could have no possible need.

"He was a proud man, and he was tortured by his discovery. He had regarded his wife, his child, and himself as being made of finer clay than the rest of mankind. His disillusion was complete. The day after she was unmasked she came into a splendid inheritance, but Smith rigorously refused to permit the expenditure of any of it in the household.

He dared not leave her for an instant, thinking the desire might come back to her. He sacrificed his pride by telling the true state of affairs to her maid, a trusted servant, and together they kept vigilant guard over her. It was the most insidious cruelty he could contrive—one that must have wounded her sorely. She was never

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permitted to lose sight of her sins. He was inflexible in his course, keeping her always under his relentless eyes. My friend Smith thought himself, in those days, quite capable of accusing and judging his prisoner, and seeing that the sentence was properly carried out. When she seemed to forget for an instant her past error, Smith ever so gently turned the thumb-screws. Ah, he really devised modes of exquisite torture that she should properly expiate her crime!

"No, she did not rebel; she drearily accepted the penalty of her guilt. At first she lived in deadly fear lest he should send her away from him; but when she found it was part of his plan to be with her constantly, she seemed content. She could not, rather would not, grow accustomed to the thought that she had forfeited Smith's love. During the first few days she hovered round him, hoping to lure some expression of pardon from him, some word of love. Never forgetting that she bore his name, he treated her with a cold civility that was more frightful to her than would have been an exhibition of brute force. He was disciplining himself all the while in repressing his feelings, for, as you have perhaps suspected, he loved her as passionately as ever.

"She devoted herself to the child, who had become a source of constant agony to Smith. If he took a fruit or sweetmeat that had been forbidden him, it became to Smith's fevered imagination evidence that he had inherited his mother's weakness; in other days it would have seemed the child's lovable fault or play.

"The child slept in his mother's apartments, and Smith was about to retire one night when his wife came in hurriedly, bidding him send immediately for their physician, for the little one was choking. Smith went back with her, and, after seeing the child, left the room—she thought to send for the family physician. She used the simple remedies that had formerly proved effectual, but without avail. She looked at Smith when he came back, but he did not speak.

"At length he told her that he had not summoned a physician, believing it better that the child should die."

"What?" I cried, aghast, my loud tone in marked contrast to his low, unhurried words.

"You are not eating," remarked Knollys, as he reflectively regarded the bead that had formed round the edge of his glass. "You are astonished at my friend's action, but he himself did not question the wisdom of its course; perhaps it did not occur to him that he could err. Better, he thought, to cause himself one sharp pang than untold misery to the bitter end. In fact, he believed he was doing a very good deed—to consign your child to death is not such a simple matter as it might appear. When the mother learnt what he had done, she was wildly indignant for an instant, then quietly placed the child in his crib and stoically watched his sufferings. And what had seemed quite right and courageous in himself struck Smith as monstrous in the mother. You are neglecting your fillet. You will find it——"

"But the mother?" I reminded.

"The mother?" echoed Knollys wearily. "You progress too rapidly. Smith was able to dismiss from his mind the idea that he had been instrumental in bringing about the little fellow's death, for it would have been impossible for the physician to reach the house before the child expired. The mother, however, did not reason with so much *finesse*, and, after the death of her child, faded visibly. In this instance, physicians were called in, but what they might have been able to do for the child they could not do for the mother. It is true she could not have found life very joyous, but her doctors agreed they had never seen anyone so determined to escape from the world. There was no illness—only a growing languidness, a gradual putting by of the smallest tasks, and a want of will to recover. If ever a woman died of a broken heart, it was my friend's wife."

"Did she give no explanation of her conduct?" I demanded, leaning on the table heavily.

Knollys was looking at something beyond me, and did not hear me until I had reiterated my question.

"So you do not believe she was a kleptomaniac? The explanation did not come from her, but from another quarter," he finally proceeded. "She was delirious for nearly a week before her death. In her lucid moments, she would ask the date, then strive to recollect something that elusively evaded her. She was continually murmuring about some money that was to be sent to someone—whom, they could not determine. Smith had been with her all day, and, towards evening, feeling he must be alone for a while to give vent to his misery, went to the library. The morning's post was awaiting him. The topmost letter was addressed to her in a man's unfamiliar hand. He tore it open, filled with an insane jealousy.

"Ah, of course, you perceive from whom it was. You are in the same position as the novel reader, who, knowing both sides of the story, is aware of the end long before the hero and heroine have lived it out. Unfortunately, Smith knew only his portion of the tale. The missive purported to come from her first husband, whom Smith had helped to bury, but whom she believed to be still alive, and cautioned her to forward his monthly allowance at once, or he would be under the painful necessity of declaring himself to Smith without delay. It was a pity he had not done so long before, as Smith would have recognised the valet. Does it not seem altogether impossible that she should have been so credulous?

"So, you see, the mystery, which Smith had believed to be no mystery, was cleared without her speaking, but a little too late, for, while Smith was reading the letter, she passed away, leaving him in a maze of maddening reflections. He has had a long while to appreciate the bitter pathos of the incident, and sometimes ponders on the problem of whether she would have confessed had he not suggested to her the excuse of kleptomania. Knowing the simplicity of her morals, he comprehends the struggle there must have been while the butler was suffering for her. I think Smith would have pardoned her for taking the money to buy the man, so that he should not make himself known; even her own silence, had he been conscious it was done that she might not be separated from him. Her love for Smith was the one passion of her life, and she paid for it dearly."

"Poor woman," I murmured tritely.

Knollys raised his head, his lips parted in a shadowy smile. "Note how we differ. I should say, 'Poor man.' She is in a place of peace."

"I am glad I am not acquainted with your friend Smith," I observed, trying to shake off the gloom of Knollys' story. "He must be a very sombre companion. Do you see much of him?"

"The world knows nothing of his story; he does not wear his heart on his sleeve. It is only to me that he confesses how dull he finds life. Yes, I see a great deal of my friend Smith—a great deal too much. Let us drink to his early demise. Believe me, it is what would please him best."

ALICE S. WOLF.

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SUMMARY.

Prologue.—The Hon. Ernest Wentworth lies dying at his estate, Chisholme Park. His wife, a light, pleasure-loving creature, falls under the mesmeric influence of Armand Lemaitre, who, by force of will power, compels her to rob her husband. While in the act of extracting a bundle of notes from a bureau she is interrupted by the appearance of her husband, who enters the room in his bed-clothes, silently points at her with his fore-finger, and then falls down dead. She shortly after leaves for Paris to join Lemaitre.

Nineteen years elapse. Edith Wentworth, who was adopted when a baby by Lady Hilton, is living at Hillcrest Lodge. Among the guests for Christmas are Cécile Delisle, a school-friend of Edith's, Professor Queech, Jack Heathcote, and Captain Arthur Musgrave. At York, on the journey down from King's Cross, Cécile observes that the carriage next to theirs contains a man and a woman. At their destination, a few miles further on, she notices a strange man there alone.

Lemaitre, alias Dr. Danton, arrives at the house as a guest, and exercises an influence over Edith that arouses the jealousy of Arthur, who strikes Danton, and agrees to fight a duel.

A murder is committed at Thorgill Beck. The body of a woman is discovered by one of Farmer Wilson's sons. Cécile deduces from the description of the body that it has been robbed. She visits the spot, and obtains the jewellery from the boy who first discovered the body.

In the duel between Danton and Musgrave only one of the pistols is loaded. Danton is lucky enough to draw the loaded one, but gives Musgrave an opportunity of leaving Hillcrest Lodge, never to return or to speak to Edith. This proposal is refused, with scorn. As the Doctor is about to fire, Cécile comes between the principals. In order to obviate further trouble Arthur agrees to Danton's conditions.

CHAPTER V.

The Face in the Locket.

Arthur sauntered away from the duelling-ground, his hands in his pockets, with a smile of scorn, but a heart that was nigh to breaking. The pledge of honour which he had just given had turned the fair aspect of the world into blackness for him.

Danton and the Professor wandered away by another path. Cécile, very pale and silent, walked towards the Lodge on the arm of Pendragon.

She had not seen Edith since her return from Thorgill Beck. She entered the Lodge, shivering, and hungry, and tired. She went hunting for Edith, and found her upstairs in her room getting dressed for dinner. Cécile lifted her arms to Edith's neck and held up her white face to be kissed.

"But, Cécile, dearest, where have you been? and how pale you look, dear!"

Cécile was dragging her down, kissing her passionately, but did not speak.

"You must not take those lonely rides by yourself," said Edith, pressing Cécile's cheeks tight between her hands, "and look! I am going to wear this sky blue at dinner. He said, you know, that he likes bright hues—oh, don't look so gloomy, my own darlingest love!"

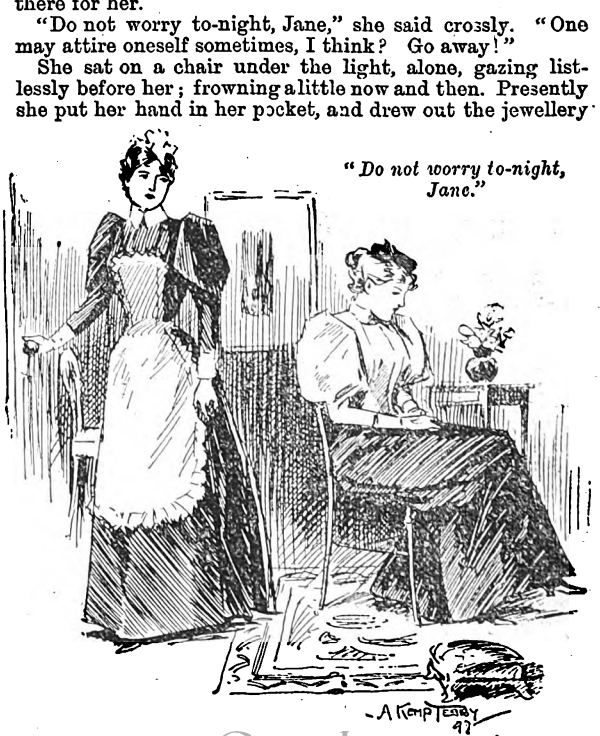
A pang was at Cécile's heart, a whole world of apprehension. Her eyes dropped before Edith's. What were those "conditions" she had heard Arthur accept from Dr. Danton? She could not guess, but she feared.

"I am going to dress," she said, "let me go. I am not feeling like one's own darling to-night."

She screwed herself from Edith's arms, and went away towards her own apartments. There was a maid waiting there for her.

"Do not worry to-night, Jane," she said crossly. "One may attire oneself sometimes, I think? Go away!"

She sat on a chair under the light, alone, gazing listlessly before her; frowning a little now and then. Presently she put her hand in her pocket, and drew out the jewellery



"Do not worry to-night, Jane."

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she had obtained from Tom Wilson that day. She had not examined the things before, for some other people had got into the compartment of the train with her.

One by one she took them out: the rings—a wedding ring, and one set with diamonds and amethysts; then the watch, all bent and broken, of gold; then the chain bracelet, with battered rings; each of them, one by one, she examined minutely, holding them near to her eyes.

She had left the locket to the last. It was of gold, and slightly battered. As soon as she had it in her hand she started.

"But——" she said, and stopped.

She looked closely at the outside.

"But—but this was worn *beneath* the dress!"

She had the habit of speaking aloud to herself, in a low, whimpering murmur, when she was searching and probing into any hidden thing.

"Beneath the dress. One sees that by the way the gold has worn smooth on this side. She wore it so for years; she did not wish the locket, then, to be seen? But why not? Ah, because it contains a likeness! And that likeness is not the likeness of her husband. She did not want the husband to see the locket, because she did not want him to see the likeness. The likeness is a likeness of an old love—of a former husband, perhaps. Yes—yes—that is how it is. We shall see. We are near to light—to light!"

But she would not open the locket. Somehow she was afraid. For five minutes she sat with it in her palm, eyeing the outside.

"But this is nonsense!" she said suddenly; and the next moment the locket was open in her hands, and she was pouring over a small oval daguerreotype set in one of the leaves.

She went utterly white.

"My God!"

Her head dropped in her hands on the table.

"Oh, my God!" burst in a groan from her dry lips.

The face which she had seen she knew. It was the face of a man. A face exactly similar hung among the family portraits of the Hiltons in the corridor without.

"She was Edith's mother!" sobbed Cécile—"this—this is the portrait of her father!"

Ten minutes passed, and her head rested still in her hands on the table. Then she rose, calm and pallid, her lips pressed together.

"Well, love," she said, "you shall be avenged! I will find the murderer of your mother!"

When she had dressed hurriedly, and gone down to dinner, the report had already spread that Captain Arthur Musgrave had departed from the Lodge.

He had left a note for Lady Hilton saying that a sudden duty called him away.

"These, then," said Cécile to herself, "were the 'conditions'!"

CHAPTER VI.

In the Conservatory.

The house-party at Hillcrest broke up soon after the middle of January. Nearly the last of the guests to leave was Dr. Danton. Cécile for a whole week had been waiting expectant.

"Why does the man not go?" she said.

She had an invitation to a country-house, near the garrison town of Ilminster, to stay with the St. John-Heygates, and was anxious to be gone. Ilminster was the town at which Arthur's cavalry regiment was now stationed. Cécile wished to be near him.

"You should go, you know," said Edith.

Cécile pouted.

"Do not worry," she said. "I will go when there is need. Now is no hurry."

"But what are you waiting for, darling? I shall want you in London with us soon, you know."

Among the rich foliage of the place they met.

Cécile kept her own counsel, and waited—waited for Danton to go.

Lady Hilton was shortly to leave for Cannes for a few weeks' stay, prior to the opening of the London season. Edith had consented to be parted from Cécile for a little, and was going to Seaton Abbey, the Duke of Grandford's seat. Seaton Abbey is in the same county as Giltwood Towers, the St. John-Heygates' place, and only twenty miles away; so that the two girls could meet as often as they desired.

Cécile waited for Dr. Danton to go.

Tom Wilson had not put in an appearance. Cécile did not forget him, and after waiting a week, wrote this short letter to Thorgill Beck:

"Tom, you've got to come — understand. — Cécile Delisle."

But Tom did not come.

As Cécile was waiting for Danton to go, so was he waiting for her to set out. She kept religiously close to Edith's side, day by day, from morning to night; and Danton was eating his heart out with anxiety to speak to Edith.

"That man believes to outwit me," said Cécile, "but he reckons wrong this time."

"How outwit you, dear?" asked Edith.

"You are not so blind! Here I wait. The Captain Arthur is a lucky man—he has one woman to love him, and another to serve his interests."

"Cécile! you do say things! And I am afraid the Captain is rather undeserving of all this feminine devotion, isn't he?"

"But you love him, Edith?—you love him?"

Edith squeezed her tight in her arms, fearful even to whisper her secret.

"And why undeserving, pray?" asked Cécile.

"The Captain has a most unloverlike lack of ceremony, dear. His departure was abrupt, to say the least of it."

"He had to go," said Cécile.

"Nonsense! why?"

"He had to go. One must trust one's own sweet love. Mind not *why*. I happen to know that he had to go. I do not choose—at present—to tell everything I know."

"You are too fond of mysteries, Cécile, darling. At least he might have said good-bye."

"I believe he could not. I believe there was a strong reason which prevented him. One must have faith in someone who loves one."

But that night, Cécile notwithstanding, Danton found

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his chance; only for a minute, as they moved from dinner. Lady Hilton had called back Cécile to mention something to her. And Danton, stooping low over Edith, said:

"Once more, before I go, I wish very much to speak with you alone."

His head was close to hers. His brows were frowning.

Edith half-glanced up at him.

"I shall be smoking in the conservatory at nine. Grant me this!"

"I—really——"

"Grant me this, Edith!"

The girl's will melted. Once again that dreamy yielding state, into which close proximity with Danton always brought her, overcame her.

"What is it you're after?"

She whispered the "yes" so low that he had to bend lower and ask:

"Did you say 'yes'?"

"Yes," she repeated.

Two minutes later she was wondering at herself for consenting.

But at nine, with absolute cunning, she ran from Cécile up the stairs and descended by another way to the conservatory. Among the rich foliage of the place they met.

Danton took her hand, and they sat within the very bower where Arthur's stinging chastisement had fallen upon the Frenchman's face.

"We have not long to speak," said Edith—"what is it——?"

"You must say something definite to me before I go," answered Danton. "I want to go to-morrow. It is dreadfully hard to tear myself from you. I cannot tell you all you are to me. You are my very soul's soul. Say something kind before I go."

"I have told you—I do not know what to say—I cannot coerce my heart——"

"You don't mean to say that you still cherish a secret fondness for that soldier boy?"

"I did not say that!" cried Edith with a touch of spirit. "You should not speak to me in that way. Even if it be so, do you suppose I am devoid of modesty?"

"Calm yourself: it is too cruel—it is too wildly absurd—for you to be angry with *me*. But the soldier boy you must forget. It is incredible that you should choose that drawling, brainless creature in preference to *me*, who am your soul, your life. And besides he is not worthy of you. He has given you up. He has told me so."

"Told *you* so?" Her widening eyes turned slowly round upon him.

"Yes. He has told me that he will never even speak to you again as long as he lives."

"He—said—that—to—*you?*"

"Yes. I give you my word. Do not think of him. He is a mere brainless coward."

Edith's heart was throbbing in her bosom with a thousand agonies of shame, rage, despair.

"Oh, let me go," she cried, "you shame—you torture me—what have you to say to me?"

"A word of comfort—one word—don't go—you will marry me?"

"I? You? No!"

"Say yes!"

"No!"

"You *shall* say yes!"

"Let me go—oh do!"

"Then say yes!"

"No—not to-night."

He was frowning, frowning into the back of her head, as he had frowned upon her mother's head.

"Yes—is it yes?"

"Not to-night—to-morrow—I feel stifling!"

"I am yours, you know, Edith! You are mine—my soul—my body—flesh and bone. Edith! say yes."

Her head fell slightly backward and sideward to his shoulder; up went her heaving breast, giving forth, with the sigh of one who dies, the long-drawn "yes."

For a moment she lost consciousness, but her eyelids which had drooped in hypnotic sleep, opened at the sound of the dearest voice in all the world.

Cécile stood at the entrance of the bower.

"You are here, then?" she said. "Come, come, darling! Lady Hilton wants you. You will have the goodness to excuse Miss Wentworth," she added, to Danton.

For half a minute the eyes of the girl and the man met in a long, searching gaze, in a long, deadly challenge.

CHAPTER VII.

The Bag of Apples.

Hillcrest Lodge was empty, and Jack Heathcote was at the very bottom of the well of despair. His bird had flown.

"What a fool I was to fancy she would ever care for me," he said to himself twenty times a day. "Why, the cleverest man going wouldn't be half good enough for her."

His white left eyebrow rose up, and the right sank down from a forehead wrinkled with despondent care. He walked about idle all the day, with his hands bulging out his trousers pockets.

"P'raps I ought to have spoken out more plain," he said, "but what's the good? A man can't go putting such questions to Queen Victoria. I suppose one of those don't-care soldier fellows will get her."

His place was not far from Hillcrest, and sometimes in the morning he rode over on a high-trotting bay to watch from the lawn the house in which Cécile had slept, and eaten, and talked. How good it was of her that day to take him to Seaborough! Fool he was! He ought to have spoken out then!

One morning he sat on his horse watching the front windows, when a tall boy with weary steps slouched near him. He had on a wide-brimmed felt hat, and carried a heavy bag of apples.

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As he came opposite to where Jack Heathcote sat on his horse, he stood and looked round toward the house for some minutes; then with a "Gosh, A doan't ca: e!" started again his weary walk away from the house.

Heathcote, noticing something odd and travel-worn in his appearance, called out:

"What is it you're after?"

"Cécile Delisle," said the boy.

"I'm after something very similar myself," said Jack to himself, "but it's no go." Then he added louder: "Come here. What's your name?"

The boy swung sullenly up to the horse.

"A'm Tom Wilson," he said.

"What's it you want?"

"A've brought Cécile Delisle a bag o' apples."

"It's no go, Tom," said Jack, "bird's flown."

"There doan't seem to be noaboddy aboot," said Tom.

"No—they're gone, all gone. But stop! aren't you the boy I heard her speak about? Didn't she write you a letter?"

"A'm the one."

"Then you're the luckiest dog in the world, that's all I can say. But why didn't you come before?"

"A was e'en thinking o'er it."

"Something like myself, boy. But it's all up: Miss Delisle's away enjoying herself with other people."

"Where aboots?"

"A place called Giltwood Towers, near Ilminster, in Shropshire."

"A'right! A'll foind her," said Tom.

"You! why, the young monkey——"

But Tom had already recommenced his dogged slow slouch, burdened with his bag of apples; and did not turn his head.

Three days later as Cécile was walking down an avenue of limes at Giltwood Towers, in the afternoon gloaming, she uttered a sudden cry of glee. Before her stood Tom Wilson with his bag of apples, with his hanging head, begrimed with mud and dust from top to toe.

"Tom! Tom! I knew you would come," cried Cécile.

Tom could not get a sound from his throat. Part of the way only he had travelled by railway; that day he had walked thirty miles.

He held out the bag.

Cécile peeped inside, and uttered another cry.

"Oh! Why, I *love* apples! And I shall eat *everyone* of these, and not even my dearest friend shall have *half* of one! I knew very well that you were good—but, oh, how tired you look, Tom! Come with me this moment!"

She took hold of the boy with one hand and of the apples with the other, and led the way to the back of the mansion toward the kitchen.

Here a table was soon spread, and Tom sat before cold meat and bread and beer.

"And you have come just at the right time, Tom," said Cécile, sitting near, "just when I have something for you to do."

Tom's eyes gleamed with pleasure.

"And you love me now, Tom?"

Tom smiled.

"And you would not stab me with a knife, I think?"

"Not Oi," said Tom from behind a full mouth.

"Then when you are done, come round to the front and ask for me. I am going away to write a letter which I wish you to deliver for me this night, see? You are tired, and shall have a horse. After an hour, come."

She got up, took Tom's shaggy head in her two hands, and dipped a kiss upon it; then ran away a little, and then back.

"But tell me, you wonderful boy, how did you find out where I was?"

"A saw a gentleman on a horse, i' t' early mornin' lookin' at t' house; *he* toald me."

"The house? What house?"

"T' house where thoo lived."

Cécile began to ripple with laughter.

"What sort of gentleman, then? A little man?"

"Aye."

"With white hair, Tom?"

"Aye."

He passed up and down the ranks.

Cécile's hands went clapping with gaiety; she left a long trail of laughter behind her as she ran away.

An hour later Tom mounted on an old grey cob of the house-stables, and set out for Ilminster, with a letter from Cécile to Captain Musgrave.

But half way on the road he found himself utterly lost, and had to travel a long distance before he was directed by a chance peasant to the right path again. When he reached the barracks it was long past midnight, and he was unable to gain admittance through the closed gates.

He and his horse slept at a small tavern in the town.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Broken Pledge.

The barracks lay at the western extremity of Ilminster. At the end of the main street of this well-to-do but rather sleepy town, you ascended a rising roadway for about a quarter of a mile, and then came upon a common, where stood the barracks.

The regimental orders for that morning ran: "The troop will parade at ten a.m. for dismounted sword exercise;" and at ten a.m. the parade-ground, or vast quadrangle inside the barrack-buildings, was bright with glinting spurs, and bosoms as red and round as robin-redbreast in his brightest liveries.

Captain Musgrave was acting adjutant, and at this early hour had to be out of bed to see that the drill-sergeant gave the recruits their necessary instruction in the art of bending the spinal column from convex to concave, until the nine months had elapsed which are deemed essential to the making of a warrior.

"Troop—attention!" went the spruce sergeant-major, as the captain came across the barrack-square, his figure clasped in the close-fitting, braided coat.

He passed up and down the ranks, giving an occasional hint to some raw novice, pointing at the lack of lustre in a pouch, or the imperfect whiteness of a belt.

He was about to visit another part of the grounds, when the sergeant-major said:

"There was a lad wanting to speak to you this morning, sir. I told him to wait yonder at the door of the orderly-room."

Arthur turned on his heels in that direction, and was presently envisaging Tom Wilson.

"Is it you who want to see Captain Musgrave?" he asked. "Give me the letter, if it is for him."

Tom examined him suspiciously, and then held out the letter.

It began:

To-morrow night I wish to see you particularly, and as you may want plenty of notice I send you the letter by messenger to-night, so that you may not fail.

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"Why did you fail to bring this last night?" asked Arthur.

"Missed my way," said Tom.

"You are a stranger here, I imagine?"

"Aye."

The letter proceeded:

First of all, I want to tell you that the bearer of this is a great friend of mine, a dear, rude, affectionate little savage, whom I want much to humanise. And I am going to ask you, as a great favour to me, if you will have him for your soldier-servant, and treat him very kindly for me. I have the fancy that he is a runaway from home for my sake, and naturally I wish him to be in the best hands. If you will do this, I promise you that he is very shrewd and strong-minded, and some day may show himself more than worthy of his meat. But you must lead and not drive him, otherwise you will find that you have got the wrong man this time.

"What frightful nonsense," sighed Arthur, "it happens, however, that I do want a servant. Here—would you care to be a soldier and my servant, you?"

"Not Oi," said Tom.

"You would not?"

"Not Oi."

"That settles it, then. But the lady here says that she wants you to be."

"Well, if *she* wants, I will."

"It is quite a question of the heart, I see. Will you do, then, everything that she wants?"

"Aye," said Tom.

"Very well. We shall see."

The letter continued:

You know, perhaps, the Dragon Inn? It is a little outside Ilminster at the east end. As I have to be in Ilminster during the afternoon, I will wait at the inn for you *at nine*. Pray do not fail, as the matter is very important. I have it on good authority that the wines and spirits there are excellent. *At nine*, then.

"What the deuce do *I* care about the wines and spirits at the Dragon Inn?" muttered Arthur. "Little French girls that behave like mad women in a play should be abolished. Can the child be in love with me?"

That very morning, at Seaton Abbey, thirty miles away, Edith, too, was reading a letter from Cécile. It said:

One is *dying* for a sight of one's own sweet face, and hungering for one's own sweet lips. I will not wait. To-morrow I will be in Ilminster, and if you come then, I shall have you all, *all*, to myself. We will spend the night together at a dear little old-fashioned inn called the Dragon, a short way beyond Ilminster, on the east. Just outside the gates there is a very long lane, long and narrow, between hedges, where you will await me *at ten*, exactly, in the night. Do not enter the inn, but wait there for me, so that we enter together. Do just as one's own love tells to one, and one will not go far wrong. The wines and spirits at the inn are said to be excellent. *At ten*, then.

"Sweet, mysterious Cécile!" said Edith, rapturously kissing the letter. "The wines and spirits!—what *can* she mean?"

Arthur drank his glassful, and rose on unsteady legs.

Cécile had engaged a parlour on the first floor of the Dragon, a rather lonely country inn in the middle of fields and woodland, very sombre-looking, and deserted at night.

In this room by ten minutes past nine she sat alone with Arthur Musgrave. There was a small square table in the centre, covered with brown oilcloth, some old carved oak chairs, some old tapestry hanging on the wainscotting.

"And do you like Tom?" asked Cécile, wriggling herself to a position of comfort in the armchair.

"Oh, I dare say he will learn to govern me without overmuch friction in time," drawled the Captain. "He is at present, as you say, rather a cannibal. But one must expect to be the prey of one's servants, I suppose."

He suppressed a yawn, languidly wondering why he found himself in this vile den.

A waiter entered with a tray bearing two bottles, a large bowl, glasses, and biscuits.

"You are permitted to smoke, Captain Arthur," said Cécile, "and I will myself, you see, take a cigarette. The spirits are for you, the wine for me."

"You are wonderfully good," said the Captain, adding to himself, "and an uncommonly fast little witch, too."

But he composed himself comfortably in his chair, and began smoking a cheroot, Indian fashion, with the large end in his mouth. Cécile, with half-closed eyes and thrown-back head, was puffing clouds of cigarette-smoke into the air. Then in a moment:

"Let me do the *devoirs*," she cried, jumping up. "Do you like much to drink?"

"I? Drink? No—I'm afraid I am rather exemplary in that way. I hardly ever 'take anything,' as we say—that is, when I can help it."

"So much the better," said Cécile to herself, "you will topple over sooner." Then she added aloud:

"You like the woman better than the wine, is it not?"

She was a little excited to-night, and whenever she was excited her English became very Frenchified in its turns of expression.

"Whatever will she say next?" wondered the Captain with languidly lifted eyebrows.

"But at least," said Cécile, "you like *the punch?* I have

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made, see, a bowl to be ready for you. I, myself, shall I confess——"

"Well?"

"I like the wine—yes!"

"Naughty," said the Captain.

"Oh no—not so naughty. One is not a nun. I do not say I like to be stupefied, but to be just nicely—what do you say?—'elevated.'"

"Quite so: I am in no danger of misunderstanding you at all."

"And, look here, shall we have—what you call it?—a game? For every glass of the wine I drink, you drink one of the punch? You are not a monk, I think?"

"Not at all a monk," said Arthur. "I entirely agree to anything you want me to do."

"Well, then——"

She poured out a glass of wine, and ladled out a spoonful of punch, which she handed to Arthur.

"It is to be hoped that you will not drink many glasses of wine," said Arthur, coughing after his drink, "this brew is dreadfully hot and strong!"

"Yes! I shall drink," she nodded laughing. "A soldier should not be beaten by a lady, is it not?"

Arthur hated to be called "a soldier."

"But now—I must talk to you more seriously," went on Cécile. "You know, perhaps, that Dr. Danton is engaged to my friend, Miss Wentworth?"

Arthur went white.

"Another glass," said Cécile replenishing his, and drinking more wine.

"No, I did not know," said Arthur. "I prefer—really—if you won't mind—not to speak on that subject."

"But, yes, I mind," answered Cécile. "I wish you to know. He gained his point by a misrepresentation, you see."

"What misrepresentation?"

"He said you had promised never to speak to Miss Wentworth again."

"The cur mentioned that?" cried Arthur, half springing from his chair.

"Yes. The subject is painful. I will drink again, if you do not mind."

For the third time she ladled punch into Arthur's glass. Each time as he drank he coughed. A distinct bright flush mounted to his forehead and cheek.

"If you please," he said, "I shall be glad if you will drop the subject. I do not care what Miss Wentworth chooses to think of me. As to what the man, Danton, said, it is true. I can never, as long as I live, hold any sort of communication with Miss Wentworth. It is *your* fault, too."

"*My* fault, is it?"

"You know. You came and interfered in our fight. I was so disgusted with the frightful scene, that I took the only chance to clear out of it."

"But if I had not come you would have been shot, most certain," said Cécile.

"Shot, yes; but that would have been the height of blessedness compared with the life I now live."

"You care so much for Edith, then?"

"Care for her?" he cried wildly, "why, I die for her—I perish for her. Oh, God!"

Then immediately, in the depths of his fuddled brain, he had the dim consciousness that he was showing emotion—before a lady—he who despised a man for showing emotion under any circumstances.

What was the matter with him? Was the punch drugged? It was, at all events, devilishly strong.

"I will drink again," said Cécile. "The subject is a painful one."

She ladled out some more punch, nearly a glassful, and Arther, hardly noticing the quantity, drank it—the whole of it.

"Still there is no need to despair," said Cécile, her own forehead flushed with the yeast of the wine. I can tell you for certain, that you do not love Edith more——"

"Arthur!" she murmured.

"Say it!" he cried, staring in tipsy hunger upon her face.

"More—more than she loves you."

"That *is* so, then?" he cried, "that *is* so, for very certain?"

"Yes it *is* so," said Cécile, glancing at the face of an old grandfather's clock in a corner.

"Then, by Heaven——"

"I cannot drink more wine," she said rising, "only one more glass"—she poured out wine and punch into the two glasses—"and then you must go. I have said what I wished to say."

It was three minutes to ten by the big clock in the corner.

Arthur drank his glassful, and rose on unsteady legs. His eyes were glary with intoxication; the room swam round him. A wild madness and exhilaration reeled in his brain.

"Good-bye! Go now!" said Cécile. "Down the stairs this way, then out by the garden gate, then straight on along the narrow lane—straight on, you know!"

She held a candle while he stumbled down the stairs, and heard him go out by the gravel-path, and heard the gate bang behind him. Then she threw herself on a couch, laughing gleefully and guiltily.

The lane was dark, and narrow, and lonely. A hundred yards from the inn stood a solitary dim lamp on its post.

Beneath this, as Arthur stumbled forward, with one arm going out waving in his joyous intoxication, he saw a figure stand. He had to pass close to her, and the lamplight shone on their two faces.

They stared at each other for half a minute.

The next moment he had her in his arms, his lips glued passionately to hers.

"Edith! Edith! You are mine!"

His cry rang through the quiet night.

"Arthur!" she murmured. "Darling! Arthur!"

(To be continued.)

Asterisk Letter Competition.

NO. 2.

On page 317 will be found a sentence in which the central letters of each word have been dropped, and asterisks substituted.

Two guineas will be given to the reader who sends in on the back of a post-card the paragraph which most closely resembles the original.

All attempts must reach this office by Monday, March 8th.

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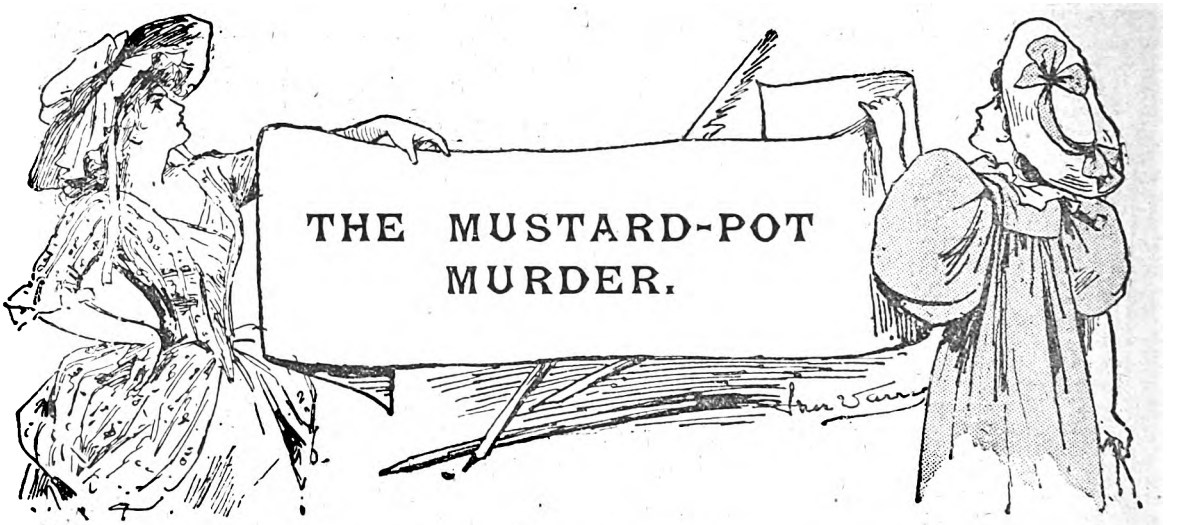

THE MUSTARD-POT MURDER.

"It had to be," said the old man who lived next door. "It was Fate."

He waved his hand at the solid-faced prisoner an officer was leading down the street. They had just discovered the crime which a few weeks ago all Paris was talking about as "the murder of the Rue Saint-Maur."

The old man had been expecting it. He was an unpleasant old man, and had feared he would die before it happened. He was gratified, therefore, that he had not missed it.

Eight years ago Louis Désire Besnard and his wife came into the Rue Saint-Maur. They were bride and bridegroom. Then she was fifty-eight. He was forty-one. They rented a small shop at No. 49 and sold wine and groceries to the neighbourhood. Their affairs prospered. They had a sleeping apartment on the first floor upstairs.

About a year ago the woman, who up to that time had been an affectionate wife, began to show curiously violent temper towards her husband. She was sixty-four then and he was forty-seven. One evening cries of "Help! Murder!" and terrifying shrieks came from the Besnard apartment. The neighbours hurried in and found Madame Besnard beating her husband.

Each time she struck him she screamed for help. In a few days there were more cries from the Besnard *ménage*. It became a regular thing. At first the neighbours came. "Surely he must be murdering her," they said. Presently they learnt better and came no more.

When the shrieks startled passers-by the inhabitants of the street would say: "Madame Besnard is 'combing her beloved.'"

Madame Besnard had developed an insane jealousy. Each time a woman customer entered the shop there was a scene. She who had been a loving wife became a fury. What was at her hand in these moments of rage she hurled at him.

Besnard was powerful and in the prime of life. The neighbours wondered that he endured so much.

"How is it, Besnard?" said one.

"If I struck her," he answered, "I should kill her. My hand is too heavy."

When the old man, whom the street called "Papa" Collignon heard this he chuckled, for he knew what was passing in the shopkeeper's mind, and he thought that perhaps he would live long enough after all. But the winter had been a hard one on "Papa" Collignon; he was very feeble.

As spring came on, the screams from the Besnard *ménage* and the assaults of the wife came to be taken as a matter of course in the Rue Saint-Maur. On one of the first very hot days of early summer—it was a Tuesday—word was passed through the street that Madame Besnard was in an unusually bad temper even for her. All day she sought chances (and found them) to pick quarrels with customers and neighbours, and above all with Besnard.

In the morning she kicked him on the calf of his leg and cut it open so that he had to go to a chemist to get it plastered up, and a second time to have the wound re-dressed. But Madame Besnard was not satisfied.

"I shall kill him yet," she confided to a friend. "I only hurt him this morning. I have got to kill him."

At 6.30 o'clock that evening the *concierge*, M. Boirot, was in his room with his wife and child. His room was next the back shop where the Besnards dined at this hour. At 6.30 precisely, through the wall they heard the agonised woman's shrieks and the cries of "Save me! Murder!"

"Listen," said the *concierge*. "Madame Besnard is beating her husband again."

But the screams, though a commonplace occurrence, terrified the child and threw her into a fit of sobbing. Madame Boirot and her husband had to quiet her. It was half-an-hour before the little girl was still again.

Before long Boirot saw Besnard pass the *concierge's* window and go upstairs to bed.

"But madame?" said the *concierge's* wife, "where is the wife?"

"She must have gone up while we were tending the baby," said Boirot.

Early on Wednesday the wine-merchant opened his shop as on other days. But his wife was not there. By 10 o'clock the word had gone through the street that Madame Besnard was not at the shop.

When "Papa" Collignon heard it he tottered in and bought a whole litre of wine, and chatted with Besnard and hoped madame was not indisposed.

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The wine-merchant thanked him much. Madame was upstairs.

But the *concierge* told what he had heard at 6.30 o'clock on the evening before to several of the lodgers of the house, and they, too, went to Besnard.

"She had just gone for a walk," said he. "Not far, only in the neighbourhood. I expect her back any moment."

All day the dwellers in the house watched for the return of Madame Besnard, but she did not come. In the afternoon the *concierge* called to a policeman in plain clothes who was passing. He told him his suspicions.

The officer went down into the shop. "What has become of your wife?" he asked bluntly.

"She is upstairs," was the answer.

"I want to see her," said the officer, and he went out and up the stairs to the Besnard apartment. The *concierge* let him in. Madame Besnard was not there.

He went back to the shop.

"Ah, yes," said the wine-merchant, "she must have stepped out." He grew pale as he said this, as if he were going to faint.

Thursday morning Madame Besnard had not come back, but the shop was open as usual. The *concierge* decided to wait no longer. At eleven o'clock he went to the Police Commissariat of the precinct and told the magistrate his story. The magistrate, M. Bottelier-Lasquin, went with him to No. 49, Rue Saint-Maur.

Besnard was at his cash desk, getting change for a customer.

"Where is your wife?" the officer asked sharply.

"She is out walking," was the answer.

M. Bottelier-Lasquin looked the wine-merchant in the eyes. "Come," he said, "that will not do. Where is she?"

Besnard had been pale and confused before. Now he became very calm. He shrugged his shoulders. "Very well," he said, "she is in there." He pointed to the back shop.

In a corner the officer found Madame Besnard. The body was standing up, wedged against the wall by boxes and sacks. A plank and some old clothes hid it. The blood had run from a wound in the head, and covered the face. The skull was fractured.

The magistrate ordered the body to the Morgue and took Besnard to the station. It was then that "Papa" Collignon had waved his hand at him.

The murderer confessed freely.

At 6.30 o'clock on Tuesday evening they were finishing dinner in the back shop. There was a quarrel, and Madame Besnard, snatching a salad-bowl from the table, hurled it into his face. It stunned him for the moment. His anger flashed up. He was exasperated beyond endurance. He seized a heavy crockery mustard-pot and threw it with all his might. Her head took the blow. She dropped, moaned a few minutes, and died.

He left the body where it fell and went up the stairs to his room. At two o'clock in the morning he stole down again and dragged it into the corner, stood it up, and hid it behind the packing-case as the officer found it.

What was he going to do with it? He did not know. He hadn't thought about it much. "It was pleasant to have the shop quiet."

Was he sorry? He supposed so, but he did not know certainly.

"It was pleasant to be quiet." ARTHUR MOTT.

RESULT OF COMPETITIONS.

RESULT OF ASTERISK COMPETITION.

NO. I.

THE first reader to forward a correct solution in this competition was Mr. C. B. Collin, Booking Office, Manchester Exchange Station, L. and N.W.R.

Below is published the original sentence:

A deep silence ensued, and Retta, fancying she knew her charge fully, and believing what she said, quickly dismissed her indignation at the girl's wild words. In the interval Lalage grew restless, and a quick observer might have discerned an expression upon her lovely face, in fact, a something about her whole mien, inspiring a shudder of incalculable fear.

RESULT OF PICTURE COMPETITION.

NO. 2.

Below appear the names and addresses of the prize winners in this competition:

W. Hodgson, 2, Eton Street, Plumstead, £5.

The following receive £1 each:

T. Stanley, 30, Garturk Street, Govanhill, Glasgow.
J. D. Monsen, 56, Bryantwood Road, Highbury, N.
F. H. Burkett, 19, Glenthorn Road, Hammersmith.
W. Power, "Ellery," New Brighton, Cheshire.
R. H. Seater, 28, Woodside Road, Woodside, Surrey.

The winning attempt is here given.

1.

Picture rejected,
Artist dejected,
Thinking so sadly,
Of cheque he wants badly.

2.

Artist sits moping,
Nothing to hope in,
Picture displaced,
From the easel it graced?

3.

Bright, new idea,
Comes very clear,
Artist quick rushes,
To palette and brushes.

4.

A touch here and there,
A scene rises fair,
Showing—'tis true,
Features quite new.
Artist I see, as pleased as can be.

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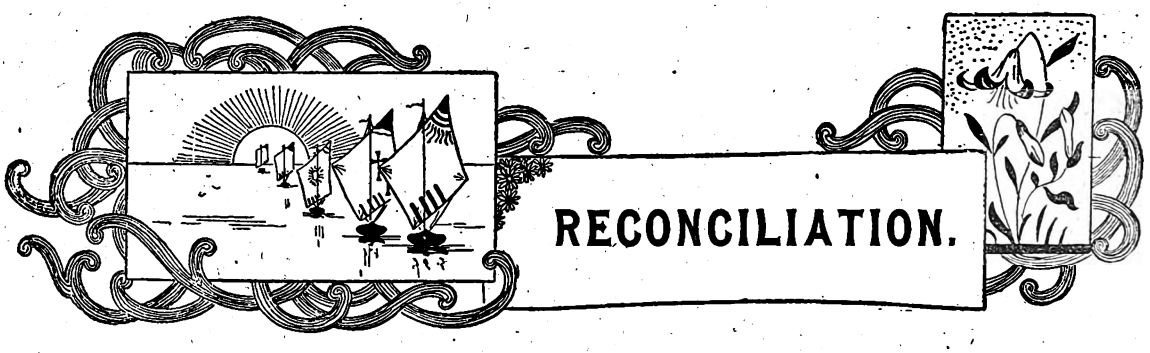

RECONCILIATION.

Paul Reville and Jean Vernier, two well-known and favourite actors, hated each other cordially.

By a sort of fatality, as soon as either of these irreconcilable enemies undertook or created a *rôle*, he was sure to see the name of his adversary in bold type side by side with his own on the poster of the same theatre.

Both were always warmly received and applauded. Reville was irresistible in a *rôle* requiring personal beauty and noble bearing. Vernier seemed the very incarnation of meanness and treachery, the ideal scoundrel, hardened and impenitent. Regularly every evening towards twelve o'clock he was unmasked and crushed under the hee's of the righteous and fascinating Reville.

In their mutual desire to annihilate one another they occasionally reached sublimity.

At the Odéon they have been seen—Reville under the scarlet livery of Ruy-Blas, Vernier under the Spanish cloak of Don Salluste, pouring forth their romantic tirades with such splendid sonority and expression as to create breathless enthusiasm in the crowded audience.

Again at the Ambigu, they were together in *La Tour de Nesle* in *Le Bossu* and *Patrie*. Always associated, always receiving together the ovations of an enthusiastic public, always great artists of the old school, so much loved by our fathers, and always leaving on any *rôle* they assumed the mark of their masterly conception. They never exchanged a word, save before the footlights and during the long, laborious rehearsals. Then, entirely ignoring their own individuality, and projecting themselves each into his respective *rôle*, each eyeing and measuring the other with the air of a Spanish grandee, and each stimulating the other to his best, they would rise to the full height of their powers, astonishing and delighting their admiring fellow actors.

"My dear old friend!".

Neither had ever taken the hand of the other, and both had openly professed the same antagonism in real life that they had exhibited on the stage.

At the Actors' Club, if Vernier was alluded to in the presence of Reville, the latter simply hurled out the one word *cabotin* (strolling player), shrugging his shoulders contemptuously.

With Vernier, the epithet *pitre* was sufficient. He pronounced this word with an enjoyment quite indescribable, and after the manner of the pupils of the Conservatory, opened his mouth in the form of the circumflex accent, and rolled out the *r* with a tremendous vibration.

Reville was a widower. Vernier was unmarried. The wife of Reville had died young—of consumption—leaving a little girl, beautiful with the beauty of a Greuze.

When Vernier, who was a good deal of a bear, caught sight of his rival in the street, leading his little girl by the hand, he was half conscious of a softened feeling towards his hated enemy, and he would growl out in his deep voice:

"What a lucky fellow he is!" and his envious eyes would follow the happy father on his way to a confectioner's, to buy a crisp little cake for Cécile.

The Porte St. Martin had announced the reproduction of *The Mysteries of Paris* for a certain date, the principal *rôles* of "The Schoolmaster" and "Prince Rudolph" to be filled by Vernier and Reville.

The disgust of Vernier knew no bounds. *He* to have this vile *rôle*. *He* to serve as a mere foil to his rival, who, in his rich *robe-de-chambre*, with gold girdle and tassels, would have ample opportunity of displaying his manly beauty and "air noble" in full view of all the pretty women, while he, Vernier, in rags and an old fur cap, would be pelted with cabbages and execrations

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from the upper gallery, the wretch from the "quartier Muffetard" being held in utter detestation by the class frequenting that part of the house.

As the rehearsals proceeded, Vernier's indignation became more and more pronounced. Suddenly, there came a rumour of Reville's illness. He had contracted a violent cold, attacking the lungs, which were seriously affected, and the poor fellow was flat on his back in the City Hospital.

His place was filled by an understudy, and as all were somewhat eagerly awaiting the expression of Vernier's satisfaction in the new arrangement, he astonished everyone by showing himself more dissatisfied than before.

Early in the evening the audience became conscious of something quite unusual—*bizarre* Vernier was not himself; he forgot his lines, passed his cues, stumbled, hesitated.

It was soon manifest to all that he missed his old associate; that he was, in short, lost without Reville, who, by his disdain and overbearing manner, his airs of a *grand seigneur* had irritated him, aroused his temper, and spurred his ambition. Reville had indeed kindled the now sleeping fire of genius in the soul of this veteran of the melodrama.

As all were wondering and talking over this singular *contretemps*—were asking "What does this mean?"—it was learnt that poor Reville was rapidly becoming worse, his symptoms giving no hope of his recovery, and astonishment reached its climax as soon as it was known that Vernier was on his way to the hospital to see his rival.

When he rang the bell at the door it was with a shaking hand. He was conducted to the chamber, where Reville, with eyes half closed, lay in that partial sleep, in which the faintest sound, no louder than the fluttering of a butterfly's wings, is distinctly perceived.

Hearing a gentle step in the room, he half raised his head from the pillow, and, seeing Vernier, said with a smile:

"Ah, it is you. I knew you would come. I was expecting you."

Vernier, the fierce, treacherous, impenitent rascal of the melodrama, fell, rather than seated himself, in the chair at the head of the bed, saying in his deep bass voice: "My dear old friend!" half sobbing out the words.

"Come," said Reville, "embrace me."

Beautiful "Accolade!" Thirty years of mutual hatred lost in this supreme embrace! They remained closely clasped, each in the other's arms, looking into each other's friendly eyes, full of kindness and dimmed with tears.

Reville, raising himself on his elbow, said:

"You do not know how glad I am to see you. I cannot tell you the pleasure it gives me, for, after my child, have you not been all my life? Do you remember Ruy-Blas? 'I have the livery of a lackey, and you the soul of one?' And to think that all that is finished! To think, my old friend, how many times I have played at burying you on the stage, and that now you are to bury me in good earnest!"

And as Vernier made a slight gesture of denial, Reville continued:

"Oh, yes; I know it is only a question of time. It is a great comfort to see you here at my side and grieving for me, and I shall die content."

Here he was interrupted by a paroxysm of coughing; but, after resting a few moments, he added:

"No; content is not the word. I am leaving my child, my darling Cécile. It breaks my heart to feel that I shall never again feel her little arms about my neck, never again kiss her soft curls, and when I am gone what will she do? What will become of her? God help my darling! She has no one." And overcome by emotion, he gasped for breath as Vernier said gently and tenderly:

"I shall be here."

"You! Will you?"

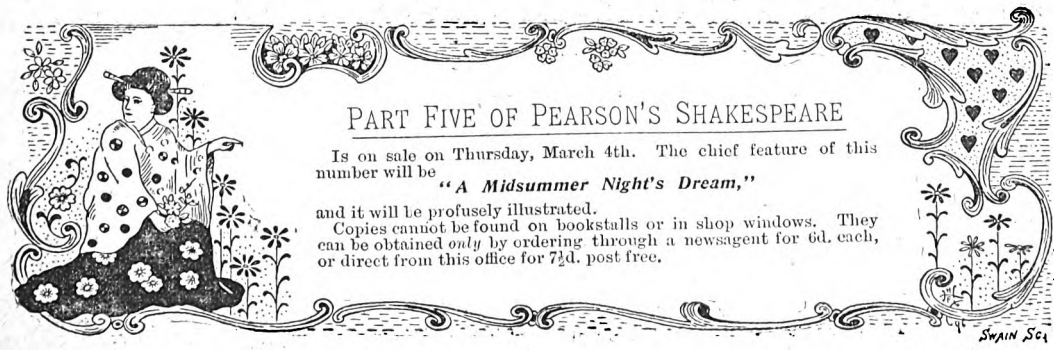
"Dear old friend, I am alone in the world; I have no no one to love. Give your child to me, I will be a father to her. Rest satisfied. She shall want for nothing. On my honour. By the memory of all our triumphs in the old days. I promise you to make her happy. I have means—much more than I need for nourishing the little creature. She shall never forget you. Your name and memory shall be dear and sacred to her. I cannot say all I feel—all I mean. Will you trust me? That is right. Your hand, old friend!"

Reville's face was radiant through his tears, and he said:

"This is the most perfect of melodramas."

The next day Reville was dead.

AUGUSTE FAURE.



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BLIND - - - JUSTICE.

A LAWYER'S REMINISCENCE.

"An innocent man need never be afraid to face a jury," so spoke a young lawyer but lately admitted.

"Well," said I, "from a layman's point of law, I think that if I thought the chances against me, no matter how innocent I were, I would decline the honour."

I had just dropped in for a friendly chat and smoke with my friend, Richard Boynton, an old lawyer well-known for an extensive *clientèle*. Turning to him, I said, as I lighted a cigar:

"What say you, Dick?"

"In theory, I agree with our young friend; in practice, with you."

Boynton added: "I'll give you a case in point if you like. It is about ten years ago when I was aroused about two o'clock in the morning by a messenger, the bearer of a hastily-scribbled note from a gentleman, an old client of mine. He was a childless widower, much interested in Egyptology, and consequently spent much of his time in Egypt. Being rich he could afford this expensive hobby. He was of a very quiet and retiring disposition, disliking all kinds of publicity or notoriety, and, like many studious men, was ofttimes very absent-minded.

"The note I received ran:

"'Dear Boynton,—They have brought me down here on some absurd charge or other. Come and arrange for my release immediately.—R. Rowley.'

"I hastened to the relief of my client. Now, I must tell you, he was very fastidious in his dress, and particularly natty and trim in his appearance. He wore a brown beard, cut in Vandyke fashion. Judge, then, of my astonishment when I was shown a man dressed in a particularly flashy style, of the kind affected by the sporting fraternity; a clean-shaved face, save for an inch or two of side whiskers. The man appeared to me to be a vulgar sporting man who had been out on a spree. Seeing me, he advanced rather unsteadily, and stammeringly said:

"'Ah, Boynton, get me out of this quick.'

"'There is some mistake,' I said to the policeman.

"'How?' asked he.

"'Why, this is not Mr. Rowley; this is not the gentleman I came to see.'

"'That's so? Well this is the man who gave me the note I sent up to you.'

"At this moment I looked up at the man before me and said:

"'You sent for me?'

"'Why, of course; who else should I send for?'

"'What made you use Mr. Rowley's name?'

"The man looked at me in amazement, and stutteringly replied:

"'R—R—Row—Rowley's n—n—name?'

"'Yes. Mr. Rowley's name,' I said impatiently.

"He clutched me by the sleeve, and gasped out:

"'Why, man—what do you mean? Do these clothes so alter me? Speak, Boynton!'

"I looked at him very keenly, and gradually there dawned on me that, after all, this was only my old friend Rowley.

"'Heavens! It is you, Rowley? What are you doing here? Come, man, compose yourself, and let's get at the bottom of this.'

"I sat down on the bench by his side, but, notwithstanding my cross-questioning, all I could get from him was nothing more than he had arrived the previous evening, had engaged a room at the Grand Hotel, had had some Welsh rarebit and a bottle of Bass, and had gone straight to bed. About midnight he had been aroused by a violent knocking at the door, and on opening it, had been gruffly told that he was under arrest, and that he was to dress pretty quickly.

"Hurried by the officers, he had hastily dressed himself, protesting uselessly that the clothes he was hustled in were not his, and was hurried off to the station. On his arrival there he had sent for me. No amount of cross-questioning could get him to vary or enlarge his story, nor could he give me the slightest reason for his arrest. As to his beard, that had easily been explained in answer to a question of mine. Owing to a slight skin eruption, contracted in Egypt, he had had it shaved off some time ago.

"The next step was to get him bailed out. This, I found, was not so easy a task. My non-recognition at first of my friend was against him. The magistrate next morning protested that this prisoner was a confidence man wanted for various offences, and that he was a certain Wilcox, *alias* Boucher, *alias* Palver, *alias* Moroney, and scoffingly declared he would not let him out under £500 bail. I did not stay to argue the matter out, but in less than an hour was back with a couple of friends of well-known wealth and standing. Bail was accepted. I carried my friend off in a cab to my house. Next morning my client was in a state of fever. I easily got a certificate from my physician exaggerating the illness.

"He remained in my house and in bed for nearly a week. During that time I found out enough to solve the mystery to my moral satisfaction, but not enough to convince a jury or even any outsider. The solution of the mystery was this: The man with the many *aliases*

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had come by the same train as my friend Rowley, had put up at the same hotel, and had been assigned a room on the same narrow corridor. By some chance my friend after supper had been given the key of Mr. Wilcox's room and had gone straight to bed. Mr. Wilcox's keen mind, ever bent on covering up his tracks, on finding that he had been given the wrong key, said nothing, examined my friend's bag, and then the idea evidently came to him that it would be a good thing if he could pass out of the hotel as Mr. Rowley.

"The probability was that he (Rowley) was in *his* room. To open the door was an easy trick for the thief. Then he must have taken my friend's attire, leaving his in its place. This affected, he paid his bill as Mr. Rowley, saying he was going to catch the night express north, and so he vanished.

"The question remained for me to prove that my friend was the real Rowley. I confess I saw immense difficulties in doing so promptly, and certainly not without great notoriety, mortifying to my friend, even if I succeeded.

"His resemblance in Wilcox's attire was so strikingly like the photos sent on to the police, and so unlike his own photos that the correspondence, papers, cards, and odds and ends which Wilcox had, either in his haste or intentionally, left in the coat and vest pockets, and which the police at the station had seized when they had searched him, that I shudderingly felt the chances were all in favour of a speedy conviction."

"What did you do?" asked the young lawyer.

"What did I do?" you ask. "I smuggled him off on a boat to America and forfeited the bail. He was, as I said, a rich man. It was the simplest way out of the difficulty and the surest.

"Still, my client, though perfectly innocent, is now a fugitive from justice." J. P. Mascott.

THE POISONED ARROW.

THE commanding officer was seated in the adjutant's office, in troubled parley with the officer of the day.

It was high noon, midsummer, and Arizona; and though the adobe was as cool as only an adobe can be in fiery weather, the Major was mopping his brow in entire discomfort.

"That's it, that's it!" he ejaculated. "Think of sending a man off on the very eve of his wedding; the very day before he is to be married. It's a beastly unpleasant thing to have to do, but I'm too old for a trip like that; Gowan's on the sick list, Henderson's away, Thompson's wife may die any minute, Trowbridge won't be back until early to-morrow morning, and you're half dead (precious hospital we have!) and officer of the day, besides. Then, moreover, Howland's about the only one who can handle those things right, and not make a mess of it. He's got to go, that's all."

He rang the bell for his orderly, and sent that unduly erect individual to find Lieutenant Howland, give him the commanding officer's compliments, and say he would like to see him in the adjutant's office immediately.

Presently Howland entered. He was the most promising officer in the regiment, and was tall and strong and homely. He had a square jaw and a straight mouth, and the jaw looked squarer and the mouth straighter just now. He foresaw something unpleasant when he caught sight of the Major.

"E-e-eh!" commenced the commanding officer, and dog-eared an official-looking document and straightened it out again. "Eh, Howland!"

"Well, sir?"

"Why—eh, I've got to ask you a deuced unpleasant thing, Howland."

"I will try to answer it, Major."

"Not a question, not a question. It's something I've got to ask you to do, and, by Jove, I'd rather be shot!"

"Anything I can do for you, I shall be most happy to do."

"See here. Everybody is sick or away, and I'm so old and fat, and Briggs is just out of a fever bed and hardly able to stand, you know, and someone has got to go up to the agency and quiet a fuss among the Apachés about the beef issue. Whoever goes has got to go now and get there in a hurry. I suppose I might attempt it, I suppose I might; but I'd make a mess of the business. I can't manage those bucks. I lose my temper too fast—and then I'm so fat!" said the Major sadly. "Briggs insists upon going, but, you see, he shouldn't. I won't allow him to. Don't you see how it is? There's only you available."

"Certainly, sir."

"I've got to ask you to do it to prevent a lot of trouble. I know you are to be married to-morrow, and it's the most disagreeable thing I ever had to do, to send you away to-day. But you see how it is," he reiterated.

"Of course, I see, sir, and I'll go—not exactly with pleasure—but still, I'll go. I can get back by noon to-morrow—and that'll give me time to shave and dress," he added with a grim smile.

They discussed the matter at some length, and Howland went to get on his scouting clothes for the long, hot ride through dust as dry as flour, and to say good-bye to Captain Trowbridge's youngest daughter.

Like the princess of fairy lore, she was as good as she was beautiful, and had light hair and brown eyes, and dimples, and clinging, feminine ways. Howland was badly in love; had been for several years, but many things had happened to prevent his marriage. At first he had had a mother and sister to support on a second-lieutenant's pay; then the sister had married, and his mother had died, so his fortune was all his own; but at that time Doris Trowbridge was engaged to marry another man.

When she found that she cared more for Howland than for her *fiancé*, she broke the engagement, and was meek and tearful and ashamed of herself for a month, until she and Howland arranged things satisfactorily between them. They were to have been married six months before, but Howland was ordered off as scout; and three months after that she had been at the point of death; so now, though the season was unpropitious, they had determined to take time by the forelock, make the most of the chance visit of a clergyman, and be married in the middle of July.

At this juncture Howland was being sent away, and he grew desperate.

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Nevertheless, he said good-bye to little Miss Trowbridge with exemplary calmness, and was more careful than she not to show depression.

"You'll come back, surely, won't you?" she begged.

"Of course I will, goosey. Don't I go to the agency on an average of twice a month nearly all the time?"

"I know. But somehow this seems different."

Howland agreed with her, but he laughed at her for all that.

"It's like the legend of Sir Olaf, isn't it? He went away the night before he was to be married, and an erl maiden made him die."

"There's nothing so fascinating as an erl maiden at the agency, more's the pity," he told her.

Then he went and rode off under the scorching sun in a cloud of dust, two soldiers behind him.

The girl watched him until she could see him no longer, and then went back into the tent to sit with a white face and closed lips and dry eyes, looking at the sands of the parade-ground.

* * * * *

Howland held a long council with the chiefs, and very nearly succeeded in settling the difficulties before nightfall. They talked, sitting under a shelter of willow sticks and branches. There was a half-cured ox-hide on the ground, upon which they squatted.

Two of the Indians played monte with a pack of grotesque raw-hide cards, and one whittled a stick for an arrow-shaft. They liked Howland, and they trusted him. This was known, so missions of the sort usually fell to him. He talked now, and waxed very eloquent, and the chiefs grunted as the interpreter translated. They were almost won to him, but they postponed their decision until they should have time to talk matters over, so they bade him return after dark. Howland went away, after having given the daughter of one of the bucks a bright handkerchief, and having said a few words to her out of his scanty vocabulary. The girl looked at him intently, with her little, bird-like eyes twinkling, and said nothing in reply, but smoothed the bandanna on her knees. When he was gone she rose and stood in front of her tepee to watch him out of sight, as the fair-haired white woman had done a few hours before.

After a time she put the handkerchief on her head and went in the direction he had taken.

When she found him it was dusk, and the coyotes had begun to whine and bark all about them, and one faint star glimmered in the purpling sky. Her eyes were wonderfully bright, and her wild gracefulness would have been alluring to another man.

She went up behind him and touched him on the shoulder. He faced about, and asked what she wanted. But for the bright handkerchief on her head he would not have remembered her. When he saw that, he smiled, and the girl, encouraged, began a protestation of desperate, savage love, in the most even of voices and broken of English, interspersed with Apaché and Mexican.

Howland answered her kindly, and, to her calm-toned pleadings, smiled in her tense face and turned away.

"*Poco tiempo*, you come," she said, gliding after him and grasping his hand. She followed him for a few yards. "You come?" she insisted.

"Yes, *poco tiempo*, I come to see your father."

She flung his hand from her and hurried off into the shadow with a low snarl.

Late at night, as Howland left the council of the braves, a hundred yards from the camp, a woman strode up to him, and, without any preface, dropped at his feet and caught his hands and repeated the story of her savage passion in the same monotone.

But Howland had completed his embassy successfully, and was in haste to return to the camp during the night and comparative coolness, so he pushed her away with a disgusted "*Vamoose!*" and hurried on.

* * * * *

Years ago there were still poisoned arrows used occasionally—weapons deadlier than the more popular rifle or carbine, for their scratch was fatal. The head was dipped in a poison curiously made. A bit of liver, quite putrid, was held before a rattlesnake until he had injected his venom into it time and time again. After a few more days this virulent substance was put upon the points of the arrows, to carry agony and dissolution to whatever they touched.

It was one of these arrows that Howland jerked from his arm, a few moments later, as he went into the hut where his two soldiers were waiting.

He held it in front of the candle and examined it intently, while the blood dripped over his dusty boot. One of the men asked him how it happened, while he cut open the sleeve. "A mistake, very likely. It was not one of the bucks; we parted good friends." The woman he did not mention. He looked at the arrow again.

"It's poisoned, I fancy. Rather hard luck," he said. He passed one hand across his face wearily, and repeated: "Hard luck!" Then he gave the men a detailed account of what he had done and accomplished, that they might tell the Major in case he himself should be past speaking. The agency doctor was off on a two days' hunting trip, so the soldiers bathed and dressed the wound, and made Howland drink the contents of a large flask of whisky. But he ordered his horse and went back to the post, nevertheless, across the long, gleaming plain of sand, under the purple arch with its stars of glimmering gold; three weird, dark figures following the road through the night.

And just as the grey of dawn came over the far off black mountains, just as the dawn breeze sprang up and blew on his swollen and burning face, just as the first call for reveille shrilled through the valley, two dust-whitened riders, supporting him in his saddle, drew up at the hospital.

At two o'clock a stretcher carried the body of Lieutenant Howland from the hospital to his quarters and the flag was put at half-mast.

Gwendolen Overton.

A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.

On page 313 several sketches are given in their proper order. £2 is offered to the reader who sends us the most appropriate wording to go under each sketch, the whole to form a story descriptive of the illustrations, and a bottle of Home Notes Bouquet will be given to each of the senders of the next best five attempts.

It is not necessary for competitors to have any literary ability. If you have a good idea, surely there should be no difficulty in putting it down in words. The whole of the story is limited to one hundred words, which may be distributed under the sketches according to the judgment of the competitor.

All that you have to do is to write in the order of the sketches the wording that you think most appropriate, enclose your attempt in an envelope (which should be marked "Picture Story"), and forward it to this office before Monday, March 8th.

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Pearson's Picture Puzzles.

No. 1. ONE HUNDRED POUNDS IN PRIZES.

IN the current number of PEARSON'S WEEKLY you will find ten pictures. They represent the names of ten well-known Actors and Actresses on the Dramatic and Music-Hall Stage. This is a competition that requires no explanation. If you will look at the accompanying picture you will see the reply is Beerbohm Tree. Who are the other people?

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and then keep the list till three other sets appear. When you have filled in the lists for four weeks send the four sheets to us in one envelope, addressed

"Pictures," Pearson's, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

But remember the sheets must come to us four in one envelope. Don't be discouraged if you cannot find forty names, fill in thirty-five, thirty, or even less. Others may be no more clever than yourself.

1st PRIZE.	£50 in Gold.
2nd PRIZE.	A £10 Bank of England Note.
3rd, 4th, and 5th PRIZES.	£5 Bank of England Notes.
6th to 20th PRIZES. . .	Fifteen Sovereigns.
21st to 40th PRIZES. .	Twenty Half-Sovereigns.

No. 1.—Beerbohm Tree.

DO YOU WANT A WATCH?

On February 18th we wound up a watch and placed it in a safe. It was wound up somewhere between the hours of four and six in the afternoon. It is supposed to run down in about thirty-six hours. If you want this watch, which is a superior article, manufactured by **Mr. HENRY E. PECK, of 71, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.**, and sold by him at five guineas, all you have to do is to mark the time at which you think it will stop on the clock face herewith, and on the line left for that purpose. You may make any number of attempts for this prize, but each one must be on a separate clock-face.

Magnificent English Lever Watch, ¾-plate movement, jewelled in eight holes, chronometer balance, plain or engine-turned cases, crystal glass, five years' warranty with each watch.

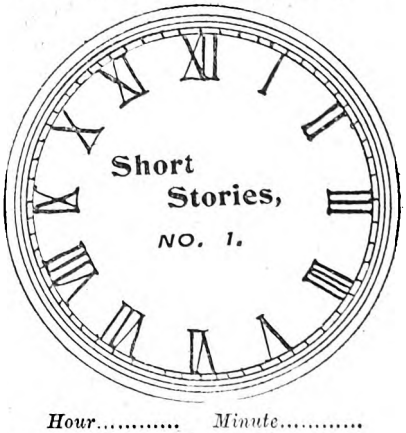
The prize will be given to that competitor who draws the hands pointing most nearly to the hour and minute at which it is found the watch in our safe has stopped.

There is no entrance fee required, but no competition will be accepted unless traced on the diagram herewith.

In the unlikely event of two competitors being correct, the watch will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt first reaches this office.

Competition closes ***Monday, March 8th.*** Address attempts:

"WATCH" ***Short Stories,*** PEARSON'S BUILDINGS, HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON, W.C.



Hour..... *Minute*.....

Name.....

Address.....

.....

All Competitions must be sent through the Post.

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A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.—No. 5.

SEE PAGE 311.

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2

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7

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SUMMARY.

The scene is laid at St. Agnes, one of the Scilly Islands. The inhabitants live by the booty obtained from vessels wilfully led to destruction by false beacons. The only two exceptions are Nigel Prideaux and Damaris Nance, his sweetheart. Manuel Nance, Damaris' father, is Nigel's greatest enemy. The *King Hal*, a warship laden with Spanish plunder, is lured to destruction, and wrecked off Troy Town. All hands are either drowned in the sea or killed by the inhabitants, except Sir Francis Seymour, who is rescued by Nigel. Damaris takes food to the survivor, who falls in love with her. Nigel secures Sir Francis' escape. Manuel Nance decides to give his daughter in marriage to one of the sons of Governor Layton, and for this purpose sends one of his men to convey the offer. The big dowry which is to accompany the girl creates dissention among the Governor's six sons, and they decide to swim across to the island on which she lives, the first arrival to become her husband. While Nance and his men are rowing over to Hugh Town to fetch Master Layton, the boat capsises and all are drowned.

CHAPTER X.

The New Chief of St. Agnes.

There was deep sorrow in St. Agnes for many days after this catastrophe. It could not have been otherwise. The drowned men had not been exemplary Christians; but they were fathers of families, and their wives and children felt all natural affection for them.

At one swoop, the population of the island was reduced from forty-five to twenty-eight. But three males were left in the land: Nigel, his faithful idiot, Ban, and the child, Obadiah.

Under these circumstances, it fell to Nigel to assume a sort of temporary lordship in St. Agnes. Of governmental duties, of course, he had none. But youthful ambition was stirred within him; and he took upon himself to see that the women and girls lacked no food that could be got by the aid of his hands from the ocean.

This seemed the more imperative as no boat came to them from St. Mary's until the third day after the accident. The sea, though calm in other parts, ran with a furious speed in the channel between these two islands. It was, said the women-folk, who were ever prone to detect in extraordinary events the agency of some malignant force, the work of the spirits of the dead men of the *King Hal*. But little of this ill-fated ship now remained in the position where it originally struck. The new storm had wrought fresh havoc upon it, and again the strand of St. Warna's Bay was overcast with jetsam. For the time, however, the survivors of St. Agnes took no interest in the things. They let them lie (bales and boxes, and even the bodies of a bullock and a man) as if they were no longer concerned with aught but their own bereavement.

In such a state did Master Layton and his son Eric find the island when at length they came into it.

The Governor was aghast to hear what had happened. True, the bodies of two or three men had gone ashore under the Fort Hill of St. Mary's, and given warning of some calamity. But that all the able-bodied males of the island save one should be cut off in the twinkling of an eye was almost past belief.

Yet his worship's distress was, sooth to say, quite as much on account of the gold that had sunk as for the sake of the men or their widowed wives.

He was quick to interrogate Nigel about the other property of Master Nance. Here, however, he did not profit greatly. For, in the meantime, our hero had talked with the women of Agnes, and had persuaded them to view their loss as in some sort a judgment for the cruel deeds their husbands had wrought in their lifetimes. By this one brief, sharp blow the Almighty had chastised the men, and so shielded them from the worse fate that would in eternity have been theirs had they continued to work such evil.

It was not sound theology, nor even impeccable reason. But it did not displease the poor souls. And in keeping with the idea, each wife had surrendered such precious things as her house contained, and especially the treasures of the *King Hal*, into the hands of Nigel. With this rich produce and the far richer spoil of the dwelling of Nance, it was proposed to ask the intercession of the noble Lord Abbot of Tavistock. Heaven would not, it was thought, be deaf to their pleading on behalf of the souls of the dead men, if the prayers were so generously supported. Only the plunder of the *King Hal* did Nigel keep apart from the rest, for he remembered Sir Francis Seymour's words thereanent.

Master Christopher Layton thus found himself baffled. He could not aver directly that there was treasure in St. Agnes, though his suspicions were more than strong. And in the evening he returned to St. Mary's in no very sweet frame of mind.

Nor was young Master Eric quite contented with the day's events. For the first time he found himself face to face with the damsel to whom he was to have been wedded.

The blue eyes and graceful form of Damaris awoke in him a passion he hitherto had not dreamt of. She did not greet him as a bridegroom. Indeed, she forbade him even to speak to her—for was she not in weeds for her father? But while she was within reach of him he let his eyes wander over her with such a flame of eagerness in them that Nurse Cochran could hardly keep her hands off him.

Yet in the end, when it transpired that she was now a portionless bride, what must his father do but scorn the notion that he should still regard this beauty as his wife in future.

It was in vain that he protested, vowed he would not live

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without her, and so forth, after the manner of hot, impulsive youths. Master Layton made a jest of him.

"Silly calf—'twas not her beauty thou wast about to wed, but her money bags. Since these be gone, thou mightest as well eat the pot the bread's baked under as mate her emptiness. Beauty, quotha! a fine thing in sooth. Look at the carcass of a cow thrice weeks in the salt sea, and then prate of the merits of skin charms!"

"I'll do it, though thou talk thy tongue out," was the youth's angry rejoinder.

"Marry, and so thou shalt, an it please thee, and be lord of St. Agnes to boot—a fine lordship, with nigh a score of lone womenfolk to aid thee—'twill suit thy talents, my son! But yet, remember the damsel is in distress. It were ill manners even in thee to vex her with thy enquiry this month or more—so come away and drink a jug of canary on it."

Though well-nigh speechless with rage, the youth could do no less than acknowledge the propriety of what his father said on the subject of his wooing. And so with a sulky muttering he returned to the boat, and St. Agnes was again left in peace.

These few days had wrought a strange alteration in Dame Cochran's estimate of Nigel.

At first she was for scoffing at him in his assumed posi-

He was quick to interrogate Nigel.

tion as head of the island. But his concern for the widowed women, and his untiring efforts to hearten the spirits of them all, won her admiration.

Only in the matter of the island's reformation was she at discord with him. She was not, she said, so eager to hand over the souls of her ancestry to the arch fiend in the nether world. She mocked at the thought that there was so much amiss in the island traditions and the habits that had come down to them. If they cut the throats of strangers who set foot on their land, they were acting but in self-defence. What right had these or any to invade a land without a "Pray thee, may we?" For the rest, what difference was there in the long run between a slit throat and a drowned man? As for the money and valuables on derelicts, they were as much the property of the finder as the egg a fowl lays is the property of the hen's owner. Nor was it so very heinous a sin to light a fire on a headland, which might serve as much to warn as to misguide a ship.

But this same good soul was not a whit averse to conciliating Heaven with some of the treasures of the island. There was no harm, she admitted, in thus making sure of the dead men's well-being in Purgatory. The harvest of the Atlantic was rich enough to license even such extravagance. And she hoped wisdom would yet come upon Master Prideaux, to enable him to see that he did no wrong in accepting the gifts proffered by the waves. Was it not a fair duello? At one time the sea thought well to snatch away eighteen lives at a stroke. Surely the least they could do was to receive what trifles at other times it offered them in compensation!

But to all this of course Nigel shook his head.

Damaris herself was the first to enlighten the old woman about her love for the acting lord of St. Agnes; and this news, too, did not come with such a shock.

"I'd rather see thee Mistress Prideaux than Mistress Pert Layton, wench," she said. "And when all's said there's little choice left if thou art to wed one of thine own people—a thing that is ever much to be advised. Further, there be three other marriageable maidens in the island, and I would not that either of those gawbies took the one proper man we have, and left thee wanting."

"Dear nurse," said Damaris in reply to this, "thou'rt fonder of me than I fancied, and the hearing of thee has made me happier than I have been this many an hour."

"'Tis a rule, wench, worth thy minding, that a rough tongue's more oft than not the voucher of an honest heart. Troth, I'm not perfect."

"And yet thou'rt not so far from it."

"Hearken to her. She says I'm perfect, or nigh it. Marry, then I must e'en do what the others do, and ascribe it to that fine wooer of thine who works changes in us all."

This with a little jesting laugh, though in no ill spirit.

But Damaris chose to regard it as a confession of fact.

"Therein, sweet nurse, I am at one with thee. My Nigel is matchless."

"And so art thou to think him so," was the rejoinder, with another laugh and a shake of the head.

Thus the days ran by, and the women began to turn their minds less and less upon their trouble. The middle of July was past, and again unkindly weather blew over the black rocks of the isles. The nights, too, grew longer, though not much, and some of the dames talked freely to each other of the terror of the coming winter, with no mankind to stand 'twixt them and the storms, and the fear of starvation that was worse than the worst of storms.

A St. Warna's Day came and went. For the first time in many years the Saint was bereft of her ritual. None went down to the Bay—nor was a single sacrificial pin cast into the muddy water of the well. Young Obadiah had been of less lively mood since his adventure on the evening of that twenty-sixth of June. It was but rarely he sang at all now; and never the hymn of which he had formerly been so fond.

Nigel had resolved again and again to take boat across to St. Mary's and there journey with others to the mainland, past St. Martin's and the Eastern Isles. But Damaris and his own doubts kept him at home. How could he so dissemble his purpose in visiting the Abbot of Tavistock as to quiet such qualms or suspicions as might

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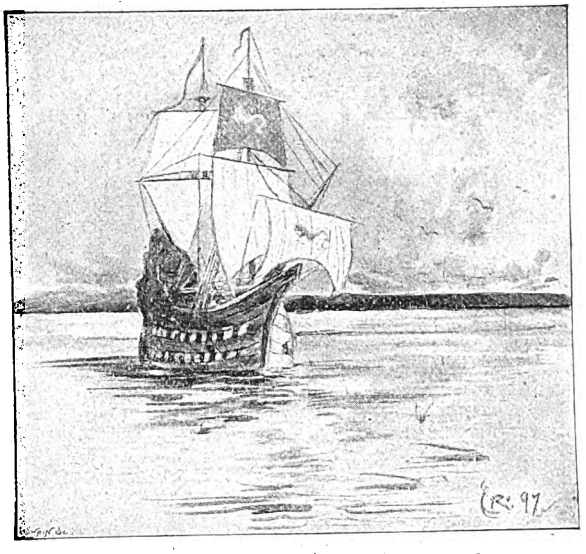
arise in Master Layton? Besides, it is not easy to carry a large sum of money without the chink of it betraying itself.

For these and other reasons, Nigel deferred his



Her head was pointed straight for the little haven.

expedition. And of all the hindrances that worked on him, none was more potent than the thought that in his absence young Layton might sail to St. Agnes, and carry off Damaris by main force.

On these grounds he had said to his sweetheart: "I will not leave Agnes without thee, or until we be duly wed, and there be some here to lift a hand in thy aid if any come to molest thee."

To which Damaris had replied that since it was so, she cared not whether they were wed or no. All she desired was the continual presence of her Nigel. What could it signify to her happiness whether they were or were not linked fast by Church ceremony, with Book and ring? She could not be more joyful of soul than she was—and this notwithstanding the occasional sadness that possessed her as she thought of her father and his end.

In truth they were bright days for both of them. There was none to say to them, "Thou shalt not do this," or, "Do this in despite of thy wishes." And many an hour, free for the time from broader anxiety, did Nigel pass with pretty Damaris on the velvety downs which spring inland from the granite cliffs.

CHAPTER X.

And so They Lived Happy ever After.

One bright, calm morning, with only a sigh of wind from the east, there stole into the channel between St. Mary's and St. Martin's a stately vessel full four score feet from stem to stern.

A month had gone by since the wreck of the *King Hal* on St. Agnes, and no such vessel as this had since appeared in the waters of Scilly.

There was excitement in Hugh Town when it was seen that her head was pointed straight for the little haven. At that distance it could not be seen whether she was of English make, or whether she was one of the pirate craft of Spain or France.

By-and-bye, however, the pennons fluttering from her tall masts told that she was a royal ship. The fair arms of old England floated in the clear air, and beneath them was a dragon with a forked tail, which Master Layton knew for the heraldic bearing of his late guest, Sir Francis Seymour.

Slowly the good ship walked through the pool towards the haven. Even the tide did not this day seem to aid her much. But at length, after a cannon shot which awoke echoes from many a rock far and near, and sent the gulls shrieking into the air, she dropped her anchor within two hundred yards of the shore. Master Layton, in his little boat, was already alongside her, and tendered a very hearty welcome to the guest whom he had so lately speeded from his island.

"I bear a Royal Commission, my good friend," said the knight, "and will say somewhat for your own ear when, with your leave, I have broken my fast."

Of the nature of this commision we need add little. It was concerned with the redistribution of certain of the lands of the islands when the dissolution of the monasteries (then brewing) might be expected. Sir Francis himself had a large grant of the monastic territory in the Isles. The Abbot of Tavistock, like the rest, was to be well shorn of his wealth.

In the course of light talk, after dinner, Master Layton spoke of the depopulation of St. Agnes, and the terrible manner of it.

Sir Francis was interested. But his interest became such when he heard young Nigel Prideaux was left sole man in the island, that the Governor of St. Mary's wondered not a little.

"Then your Excellency knows the youth?" he suggested.

"I know none I esteem more—of his kind," answered the knight.

He would not further be drawn on the subject, though it was observed, after inquiring about the girl named Damaris, that he puffed his lips and looked elated, like one with a brave idea in his head. He learnt too that it was this same damsel who was to have been the prize of the eccentric contest he had by chance initiated—whereupon he had

They came upon Damaris.

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frowned, and trifled restlessly with his moustache, which he wore short, and turned after the Italian mode.

There was much in his visit which perplexed and even troubled Master Layton; but he knew not what to do or say in mitigation of his anxiety. The King's Sign Manual was not to be questioned.

On the morrow, upon a placid sea veined with lines as if snails had trodden over it, and left their mark, Sir Francis was escorted across to St. Agnes. He was accompanied by Master Layton, the Governor's two eldest sons, and others. With the party was Father Harris from Tresco, who was in Hugh Town at the time, and craved a passage that he might take the church's consolations with him to the widowed women and orphans.

"Who knows, sir priest," said the knight somewhat cavalierly. "Thou mayest have more duties than thou wottest of, and some of a various kind."

But to this Father Harris said nothing, for he had word of the reason of Sir Francis' coming into the Isles, and was careful not to anger him.

No sooner were they landed in Perkilla Bay than young Eric Layton craved permission to run on ahead to give warning of their visit. But Sir Francis said "Nay" to him—there was that in his face which told Master Eric that the knight was no favourer of his suit with Damaris. Yet it did not dishearten him; for what can it matter, he asked himself, to a nobleman whom the wench marries?

A**n, h*****r, w**n of a s****n t**y a*l c**e u**n D******s h*****f,s****d w**h h*r w*****n w**k in a g****y h****w, w**h r***s b******n h*r a*d t*e s*n, t*e L****n y***h h*d to c****e h*s m**d a******y. T*e l***t of r**********n on t*e g****s f**r f**e m**e h*m t***k t*e k****s c**********r m***t e**n be h*s r***l.

"Sweetest of sweet Penelopes!" exclaimed the knight, as he bent and kissed her hand—she going rose-red to her ear tips the while—"may eternal fire have me if I do not aid thee towards thy Ulysses."

All which was Hebrew to the bystanders, and indeed to Damaris herself—though she knew by her heart that it meant no ill to her.

Then the womenfolk of the island gathered and surrounded the party. They mourned their losses afresh, and shed tears; nor would they take comfort from Father Harris, whose words had a scholarly cast they cared not for. Only when mention was made of Nigel did their countenances clear at all. With one voice they belauded "Master Prideaux" as their true friend.

"By St. Jago of Compostella," exclaimed Sir Francis, with a light laugh, "your cavalier, fair Damaris, will have to play the Turk. 'Tis much to be hoped thou art complacent and not of a jealous humour."

This time the girl smiled, for she caught his meaning. There was compliment to Nigel in his words. She could forgive his allusions for the sake of that.

Afterwards they all went toward St. Warna's Bay, and the site of the wreck of the *King Hal* was regarded with lowering brows by Sir Francis. The distress of that fatal night was renewed in him as he beheld the cruel rocks and the splinters and other wreckage on the stones.

"Where is this Master Nigel?" he asked imperiously. "I have an account to settle with this accursed island."

They said he was still out at sea in his boat after the fish; and with him was little Obadiah Hicks.

"A pretty land in sooth," scoffed the knight gaily. "With a score and more of dames and virgins in the keeping of an idiot!"

And so they strolled on, and their steps led them to the grassy curve which ended in an inlet on the north side of Troy Town headland.

Sir Francis lifted his head briskly, and then glanced at Damaris, whom he had kept by his side.

"Methinks," he said softly, "thou and I, child, have been here before. And, by my faith, it was a well tasting capon, and the sweeter for being carried near that tender heart of thine!"

"'Twas this very spot," rejoined Damaris. "Yon rock like a sheep's head faced thee, did it not, from the cave?"

And so they strolled on.

"Marry it did, and finely I wearied of thy hard sheep's head ere that stout lad of thine took me in hand. May my right arm rot from my body if I forget it."

But at this moment there was a sound of much talking behind them, and, turning, they saw the women of St. Agnes and Nigel himself, and after them they were dragging a hand-cart, which seemed more burdensome than its load would have argued it.

The knight stepped back, and offered both his hands to our hero.

"Good Nigel, I rejoice to see thee," he said most courteously, so that Damaris was like to kiss him for his kindness. "But what have these dames brought me?"

"The fragments of thy lost ship, Sir Francis—in all, some thirty thousand gold pieces, and other curios."

The knight said not a word at first, but looked from Nigel to the boxes, and then at Master Layton.

After which he abruptly slapped Nigel on the shoulder. "Thou art a marvel of a boy," he exclaimed; "indeed," he added, with a merry, wicked smile, "thou'rt a pair of wonders, and beshrew me if I'll rob the world of its chance of a progeny of such. As for you, sir" (to Master Eric), "you may sing your '*dimittis in pace*,' for you've lost her. Stay, I like not the blackness of your countenance. You be men of hard and reckless lives in these islands, and I've not faith in all of you. I pray you withdraw a pace or two, save only Master Prideaux, whom I hereby name Lord of St. Agnes by Royal Grant under my hand, and also save the Demoiselle Damaris Nance."

The knight had to repeat his request before it was fully complied with. Then the Laytons and the womenfolk of St. Agnes gave way.

"Now then, young people," said Sir Francis, "you have seen one token of my goodwill toward you. I'd fain give you a second. There's yon priest of Tresco here to hand, and I will rejoice to play the part of bride-father. Come,

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say the word, and we'll have you tied up for life this very hour."

Perhaps Nigel would have accepted this proposal without demur had it been made to him alone. The opportunity was at least a good one, and he was so light at heart to perceive that he had a friend who was more puissant than the Governor of St. Mary's.

But the blushes on Damaris' downcast face held him reluctant.

"It were ill done to hurry her," he said gently.

"Methinks I know maiden nature better than thou, good Nigel," was the knight's smiling rejoinder. "It may be 'no' at the mouth with them, but I vow to thee it's 'yes' at the heart on such times as these. And it's the man who reads their hearts first and their tongues' words only by the light of them—it's that man who does best for them—and, by my soul, best for himself too. Dost take me?"

This discourse seemed to encourage Nigel — he advanced and took the girl's hand.

"Sweetheart," he whispered, "wilt be my bride this very hour? I'll view thy silence as consent."

Sir Francis heard and laughed loud. "Thou'lt make a good lord, Master Prideaux, for thou hast strategy in thy composition, as well as truth and honour, and such goodness as I would were more common elsewhere in the world. She'll stay as dumb as a post, mark if she do not."

And so she did. Whereupon Nigel put her hand upon his arm and they both stood before the knight. The girl had raised her face towards her bridegroom when Sir Francis called for Father Harris—and there was such a light, contented smile upon it that he could hardly refrain from clasping her in his arms in public.

Thus, on the green turf, under the blue sky, with the babble of the sea on the shingle in their ears, and with all the people of St. Agnes and the three Layton men about them, Nigel and Damaris were married. And at a word from Father Harris, after the ceremony, all went on their knees, with their faces toward the Bay of St. Warna, and the priest besought the Almighty to bless the island of St. Agnes and all its inhabitants, and to put right instincts into their hearts. To which prayer the knight in particular uttered a resounding "Amen," with unrestrained shaking of the head as he looked sternly towards the rocks on which the *King Hal* had been lured. But his face lost its severity when he marked the boxes of gold, and he gave the bride and her groom great congratulations on their alliance.

The St. Agnes women, too, pressed forward, and Dame Cochran in the van of them, to offer their blessing also to Nigel and Damaris. The event pleased them mightily upon the whole. And Dame Cochran in particular could not refrain from looking impudently at young Layton, with a toss of her old head. But Master Eric had ere this begun to laugh as if he cared not at heart for his own discomfiture. He was a youth of volatile and pliable nature, and he jeered at himself for his recent earnestness as if it had been a folly.

They burnt it to the ground.

"There's one thing more," said Sir Francis, when he had begun to move towards the Bay to leave the island. "In due time I will send thee, my Nigel, a company of stout-limbed youths, like thyself, to reinstate the island. They will have a word to look to thee for their headship; for their wives they need also, I trow, look not out of St. Agnes. By my troth, widows are not to be sneered at. They are like autumn plums, than which I know naught more to my taste. But such maids as thou, fair Damaris, are — as methinks I have said before—incomparable."

Then, with many expressions of his lasting goodwill, Sir Francis left St. Agnes in the keeping of its new lord. Master Layton and the others also parted with Nigel as with a person of some great distinction.

* * * * *

That evening the wedding feast in St. Agnes was celebrated. And afterwards, ere bedtime, with a silvery moon in a quiet sky, they all repaired to the Bay of St. Warna, and, kindling a bonfire round the post which had of old served them as the centre of their heathen dances, they burnt it to the ground. The well of St. Warna they choked with the big stones they rolled into it, and at this task no one was so industrious as little Obadiah Hicks.

A new and a happier era had begun for the isle of St. Agnes.

The End.

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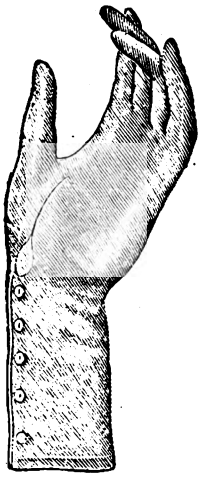

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Answers to Correspondents.

P. L. S. wants to know why champagne can be manufactured only in certain parts of France.———The champagne district in France has a peculiar conformation of soil—loam and stones mixed. There is no similar soil suitable for vine culture in any other country, or in any other part of France, and, as a consequence, this small area in the north-west of the French Republic has retained its celebrity for centuries.

A. A. G.—32,000 varieties of goods are manufactured from wool.

J. S. T.—Opinions differ as to which is the most sensitive part of the body. It is usually supposed to be the tip of the tongue, but those engaged in polishing billiard balls, or any other substances requiring a very high degree of smoothness, invariably use the cheek bone for detecting signs of roughness.

U. I. C. E.—You are suffering from an overpowering dose of self-consciousness. It is a malady that frequently attacks young men of your age. You imagine that everybody is drinking in every word you say, and noting your every movement, while really they are not taking the least notice of you. There is no remedy for such a trouble. The only thing is to wait until you outgrow it.

Ben.—The "Adventures of Mr. Alfred Juggins" will be published in book form.

F. R. stammers. He wants to know of a cure.———Tap or beat time with the finger at every syllable pronounced, either in reading—which should always be aloud—or speaking. By so doing the most inveterate stammerer will be surprised at the immediate result, and with long and constant practice no impediment will be found to fluent speaking. Also, if you will carefully note, when reading aloud, that there are certain letters which, more particularly as initials, make speaking difficult, you will find that the sound of other letters can either be substituted or pronounced so as to remove the difficulty. Thus Y and U are especially obnoxious. Say Eeankee for Yankee, Eeouth for Youth, etc. By care and patience you will find this of great assistance.

C. D. D.—You may make an excellent lubricating and burning oil and embrocation compound from the following recipe: One ounce of camphorated oil, three ounces of sperm oil, and four ounces of vaseline oil. Mix the whole together, and colour with a little alkanet.

Cavendo Tutus.—Impossible to say which is the best sea-side town for investing in boarding-houses. Rising places are best, and these are not at all difficult to find.

L. T. is going bald, and wants to know of a simple remedy.———Try glycerine, whisky, and quinine. They should be mixed. Don't give yourself the whisky, your wife the quinine, and your baby the glycerine. This will probably result in the loss of heir. Rub the mixture into the scalp every morning.

Mrs. J. L. T. is in a quandary. She recently advertised for a cook, and amongst the replies was one from a person with excellent recommendations and in every way satisfactory. Arrangements were made for her to take up her position in the house, and she arrived the other day with her trunk and a bicycle. Mrs. J. L. T. remonstrated with her new menial, who in return insisted in either stopping or receiving a month's salary in lieu of notice. My correspondent wants to know if she can legally prevent the cook from bringing her dirty bicycle right through the front door, and keeping it in the kitchen.———I'm sorry, but no questions of a legal or medical nature will be answered in these columns. You had better consult some respectable lawyer in the matter. If he thinks you are wrong, the quietest, quickest, and, perhaps, in the end, the most economical course to pursue, would be to pay the woman the balance of her wages and pack her off. This peculiar case opens up the possibility of a new occupation for women. In the event of its legality being proved, there is nothing to prevent a servant from bringing an elephant or a pantechnicon van full of goods into the house of her employer, on the ground that they are part of her belongings.

M. F. D.—There is a railway between Cronstadt and Oranienbaum which is laid upon the ice.

G. C. S.—A cigarette smoker sends into the air about 4,000,000,000 particles of dust at every puff.

Dreamer.—You never see *Pearson's Shakespeare* about because it is not exposed for sale in shops or on bookstalls.

H. T. L. M. (Doncaster).—The brain of the ant is larger in proportion to its body than that of any other animal.

Lucy.—It is not for me to say whether *Home Notes Bouquet* is better than the one you mention. You'd better sample both, and judge for yourself.

A Constant Reader.—I know of no instance in which the winner of the Derby has been known at any London office before the second horse has passed the winning post.

J. F.—The mail steamers of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. have sailed regularly for a great number of years, with the exception of the day mail on Good Fridays.

S. L. K.—The proper distance between the eyes is the width of one eye.

A. M.—When you write on one subject, do not enclose stamps for handwriting delineation in the same envelope. Keep them entirely separate, and mark your communication on the outside "Graphologist."

E. S.—When cabinet photographs first came out about twenty years ago, 95,000 copies of the Queen's likeness were sold in one year, but now 500 is a good sale.

Although it is considered a breach of etiquette to look behind one while walking, while riding a bicycle it is considered distinctly clever, if you are still on the bicycle after you have looked round. There are very few occasions, though, on which it is absolutely necessary to look round. As a rule, it is merely to satiate idle curiosity. However, this fact does not deter novelty-hatchers from bringing forth instruments for enabling one to take a back view. Among the best of these, consistent with the very modest price of a shilling, is the "Mirror Wristlet" issued by Garston and Co., of Queen Square, Aldersgate Street, E.C. There is little doubt that the article will become popular with ladies. They will find it invaluable for looking at the country behind them, to see if their hair is tidy or their hat on straight.

It is only to be expected that with the advent of the motor car the bicycle horse will become unpopular with the rising generation. Mr. Charles Clamp has recognised this in good time, and has invented a toy in which the locomotive engine takes the place of the wooden horse. The boy sits on a seat in the tender, and pedals the back wheels, while the steering gear is connected by rods with the front wheels. This gentleman is the inventor also of a water roundabout, in which ships take the place of the orthodox horse, and float round in real water. The engine works and shipbuilding yard are to be found at 67, Kitto Road, New Cross, S.E.

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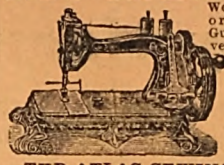

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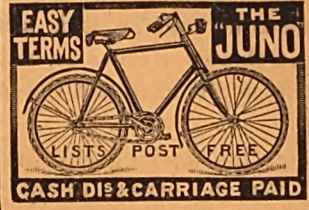

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They Hammer on the Hard Road.

"It isn't the hunting that hurts the horses; it's the hammer, hammer, hammer on the hard high road."

The noble sportsman who said this is sometimes a little careless about his "*h's*," and in quoting him I have taken the liberty of putting them where they belong. He won't mind that, I'm sure. As to his opinion, it is sound as a cocoa-nut. And there are other animals besides horses of which he might have said the same thing. For example:

"It isn't the working that hurts the men and women; it's the worry, worry, worry on life's hard high road."

But what is one to do? How can we stop worrying? On this point a certain writer says: "Don't worry, don't fret, don't let your mind dwell on trifles; observe the true proportions of things." Bright man! Let us tender him a vote of thanks. Should you ever consult him about a grain of sand in your eye he will say: "Oh, don't pay any attention to it." Excellent advice—for people with glass eyes. But how would he handle cases like these?

"Only recently," writes a woman who evidently knows what she is talking about, "have I recovered from an illness in which (taking body and mind together) I suffered more than I shall be able to set forth in words. It began in March, 1893. Without knowing why, I felt strangely. I was tired and exhausted, and had wholly lost my appetite. I ate a little, of course, but it appeared to do me no good. After eating I had a deal of pain at the chest, through to my back. There was a horrible gnawing sensation at the pit of my stomach, and for over three months I took no solid food. My flesh left me until I became so thin my acquaintances hardly recognised me; and I was so weak I could scarcely drag one foot after the other.

"But perhaps the worst feature of my condition was the state of my mind and nerves. My ambition was not only gone, but I grew so low-spirited and nervous that I didn't dare stay in the house alone. At night this feeling would be more intense and depressing. Sometimes I fancied I should not live till morning. Every subject presented its dismal and doleful side to me. I had medical advice and treatment, but no benefit came of it. Nearly a year passed in this way, when in February (1894) my mother persuaded me to try Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup, saying it had done her so much good under similar circumstances. I got a bottle from the Provident Co-operative Stores, Whitehall Branch. After taking it only a few days I felt greatly relieved; and by continuing to use it my appetite soon returned, my food agreed with me, and I grew strong and able to resume my work. (Signed) (Mrs.) Agnes Maria Hyde, 25, Devon Street, Darwen, Lancs., February 27th, 1895."

"In the early part of 1889," writes another, "I began to feel ill and out of sorts. I felt heavy, tired and weary in body and mind. I had a sour taste in the mouth, no appetite, and much pain and distress after eating. Rest gave me no relief, and I seldom got a full night's sleep. As time went on I became very weak—never being free from pain of some kind or another. The doctor's medicine did not reach the real seat of my complaint. For two years I suffered in this way. In March, 1891, I read a book about Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. I shall never forget the hope with which it inspired me. I got a bottle from Boot's Drug Stores, Bridge Street, and was wonderfully relieved by it. I could eat and digest food, and the pains decreased, and in a short time left me altogether. I have since had my usual good health. I now keep Mother Seigel's Syrup in the house as a family friend. (Signed) (Mrs.) Susannah Horne, 4, Beach Cottages, Mansfield Road, Rotherham, March 12th, 1895."

Most women fall ill from worry. It is hammer, hammer, hammer on the hard high road with them; an endless monotony of petty cares and vexations—all hitting the same spot on their brains and nerves. The disease that is bound to follow is the disease that came so near crushing the heart and life out of the two ladies whose letters you have read—indigestion or dyspepsia. That Mother Seigel's Syrup will cure the disease is a reason for profound thankfulness. But as for the *causes of worry!*—alas, I can suggest no remedy save courage, and hope in the good time coming.

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 428. FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 13TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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"The Typical Cocoa of English Manufacture—Absolutely Pure."
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In DRINKING COCOA, care should be taken to have the pure article only, as many so-called "pure" cocoas contain added matter, which is not only unnecessary, but often positively harmful. CADBURY'S is a perfectly safe and reliable Cocoa, containing the full nourishing properties of the cocoa bean, without any foreign admixture whatsoever. As a sustaining, strength-giving beverage, and a nourishing food, CADBURY'S COCOA fulfils every requirement.

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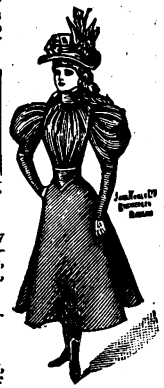

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SHORT STORIES

No. 428.] For the Week ending March 13th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

That Wedding Cake.

"LETTERS, sir!"

"Thank you, Thomas. Put them down and take yourself off!"

I had just finished my breakfast, and the tiny silver *chocolatière*, with the bachelor service of transparent china, still stood on the damask-draped round table. It was a bright little room, with its white and gold paper and high-heaped grate, in the grey light of this chill December morning, when the air was thick with noiselessly falling snow-flakes. And this contrast between the bitter atmosphere without and the tropical warmth of my own special nook gave me an additional consciousness of satisfaction, as I leant back in my chair and proceeded to examine my correspondence.

"Lee Worcester wants to know if I can go there to tea this evening. Of course I can; Lee's wife is a perfect little rosebud, and one, besides, who does not believe in cashiering all her husband's bachelor friends. And then I rather like that brown-eyed sister-in-law of his. Yes, I'll go, certainly. Hallo—here's a letter from my brother in Glenfield!"

I unfolded the document eagerly, scarcely able, at first, to credit the tidings it revealed.

"Well, here is a pretty state of things! Going to be married, claims my congratulations, says that Mary (who the dickens is 'Mary'?) is in great tribulation about the wedding cake; affair to come off on Wednesday and no cake to be had for love or money! Will I be the best fellow in the world, and send one down from D'Artier's?"

I glanced at the date of the letter; it had been delayed several days' posts, and there was not a minute to be lost. I rose and put on my hat and overcoat, giving more heedful gaze at the various directions about icing, weight, and decorations, which accompanied Tom's closely-written epistle, before I sallied boldly forth into the street on my novel errand.

It was just about one o'clock, the snow had ceased falling, and the sun shone brilliantly. D'Artier's was full, of course; there were at least a dozen ladies that I knew sitting at the tiny marble tables. I tried to assume an air of easy impudence, as if I had only come in for a pound of chocolate almonds; but it was of no use, I could not disguise the latent sheepishness of my aspect as I sauntered up to the counter.

"How can I serve you, sir?" demanded the trim damsel who presided over the saccharine treasures.

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I muttered something under my moustache, feeling a hot blush suffuse my whole countenance. Why wouldn't those inquisitive womankind attend to their ice-cream?

"Cake, sir? Certainly. For a party, sir? Pound cake, lemon, almond——"

"No, no," I bawled; "I want a wedding cake!"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir," tittered the atrocious shopwoman. Was it reality, or did I only fancy that the titter was echoed among the bonnets and furs beyond? However that might have been, the mere apprehension was sufficient to throw me into a cold perspiration.

The next moment, however, the counter was heaped with various temples of glistening white sugar, some wreathed with make-believe roses, some surmounted with Cupids, others pure white masses of icing. I surveyed them in a state of hopeless bewilderment.

"Perhaps, sir, it would be better if the lady could come with you to select," hazarded my enemy behind the counter.

I could endure this badgering no longer, but pounced upon a gigantic pyramid of sugar lilies, from which peeped up a tiny alabaster Cupid.

"I will take this; what is the price?"

"£3, sir."

I laid down the money, and never experienced so delicious a sensation of relief as at the moment when I gave the address to which I wanted it sent.

I went out of the shop with the eye of every woman upon me. At no time of my life has my vanity received so appalling a blow. My very knees trembled. On reaching the door I sprang into a hansom and drove to the club.

* * * * *

"How d'ye do, Golde? When is it to come off?"

"When is what to come off?" queried I, considerably puzzled at my friend Atherton's address.

"Your wedding, to be sure. Ah, you're a sly dog to keep us all in the dark so long."

"You can't have been much more in the dark than I am at this moment, Atherton. What on earth do you mean?"

But Atherton only wagged his head knowingly, and rushed off in pursuit of a 'bus, saying something of which I only caught the disconnected fragments "my wife," and "D'Artier's."

"Hang that wedding cake," was my internal ejaculation.

As I pursued my speculative way a tiny gloved hand was held out from a passing carriage.

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"Ah, Mrs. Eveleigh, excuse me for not noticing you."

"We all know that love is blind," said the lady, smiling. "Now I know why you haven't been to see me for such an age. Ah, you needn't look so unconscious. My niece was at D'Artier's this morning, and saw how particular you were in the selection of a certain article."

Before I could explain this piece of circumstantial evidence, there was a movement in the "block" of carriages which had caused the temporary detention of my fair friend, and her equipage rolled away, with a wave of the pretty hand and the archest of smiles.

I stood looking after her. with an odd sort of impression that I should wake up presently to find myself married to somebody, whether or no; indeed, I was not altogether certain whether Mrs. Golde was not waiting for me at home.

How brilliantly the firelight and gas-light illumined that cosy little room at Lee Worcester's, with its pink-tinted walls and the crimson carpet sprinkled with small white buds. The piano was open, strewn with sheets of music, just as it had been left, its pearl keys glimmering softly in the subdued radiance of the one jet of light that glowed through a frosted glass shade above. The tea-table was all set—I had often dreamt of a home of my own that should be something like Worcester's in its snug evening comfort, and somehow that tea-table always formed part of the phantasm. There was something so bright and cheerful in the snowy damask and the sparkling glass and glittering china.

The golden slices of cake and tiny white muffins, breaking into crisp flakes that melted in one's mouth, and amber jellies, quivering like gigantic jewels through their crystal prison walls, produced a wonderfully agreeable effect on my epicurean sight. And I could imagine no prettier vision to crown it all than Mary Worcester in her crimson merino dress, edged round the throat with delicate lace, presiding at the silver tea urn. Except, perhaps—but that's neither here nor there!

I was a little disappointed, on entering, not to see Lee's sister-in-law, a trim little beauty, with brown, rippling hair and velvety eyes, somewhat between hazel and black, but I did not like to ask any questions, and consequently remained in ignorance until Mary casually remarked:

"Netty is very low-spirited this evening, perhaps she will come down stairs by-and-bye."

How I longed to ask what the matter was. Perhaps she had received bad news; perhaps she was not well. I would have given my two ears to know, but I didn't dare to enquire.

"So you're going to be married, eh, Tracy, my boy?" said Lee, as we sat in front of the bright fire. "Well, you can't do better. A bachelor at best is a mere fraction of society."

I started up, annoyed beyond all endurance.

"For mercy's sake, dear Lee, do tell me where you picked up that ridiculous report!"

"Ridiculous report! That's pretty cool, upon my honour," exclaimed Worcester.

"Now, Mr. Golde," said Mary laughing, "don't deny the soft impeachment. I am sure you would enjoy a quiet home of your own much better than chambers. There is no charm against a sad heart like domestic bliss!"

There was a radiant softness in her own tender eyes as she spoke that penetrated me with the sudden conviction that I had been very foolish to remain single all these years.

"Do confess," she added gaily.

"But I have nothing on earth to confess!"

"Nonsense," said Mary, holding up a pretty warning finger. "What were you buying at D'Artier's this very morning?"

I turned scarlet, here was that everlasting wedding cake again!

Fortunately my inquisition was terminated for a moment by the entrance of Lee's sister-in-law, looking lovelier than I had ever seen her before, a little pale perhaps, however, and her silky eye lashes heavy with what I could almost have fancied recent tears, were it not that she seemed in extravagantly gay spirits. The soft flushes of colour came and went like pink shadows across her cheeks, and her coral lips were dimpled with the brightest of smiles, yet all the time I could not divest myself of the odd impression that she was ready to melt into an April shower of tears at any moment!

She lightly tendered me her congratulations upon the approaching "happy event," holding out a small, snowy hand loaded with sparkling rings as she did so.

"You speak in riddles, Miss Nettie."

"Don't pretend that you have not the key to them," she said, a little tremulously.

"I cannot comprehend what you mean," I answered.

She said no more, but sat quietly down, shading her eyes with her hand, as though the fire dazzled them. Mrs. Worcester, however, still pursued the obnoxious topic.

"Then how do you explain the wedding cake at D'Artier's?"

"Is that the only testimony upon which I am tried and convicted of a wilful intention of matrimony?"

"That is all; we are ready to hear your defence."

"Well, that unlucky mass of white sugar and dyspepsia was for my brother's wedding ceremonies, a hundred miles away. I assure you it had not the least connection with my matrimonial fortunes."

Nettie looked up with a rare brilliance under her long lashes, and an almost involuntary smile wreathing her lips; I took heart and went bravely on, cheered by a sudden inspiration.

"But I will purchase a bride cake twice as large for my own wedding, if Nettie will consent to be my bride."

There—I had done it! In less than five minutes I was an accepted lover, looking boldly into the wondrous liquid depths of those brown, beautiful eyes. A new sensation—but agreeable, very.

"And now, Tracy," said Mary mischievously, "I will tell you a secret; the reason Nettie cried half the afternoon and became so low-spirited this evening was that——"

"Mary!" remonstrated Nettie, with cheeks ablaze.

"That she heard you were buying a wedding cake," pursued Mary, putting away the white fingers with which Nettie vainly strove to fetter her tell-tale lips.

"I'll order another one to-morrow," said I meditatively. "Ah, I shouldn't have repined so much at Tom's commission had I known what a sweet little wife it would win me."

"Don't, Tracy," said Nettie, hiding her face on my shoulder.

And when Tom wrote to know why on earth I didn't come to his hymeneal ceremonies, I wrote back that I was obliged to stay to attend to a wedding of my own.

And such a wedding cake as graced the centre of our banqueting board! It's no use trying to describe its frosted splendours, but if any of my readers seriously contemplate getting married, I'll send them the recipe.

A. Graves.

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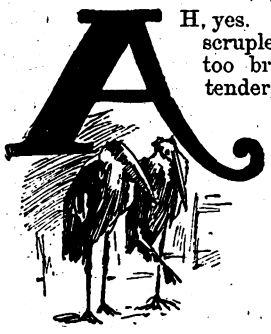
THE DUEL.



AH, yes. I really do feel some sort of scruple about this matter. He is too brave a lad, too young, too tender, for the shambles of such an old butcher as myself.

But, pshaw! Why should I, eh? It is his own folly. To insult me—me, Gaston de Samnarez—and at Bignon's, too, before all my friends and acquaintances. And such an insult! *Sangdieu!* but my blood boils at the thought. I—spat upon, drenched with wine-lees, called coward and liar by this sprig, this but erstwhile school-boy! *Nom de Dieu!* but I will cut his comb, this cockerel.

And yet he could not have done aught else. He had no alternative. He says I insulted his sister. And so the cartel has gone out, and this morning I meet this young Don Quixote.

Ah! here we are on the ground. We are first, I see, my seconds and I. "Ah! good-day, doctor. Hope sincerely we won't trouble you much." What a charming spot where a man may meet his enemy, and where the two may discuss their little differences as gentlemen should. Here for a man's last bed, if so it should happen, is a piece of turf, softer than sleep. *Ma foi!* I grow poetic. I should be composing a sonnet instead of preparing to write an epitaph. But, really, what a heavenly morning! No balking, dazzling sun, but a cool, grey haze—sufficient light, with no nasty shadows from that background of trees.

"Charming, gentlemen, charming! My dear Raoul—ah! here comes my man! *Bonjour, messieurs!* He's a bit nervous, Raoul, but I'll wager he's full of mettle." It is a pity—such a pretty boy, with a girl's peachy bloom on his young cheeks. But there is a murderous glare in his usually soft eyes as he looks at me, for am I not—malediction! Well, a little blood-letting may cure your chivalrous fever, my young sir; and so we will bleed you—we will bleed you!

At last, all preliminaries settled, we stand, boy and man, face to face, divided by two cruel ribbons of steel.

"*Engagez*, gentlemen!"

How gracefully, yet firmly, he stands. A very pretty style he has, too. I wonder who was his *maître d'escrime?* Whoever he may be, he teaches well, and his pupil does him credit. This is no raw, clumsy novice. *Parbleu!* What a wrist it is—supple, yet firm. Quick, too, on his legs—like a cat. Wastes too much energy in moving about; but that is a fault with all the youngsters. Ah, that was a sweet thrust in *quatre*, and how is that for a smart counter, eh? Prettily parried! Egad, a fine double, feint, and quick lunge! Well recovered; but do not try any more tricks with me, *mon enfant*, it will not pay.

Sacré! how his eyes burn as he watches me; and yet through their fire I can see the soft reproachful glance of his sister. Poor girl! What lovely and innocent orbs she had. I am sorry, but——"

Mon Dieu! Phew! that was a narrow shave. Moral: leave thoughts of limpid eyes and remorse till after the fight. Too hot, too hot, my young friend. Faith, you will not get such another chance to send me drumming this pretty bit of sward, with hands and feet, if I can help it. *Mon Dieu!* how the clubs would ring, if I, by some careless play, went down before this raw schoolboy. How he himself—— But not yet—not yet.

How our blades clash and rasp, and grate and rattle, as they wend their sinuous ways for life or death. Faith, it is a sinister music—the music of the sword. Hot work this and a deuced more trouble than I expected.

He's as nimble as a wild cat.

"*Touche!*"

Our swords are struck down, and the doctor steps to me. Disgrace! I could not recover in time, and this lad, this novice, has ripped my left shoulder with his awkward counter.

"No need for you, doctor. No harm done, gentlemen." Only a warning to me not to play the fool with this forward young devotee of the foil and plastron. "I hope you are not satisfied with this trifling scratch, monsieur?"

A little blood, you say, will not plaster your sister's honour? *Eh bien*, you want all—all I have. Good, good! Now you shall never go home to boast of that paltry prick. Quick, before my shoulder stiffens.

"Ready, gentlemen? Then *engagez!*"

Hard work this, eh? What with lunging and recovering, shifting, breaking, and taking ground, my older legs are getting tired. But my stronger play is beginning to tell, and his wrist is weakening every moment.

Still he plays on pluckily. He is a true knight, indeed. I can have him when I please. Heart or lungs? Neither. His sister implores me out of his eyes. No fear, sweetheart: he shall live. I will just take the sting out of him. He is too young, too handsome; he will be a devil among the women in time, that boy—a second Gaston de Samnarez, perhaps.

Peste! he has scratched my hand now! It is nothing—nothing—it has but pricked the skin. Fight on—fight on, I say, you young hound! *Nom de Dieu!* if you must, you must, so there, and there, and there!

Spang goes the guard of my rapier, clicking sheer against his breast-bone, and his blood spouts out in a warm clammy jet on my shirt-front and face.

And there he lies—poor boy, poor boy—on the bloody sward, with his eyes, even in his death-throes, full of a mingling of the sister's soft, sad reproach, and his own unsatisfied yearning for revenge. His face will haunt me to my death—and, perhaps, even then—who knows?

A heart-rending shriek, a rustle among the bushes, and a white figure flies out and throws herself on the bloody corpse. Just Heaven! It is his sister! Let me be gone!

HASSAN.

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An American Adventuress

The London season was well advanced; in fact, it was the week before Ascot, yet Harry Wainwright had only been in town a few hours when he strolled into his club for dinner. He took his letters from the hall porter with the air of a man to whom all correspondence is a bore, and rapidly glanced through them, till he came to one the contents of which caused him the utmost astonishment. It ran as follows:

My Dear Harry,—It may surprise you to learn from me that I intend shortly to be again married. As this will make a considerable alteration in my mode of living, I wish to see you as soon as possible. My breakfast hour is half-past ten, as usual.—Your affectionate father,

Charles Wainwright.

Such was Sir Wainwright's brief announcement of his engagement to his only son. The only son's answer was equally brief:

My Dear Father,—I have only come up to town this afternoon, when I found your letter waiting for me. I will call upon you to-morrow morning at half-past ten.—Your affectionate son,

Harry Wainwright.

From these two letters it will appear that the relations between father and son were not of a confidential nature. It would be impossible to imagine two more different characters.

Lady Wainwright had died when Harry was hardly more than a child, and since her death Sir Charles had led an ordinary lazy bachelor's life. Both the house and the shooting on his country estate at Winterford had been let, and Sir Charles spent most of his time at his bijou residence at Mayfair. A few country-house parties were quite sufficient to satisfy his taste for field sports, which had never been very ardent. At the present time he had the reputation of being the best dressed, the most gentlemanly, and the most selfish man in London clubland.

To such a man a son must be an incubus in any case; but when the son is a keen sportsman, and possesses an utter disregard for all the conventionalities of life, the incubus becomes too great to bear. Fortunately for Harry Wainwright he had an income of five hundred a year under his mother's marriage settlement, and his father gave him another two hundred and fifty on the tacit understanding that he did not annoy him. So far the arrangement had proved satisfactory to both parties.

"Well, Wainwright, come to town at last? You don't seem very pleased with it, either."

The speaker was Lord Pelham, eldest son of the Duke of Harness. He was one of Harry Wainwright's greatest friends. They had been at Oxford together, and since then had ridden the same horses, shot the same coverts, and carried on harmless flirtations with the same woman—important factors in concentrating modern friendship.

"Yes, it was a nuisance to have to leave the salmon this weather, but I had to come up to town on business. Seen or heard anything of the governor, Pelham?"

"Do you mean Sir Charles?"

"Yes."

"Not much; except that they say he has been paying a lot of attention to a new beauty."

"Well, he has got engaged to somebody. Read that. The worst of it is that I came up to town to tell him that I am engaged, so I expect there will be a muddle."

"H'm! But tell me about yourself, old man. In the first place, I congratulate you; and in the next, let us order dinner."

Harry Wainwright's story was soon told. He had been staying in a country house in the north for the salmon-fishing, and had fallen in love with, proposed to, and been accepted by the daughter of his host, a girl named Maud Blossom. Pelham knew her intimately, having often stayed in the house, and again warmly congratulated his friend.

"Now tell me something about my future step-mother."

"Well, to speak the truth, I don't know very much about her; she is an American widow, with lots of cash, named Mrs. Stanley. As I have already said, she is sufficiently handsome to have become a fashionable beauty. Of course, she must be clever, or society would not have taken her on credit, so to speak, for nobody seems to know anything of her antecedents. But you will soon be able to judge for yourself. By-the-bye, are not the Blossoms coming up to town?"

"Yes; they are coming up at the end of the week for Ascot, and have got rooms at the Langham."

Even "the pink wine of France" failed to dispel the gloom which the news of his father's engagement had cast on Harry Wainwright's mind. He knew that vanity and selfishness were the two chief traits of Sir Charles'

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character. It was a hard confession for a son to have to make to himself, but it was the truth, and Harry Wainwright, now that he was engaged to be married, knew that he should have to look the truth sternly in the face.

He left the club soon after dinner, and went back to his hotel. What a difference twenty-four hours can make in a man's life! On the previous night Wainwright had retired to rest with the prospect of enjoying every happiness that love can bring. To-night he had already begun to realise that the path of that love would not be strewn with roses.

He was at his father's house in Mayfair punctually at half-past ten on the following morning, with a spirit which, though depressed, was resolute. If the father should sneer at the son's engagement, it was more than probable that the son would forget his filial duty and sneer at the father's.

There was no cordiality in Sir Charles' greeting. He received his son with the same polished politeness with which he would have received an utter stranger, and during breakfast neither made the slightest allusion to the subjects which filled each other's thoughts. Yet, although they talked on the ordinary topics of the day, a careful listener would have noticed that they resembled two boxers, each of whom was waiting for an opening.

Breakfast being finished, Sir Charles lit a cigarette, pushed his case towards his son, and, sinking into an armchair, said, in an indolent tone of voice:

"You gathered from my note, Harry, I suppose, that I intend to marry again? Of course, my marriage will alter considerably my present mode of living. I shall make Winterford my chief residence, where, my boy, you will always be welcome. Indeed, both Mrs. Stanley—that is my future wife—and myself would be glad if you lived there altogether."

Sir Charles had an idea of making his son his estate agent, with instruction to superintend the stables and the shooting.

"I am sorry, sir, but I am afraid the arrangement would be impossible. I really came up to town yesterday to tell you that I had become engaged to be married myself."

Sir Charles was silent with surprise for some seconds. Only those who knew him intimately could have recognised how angry the news had made him.

"H'm!" he answered pettishly. "Then I am afraid that the plans I had made for your happiness are destroyed. As a married man, I could not afford to give you the liberal allowance which I have been giving, while the prospect of a married stepson and his wife in the house would hardly be pleasing to my wife."

"Nor to mine either, sir, for that matter."

"And may I ask who is this lady you intend to make your wife?"

"Miss Blossom. I believe you were at school with her father."

The indirect illusion to the baronet's age added fuel to the fire of his irritation, but he only said:

"Ah, John Blossom. A very dense boy. I remember him at Eton."

"And may I ask who my future stepmother may be?"

"Certainly; Mrs. Stanley. I dare say you may have heard of her."

"I must plead ignorance to the name."

Sir Charles stood aghast. The name of Mrs. Stanley as a fashionable beauty had been on everybody's lips during the present season, yet his own son had not even heard of it.

"Mrs. Stanley's attractions are well known in society circles," he said stiffly, with a strong emphasis on the word society. "I am generally considered a fortunate man for having won her affections."

"Indeed. Then I congratulate you. Who was the late lamented Mr. Stanley?"

The veins on Sir Charles' forehead were swollen with passion, but he replied calmly:

"I cannot see that it matters in the least to you or to anybody else who he was. I asked you here this morning to tell you of my engagement and to accept your congratulations. You have thought fit to show your annoyance at my engagement, both by your words and your manner. There is only one thing now that I have to ask you and that is to keep your annoyance to yourself. It is the worst possible form to let family quarrels become public property. In regard to the private allowance which I have hitherto given you, that will have to cease entirely. You have an independent income of your own, and if you choose to marry with that income, it is your affair, not mine. I only know that I would not risk matrimony on the same terms."

"Is not that a question for Miss Blossom to decide?"

Sir Charles shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps so. At all events, it is not for me to decide. Now, in order to prevent any vulgar gossip, I wish you to call upon Mrs. Stanley. I, on my part, will call upon Miss Blossom. It is a matter of mere formal politeness; that is all."

"Certainly, sir; there is no need to tell the outside world, if we disagree."

"When will you call?" Sir Charles asked abruptly.

"The sooner the better. This afternoon, if you like."

"Very well. If you will call here about three o'clock, we will go together. Is Miss Blossom in town?"

"No, sir; but she is coming up on Monday for Ascot."

"Very good. Then I shall see you at three."

Such was the meeting between father and son: no affection, no sentiment, no anger had been expressed. Both were glad the interview had been got over without a scene. The son had lost a third of his income: the father had lost a good estate agent. Both knew that the gulf that separated them had been widened.

* * * * *

Mrs. Stanley certainly was the beauty of the London season. She had shot forth like a rocket over the firmament of society, but from what star she had emanated, and what was the propelling power of the emanation, were secrets which society had not succeeded in unravelling.

Society did know that she had made her *début* under the wing of Lady Highclass; that she had a charming house in Grosvenor Place; that she went everywhere, and that everybody worth knowing went to her "At Homes." That was sufficient for society; it was not sufficient for Lady Highclass.

At the time of the interview between Sir Charles Wainwright and his son, another interview was taking place between Lady Highclass and Mrs. Stanley, in the latter's boudoir. There was one point of resemblance in the two interviews; both were equally unpleasant.

"You remember our compact perfectly well. You were to give me five thousand pounds, if you got married."

"Exactly, Lady Highclass; but, then, I am not married."

"As good as married, anyway. I am pressed for

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money, and am leaving town directly after Ascot. It can make no difference to you whether you pay me now or in a month's time, and it makes every difference to me."

"But it does make a very considerable difference to me. I have my expenses, as well as you have. You have already been paid more than sufficient for your services."

"Take care, Clare Stanley. I am not a woman to be insulted with impunity. If I have hitherto exercised my social influence on your behalf, I can also exercise it against you."

"And let society know that your influence is to be bought by the highest bidder. The British aristocracy will be proud of you."

"Perhaps. One thing is certain: that society will believe me and won't believe you."

"Might not society wonder how you, with your income manage to live at such an expensive rate? No, Lady Highclass, the part of the bully does not suit you. You know perfectly well who would be the sufferer if we were to quarrel."

"I don't want to quarrel," her ladyship retorted. "But I want money, and must have it."

"But suppose that I have not got it to give you!"

Lady Highclass looked astounded.

"It is the truth. I have not five thousand pounds in the bank at the present time. I will give you a cheque for a thousand, and you must wait for the rest till it is due."

Lady Highclass protested! Then she changed her tone to one of entreaty. But in vain. Mrs. Stanley was inflexible. So, as there was nothing more to be got, her ladyship took the cheque for a thousand pounds and left.

Mrs. Stanley was inflexible.

Mrs. Stanley leant back in her chair, and a smile of contempt came over her beautiful face.

"Yes, my lady," she muttered to herself, "if I had given you five thousand pounds you would have blackmailed me for more before my marriage. Bah! How I wish the whole farce were over."

Possessing a physical beauty which was as near perfection as possible, and a fascination of manner which was well-nigh irresistible, it was not surprising that, once launched into society, she should have sailed forth in front of all rivals.

The chief surprise about her career was that she should have accepted a baronet like Sir Charles Wainwright. He was considered two or three rungs too low in the ladder for a girl who had a royal prince dancing attendance on her.

Some few of the old loungers about Clubland said that Mrs. Stanley was too clever not to know her own business best, and then Wainwright might not be quite such a lucky dog as people thought. Their opinion would have been strengthened if they could have seen her as she muttered: "Bah! How I wish the whole farce were over."

Harry Wainwright called for his father at the appointed time to go with him to Grosvenor Place. He was curious to see this beautiful woman who was about to become his stepmother. He had already made up his mind that she was only marrying his father for his position, and determined to watch her narrowly.

Nothing could have been more gracious than Mrs. Stanley's manner of receiving him. She affected to take a great interest in his engagement, and asked him several questions about his *fiancée*. Sir Charles listened with astonishment. As he said to her afterwards: he had never known a woman draw Harry out so much before.

"My dear Charles, as we are so closely connected, is it not better that we should be firm friends?"

"Of course, Clare! I only said to Harry this morning that there was nothing more odious than a family quarrel. Still, it will not be necessary for us to see a great deal of him and his wife."

"I wonder what she is like, and whether we shall get on together?"

"This Miss Blossom? I suppose she is the ordinary country girl, of the milkmaid type. But she is not an interesting subject; let us talk about ourselves."

Although she did not say so, Harry Wainwright was a subject of great interest to Mrs. Stanley. She was resolved to make him fall in love with her, and, in spite of his engagement, had not the slightest doubt that she would succeed. In truth, so far from cementing family friendship, it seemed extremely probable that she would be the cause of a very pretty family quarrel.

* * * * *

Mr. Blossom was a model of a country squire. Nobody in their sane senses could have taken him for anything else. Even when he was sitting in his stall at the theatre he exhaled a scent of the country, which made his neighbours picture him shooting partridges amongst his own turnips. He disliked town life, and if it had not been for his wife and daughter would never have come to London. As it was, he generally spent his days at Lord's or the Oval, unless there was a race meeting within easy distance. But during his present visit he found that he had other duties to perform. He had been obliged to dine with Sir Charles Wainwright, and he had come away with a very poor opinion of his host. He had been taken to a formal dinner-party at Mrs. Stanley's, and had expressed the candid opinion

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afterwards that there was no fool like an old fool, which was not flattering to the baronet.

"I tell you what, Janet," he said to his wife one evening. "Harry Wainwright is as good a fellow as ever crossed a horse; but how the deuce he came to have such a father is a mystery to me." To which his wife sensibly replied that Maud was going to marry Harry and not his father.

To Maud Blossom, however, this visit was one of continuous pleasure. She was proud of having Harry Wainwright for an escort. Mrs. Stanley had been more than polite to her, and would insist on calling to take her driving in the park, on bringing her home to lunch, and on rendering those thousand and one little civilities which pave the way to friendship between women. Maud was far too innocent to detect the treason which lay hidden in the heart of her new acquaintance.

But it was Ascot week, and the Cup day had arrived, the day which society has chosen as the meridian of the London season. Sir Charles had dressed himself with more than ordinary care for the great festival, and the result was a triumph of the tailor's art; but he was far from pleased at the arrangement which had been made for the day.

"Clare knows how I hate anything like a family party!" he said to himself, as he slung his field-glass over his shoulder; "yet she insists on asking the Blossoms to join us. Then she is perpetually telling me to do the agreeable to Maud, while she talks to Harry. Confound it all! I wish I were married! I'll take good care that we have none of this nonsense at Winterford."

To take her driving in the park.

The truth was that Mrs. Stanley, having determined to make Harry Wainwright fall in love with her, had already commenced a flirtation with him under the guise of friendship. Both to him and to Maud she represented herself as an *amicus curiæ*, anxious to prevent any family quarrel; and so she got rid of the somewhat tiresome attentions of Sir Charles, won Harry's confidence, and checked any distrust on Maud's part. She knew beforehand that her married life could not possibly be a happy one, and that it was her policy to have her stepson on her side in the future disagreements between herself and her husband, which were certain to take place.

Why describe Royal Ascot, with its royal procession, its royal enclosure, its crowd of the best-dressed worshippers at the shrine of fashion? Has it not been written in the chronicles of English institutions? Do we not all know it, from the duchess in the latest production of Worth's, to the welsher's clerk, with his hawk eye on the look-out for fools? Let us therefore confine our attention to our story. Many were the field-glasses pointed in the direction of Mrs. Stanley: many critical eyes looked at the beauty of the season. One man evidently took a special interest in her. Although he was backing horses for large amounts in Tattersall's ring, yet when his attention was not taken up with racing, he was always looking at Mrs. Stanley with a puzzled expression on his face. That he was a well-known man in betting circles was apparent from the deference shown to him by the bookmakers, not a few of whom wondered at his present absent-minded manner. At last this leviathan among backers beckoned to a quietly-dressed man, and talked earnestly to him for some two minutes. The quietly-dressed man listened, occasionally nodded his head, but never spoke a word until his companion had finished, when he merely said: "All right."

"Then I shall see you to-morrow at seven?" enquired the backer.

"Yes," replied the quietly-dressed gentleman; and they parted as mysteriously as they had met.

Meanwhile, Sir Charles Wainwright, as he had predicted, was spending a very unhappy day. Both Mr. and Mrs. Blossom took an unaffected interest in horseflesh, and made constant excursions to the paddock, leaving the rest of the party to amuse themselves.

Now, as a crowd of friends and acquaintances were always hovering round Mrs. Stanley, and as that lady also took care to keep Harry Wainwright at her side, Sir Charles was obliged to attend to Maud, and to suffer

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the pangs of jealousy at the same time. Maud Blossom belonged to the class of unsophisticated country girls for whom Sir Charles had no admiration; so when he had laid two "ponies" to one on the favourite for the Cup, and seen it beaten by a short head, what little good temper he did possess had taken wings and flown away from him.

"Don't be absurd."

"Harry," he said petulantly to his son, "I am afraid I must ask you to take care of Maud for a few minutes, as I have to go into the ring."

It must be remembered that Sir Charles' love for Clare Stanley partook more of the nature of pride than of affection. If she had not been the centre of admiration he would never have given her a moment's thought. But as some men are ambitious to ride the most showy horse in the Row, so others are ambitious to be engaged to the most beautiful woman of the season. Such was the case with Sir Charles; so it was extremely galling to him that Clare should give him the cold shoulder at such a place as Ascot. He thought that society would notice it, and so it did.

"I say, Mrs. Stanley doesn't seem to be very spoony on her elderly beau, does she? Who is the young fellow with her?"

"Oh! that's young Wainwright, her future step-son."

The first speaker whistled in surprise.

"He's all right. He is one of those sporting chaps who would like to spend their lives shooting big game in the Rockies. Besides, he is engaged to be married himself."

"Is he? Then I pity the girl."

This, and much more, said society.

But Harry Wainwright had no suspicion of the remarks which were being made about him. Mrs. Stanley had told him that she wished to lessen the breach between him and his father! She had been very kind to Maud, to whom she had told the same tale. So if she did not deceive the scandal-loving world, she deceived this innocent pair. Partially, though not altogether, she deceived her Sir Charles when they returned home.

"I don't know what I have done, Clare, but you would hardly speak a word to me to-day."

"And I thought I was doing exactly as you wished. If you want to spoon in public like John Thomas and Mary Jane——"

"Don't be absurd. You know what I mean. You would not let me come near you, and, worse still, made me look after that milkmaid."

"Now, Charles, you have lost your money and are cross. At least, you have me all to yourself now."

She kissed him as she spoke, and soon coaxed him into a good temper.

"Wait till we are united, love, then we can see as little of our Phyllis and Strephon as we choose. Now, Charles, say you are not angry with me before you go."

"Men were deceivers ever." So sang the Bard of Avon three hundred years ago. *Tempora mutantur*: times change, and so do human beings.

* * * * *

Mr. Carte, of Chicago, the leviathan amongst backers on the turf, sat in his private room in a private hotel in Albemarle Street at seven o'clock on the evening following the Cup day, waiting for the quietly-dressed gentleman. It was the first year that Mr. Carte had patronised the English turf, and certain bookmakers hoped it would be his last. He had come over with plenty of dollars and a system, the system had succeeded and the dollars had increased! Socially he had confined himself entirely to racing circles, and had not even evinced any ambition to enter the precincts of clubland. This was the reason why he had not seen Mrs. Stanley before the previous day, but now that he had seen her she occupied a considerable share of his thoughts.

"Well, Dick," said Mr. Carte, as the quietly-dressed gentleman entered the room, whom we will introduce as Richard Lee, "it has been a glorious week; another regular knock-down blow for the ring, my lad. Pleasure first and business afterwards. Come to dinner—I am as hungry as a cowboy."

Dinner is a lengthy affair amongst racing men who are obliged to be abstemious during the day, and it was after eleven before the two friends returned to Albemarle Street. An hour was spent in going through the betting-book. Then, throwing himself into an arm-chair with an air of relief, Carte said:

"And now, Dick, how about this Mrs. Stanley?"

"She is Nell Robinson, widow of Jack Robinson, who was shot down Texas way some two years ago."

"I more than suspected that yesterday; but how the thunder has she managed to come over here and raise Cain in society?"

"Well, she is the 'cutest woman I ever ran across. Her beauty speaks for itself."

"I know all that. But who was Stanley? And where did she get the shekels from? I don't know much about society, but I do know this, that American widows don't catch on unless they are considerably gilded."

"Then if you want to find out that, you will have to trace her career since Jack Robinson's death. Personally I don't suppose that Stanley ever existed, except in the lady's imagination. All I know is that she came over to England at the beginning of the year, and was run by a certain Lady Highclass, who seems to be a bit of a boss. But what is the good of finding out? You don't want to spoil the woman's game, do you?"

"Certainly not; unless there was something to be gained by it."

"What can you gain? You don't want money."

"I don't know, but useful information is always worth something or other. Let me see, you went down into the Argentine for a few years or so, after the Robinson affair, so couldn't know anything about her."

Dick Lee nodded.

"Who is this Sir Charles Wainwright, whom she is going to marry? He is not one of the regular racing fraternity."

"Man about town," the other answered laconically.

"Got any shekels?"

"Yes, and a country seat called Winterford."

"Fancy Nell Robinson as a baronet's wife and the mistress of an old English country house! By Jove,

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I've hit it! Sir Charles shall go on the turf, and I'll manage his horses."

Carte was so pleased at the idea, that he did not

She tore open the note.

notice the look on Dick Lee's face. If he had, his joy would not have been as boisterous as it was. He talked exultingly for some minutes as he fancied himself as owner of racehorses. He might have fancied himself a member of the Jockey Club, if Lee had not suddenly interrupted him.

"You seem to ignore the consent of Sir Charles."

"Bother Sir Charles! He would consent, to prevent the exposure of his wife. Or I might approach the wife first, and she would coax him into consenting, to save herself."

"Both contingencies are extremely improbable."

"What do you mean?"

"Simply that you have nothing to expose. Listen to the case. You happen to know that Lady Wainwright is the widow of an American gambler, and you disclose the fact to her husband, who is probably aware of it already, demanding as a price of your secrecy that he should enter into a racing partnership with you. He would either laugh at you, or have you horse-whipped. So much for the first contingency! The second is worse. The lady would defy you to do your worst, and ring the bell for you to be shown out of the house."

"Then I would let society know what sort of woman it has made its idol."

"Society would not believe you, in the first place, and you would gain nothing by it, in the second. You might have some influence if you chose to make a complaint to the Jockey Club, but you are powerless to make a complaint against a reigning beauty."

"But how did she get her money? The woman must have some secret."

"Probably she has," replied Dick Lee curtly. "But then you don't happen to know it."

"I must say you don't seem very keen on the matter."

"Because I don't see anything to be got out of it. Sorry to destroy that charming castle you were building in the air, but there is not the slightest chance of its ever having an earthly foundation. Take my advice, and think no more about it. I must be off to bed now; meet you at breakfast. Good-night!"

But Dick Lee did not go to bed. He sat up smoking and thinking till the first streaks of dawn lit up his room. In the stillness of the night many plans suggested themselves to his mind, only to be tossed aside as worthless as soon as they were formed. On one point only was he satisfied, namely, that he had put Carte off the scent of Mrs. Stanley's history. He alone of all men in London knew that history, but he was doubtful how to make use of his knowledge, or, indeed, whether to make use of it at all.

"If I were sure she would be happy, her secret should die with me," he said to himself more than once. Strange thought for the hero of over fifty duels. If it had been expressed aloud, nobody who knew the man would have believed in its sincerity. Could this be the same Dick Lee who had beaten the Red Indian in cunning; who was the deadest shot in the Southern States; who had never been known to spare either man or woman? But he had never shown to any living creature the one deep wound in his heart. Until that day he had thought himself that it was cured, but now it was bleeding as copiously as ever. The love which he had deemed dead was again full of life; but how different was the nature of that life! What had been passion was now compassion; jealousy had become generosity; the burning ardour of the man was changed into the tenderness of a child.

* * * * *

Mr. and Mrs. Blossom, having enjoyed their annual visit to London in their own peculiar fashion, left town, and also left their daughter behind them. Maud was now the guest of Mrs. Stanley, much to the disgust of Sir Charles, who, with the selfishness of all lovers, whether they be twenty-one or eighty-one, wanted to monopolise the society of his *fiancée*. Mrs. Stanley, however, thinking that she should have as much of Sir Charles' society after marriage as she wanted, had elevated Harry Wain- to the position of her "tame cat."

It was a proof of the woman's cleverness that she had done this without exciting the jealousy of Maud. London life, with its dissipations—its Hurlingham, its Sandown, its dances in Mayfair, and its "At Homes," in Belgravia—were such novelties to the country girl, that her mind was in a constant state of bewilderment, and she never paused to consider that her lover's attentions were becoming daily less ardent. Even if she had had any doubts about Harry Wainwright, Mrs. Stanley would have instantly dispelled them during those curl-paper confidences which women love to indulge in.

"My dear Maud, Harry's devotion is really too tiresome. He sat out two waltzes with me to-night, while you were dancing with Lord Pelham, and his conversation consisted of Maud, Maud, Maud, nothing but Maud."

Then the girl's eyes would brighten. She had thought at the time that Harry might have been more attentive to her, now she blamed herself for thinking him wanting in devotion. Certainly Mrs. Stanley ought to have been satisfied at the success of her deception.

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We are told that Circe was the daughter of the sun, and that by means of the heat which she inherited from her sire, she was enabled to make the sons of men burn with a consuming passion. There can be no doubt that the ancient Greeks were right, except that they omitted to state that Circe was not the only daughter of the sun. For certain it is that Clare Stanley had managed to make more than one man fall in love with her. And yet she was not happy.

She knew that she was on the verge of a precipice and that at any moment she might be hurled into the chasm of shame beneath. But this she had known when she had started on her adventurous career, and this was the reason why she wished to hasten her marriage with Sir Charles, and to make Harry Wainwright her lover, so that he might protect her in her future troubles. Her social success had been greater than she had ever anticipated. But she had sacrificed her love at the altar of her ambition, and had found out in the quiet moments of her solitude that the artificial veneer had not stifled the woman's heart with which Nature had endowed her.

She was sitting one July afternoon in her boudoir thinking of her old life, and feeling some little remorse that she had ever forsaken it. It was not the life in Texas that she was dreaming of, but of the two years which succeeded it—two years spent with the husband whom she loved, amongst the most luxurious scenery of South America—two years of unbroken bliss.

Where was that husband now? Was he alive or dead?

Two people . . . are sitting side by side.

She was alone. Maud had gone with some new friends to a *matinée*, and Sir Charles was in the city on business. Suddenly Harry Wainwright was announced.

She received him with her usual fascinating manner—a manner which was charming him on to his destruction as it had charmed many before.

The man sat down beside her on the sofa, and yielded himself up to her influence. Occasionally his conscience had smitten him about Maud, and then he would drown conscience in wine.

Now the voice of conscience was dumb: he drank in every word which came from her lips; he gazed upon her beauty and was intoxicated by it.

"Clare, my friendship, my love is yours," he said as he bent over her. "My darling——"

A knock at the door arrested his words, and a servant entered with a note. Mrs. Stanley looked at the handwriting, and turned as pale as death.

"There is a man waiting for an answer, madam."

She tore open the note, and quickly read the contents. Then she went to her writing desk.

"I will be with you at the time you mention," was all she wrote, and, addressing the envelope, handed it to the servant.

"Clare, darling, what has made you worried?"

She rose angrily.

"What right have you to call me darling? You, who are engaged to another woman. No, Harry," she added, more softly, "forgive me, for it has been my fault. Leave me now; forget me and all that you have said to me. It is not too late. Go to Maud. She loves you and believes in you. Your place is by her side. This infatuation for me will be past in a day, and your love for Maud will be stronger. Go now. I wish to be alone."

He went out without a word. The dream was over. The veil was lifted from his eyes.

What was the note which had caused this sudden change in Clare Stanley? Merely:

"Meet me in the Broad Walk at Kensington at six.—Dick."

It was already five o'clock. There was no time to be lost. She hastily changed her elaborate tea-gown for a plain serge dress, and was soon being whirled down to Kensington. She had had no minutes even for thought. Her brain was too dizzy to enable her to judge how to act.

She trembled as she walked up the Broad Walk, glancing nervously about her. At last a quietly-dressed gentleman stepped out from behind one of the huge trees.

"Nell!"

"Dick!"

Dick Lee held out his hand and she took it, though her eyes were downcast. They walked along a few yards in silence.

"Nell," the man began, and there was a note of the saddest compassion in his voice, "I am not here to reproach you, nor to molest you in any way. I only want you to answer me one question. Are you happy?"

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"I am the most miserable creature on earth," she replied, sobbing.

They strolled away from the madding crowd, though few would have recognised them as the society beauty and callous gambler.

"Can you ever forgive me?" she murmured.

"I can and do forgive you. I forgive you so much that if you ask me to leave you now, your secret shall never pass my lips. If you wish me to remain, Nell, it is not too late now to return to the old days of happiness."

"How can I thank you for your generosity? How can I atone to you for the past? I was and am your wife. I will be your slave."

And thus she sacrificed her ambition at the altar of her love and duty.

In the course of the evening Sir Charles Wainwright received the following note, together with presents which he had made Mrs. Stanley:

DEAR SIR CHARLES,—Circumstances have occurred which render it imperative on my part to break off our engagement. I am sorry for any pain that this letter may cause you, but you would have suffered more if I had married you. Do not try to see me, as henceforth I am dead to society. Wishing you happiness in the future, I am, yours sincerely,

CLARE STANLEY.

* * * * *

The scene is Goodwood. Sir Charles is there, looking five years older than he did at Ascot. Harry Wainwright is there, telling his friends that he means to be married before the commencement of the hunting season. Mr. Carte is there, though without his late companion. Society is there, inventing tales wide of the truth about the disappearance of its late idol.

* * * * *

The scene is the deck of an Atlantic liner. Two people, whom the passengers have agreed to be a newly-married couple, are sitting side by side. Love is visible in the face of both; but in the face of the man it arises from the sense of protection, in the face of the woman from heartfelt gratitude.

G. F. U.

A LITTLE FISHER MAIDEN.

"Six pairs."

"Long ones, ten buttons, and Suèdes."

"You can choose for yourself."

"Done."

"Oh! You will back out."

"I?" indignantly. "No, indeed! I have been longing for it for days."

"All right, then, I take the bet."

"Halloa!" chimed in a third voice from the other end of the room, "what are you two up to now?"

The girl laughed.

"I thought you were too deep in politics to be listening," she said, "but if you want to know, Stanley has just bet me six to one——"

"That she won't walk down the Rue Grande at noonday in the fisher-girl costume she admires so much," interrupted Stanley.

Percy Rivers threw his paper on the ground, rose, and crossed the room.

"What nonsense is this?" he asked sternly, facing his younger brother and sister.

Ethel shrugged her shoulders.

"You are always a spoil sport, Percy," she said plaintively. "It is as dull as ditch-water with you stepping in to stop every bit of fun. Where's the harm in this? I dare say, for all your long face and priggish manner, that you had plenty of larks in your time."

Percy's brows grew sterner.

"Am I to understand, Ethel," he said, "that you propose masquerading here, in a foreign town?"

Ethel nodded.

"Call it what you like," she said doggedly, "I am going to dress up as a fisher-girl; the costume is most becoming. Stan can withdraw his bet; I shall do it just the same."

"I forbid you, Ethel."

A defiant look answered him.

"We'll see," she said saucily. "I'm off to consult madame," and with a glance at Stanley, she left the room.

"How could you be so senseless, Stanley?" said his brother angrily, as the door closed. "Now she will carry out this ridiculous farce."

"Don't fly into a passion, Percy," returned the young fellow calmly. "I had no idea she was really in earnest."

Then his senior paced the floor.

"After all, it is nothing very dreadful."

"When does this mad performance take place?" asked Percy, stopping short.

Stanley shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, Ethel will settle that."

"Look here," said Percy grimly, "I wash my hands of you both, but I depend on you, Stanley, to keep her out of any scrape this tomfoolery leads to."

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"All right, old fellow, but you can be easy. Ethel won't come to grief."

Miss Rivers, in the meanwhile, was closeted in madame's sanctum behind the shop.

The Lenoirs were jewellers, but mother and daughter would have found their incomes precarious enough without the money accruing from the first and second floors, now occupied by the Rivers.

It was policy, therefore, to be obliging; so, though Mme. Lenoir was shocked at the proposed escapade, and inwardly apostrophised the English as a "mad lot," she expressed great interest.

"I think I can find mademoiselle the dress she requires," she said, all smiles and smirks.

"You dear woman!" exclaimed Ethel delighted. "How? Where? Of course, it must be new."

Madame nodded.

"Leonie," addressing her daughter, "Josephine would lend hers, eh?"

"What?" cried Leonie shrilly. "Her wedding dress?—never!"

Madame looked at Ethel.

"Mademoiselle would be very careful of it, would she not?" she said.

"Oh, yes," replied the young girl eagerly. "I only want it for an hour. But will it fit me?"

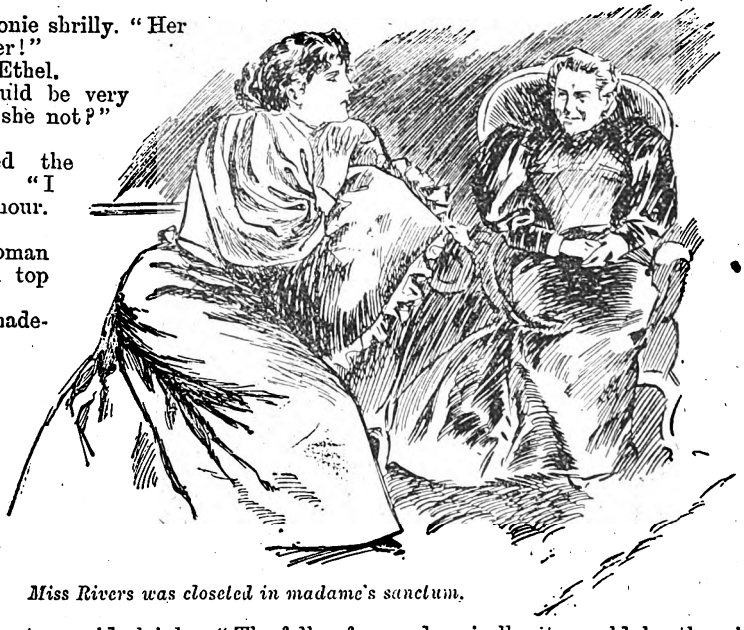
The French woman surveyed Ethel from top to toe critically.

"Yes," she said, "mademoiselle is the same height."

Then, with a wink at Leonie:

"How much will mademoiselle pay for the loan?"

"The cost is the least part," replied the girl quickly. "I leave that to you, dear madame."



Miss Rivers was closeted in madame's sanctum.

Madame's arched eyebrows and hand gesture said plainly: "The folly of those people!" and she instantly resolved to take advantage of the said folly to do a stroke of business on her own account, independently of the "commission" she intended to charge Josephine when the bargain was concluded.

"I will send about the costume at once," she said aloud, "and, Josephine, if she consents, shall bring it to show mademoiselle this evening. It is all complete except——"

"Except what?" interrupted Ethel eagerly, as madame paused, while Leonie looked wonderingly at her mother.

"The long earrings," replied the French woman suavely. "Mademoiselle knows they are an essential part of the dress, and Josephine would not care to lend them——"

"But——" began Leonie.

A frown from madame cut her short.

"Mademoiselle must buy a pair of real gold ones," suggested the shrewd tradeswoman, with a triumphant glance at her daughter; and leading the unresisting Ethel into the shop, she showed her several pairs of handsome earrings.

"You ninny," said madame to Leonie, with a reproving shake of the head, when Ethel, having selected, ran off with her treasures. "You ninny, will you ever learn to open your mouth for the ripe fruit to tumble in it?"

The Boulognaise fisher-girl proved ready to oblige the English lady, and Ethel was summoned downstairs that evening.

"This is Josephine, Mees Etel," said madame by way of introduction, pointing to a young girl in stiff-brimmed white cap and scarlet petticoat.

"It is very good of you to lend me your dress," said Ethel with a smile.

Josephine began untying a brown-paper parcel.

"See, mademoiselle," she said proudly, placing each article over a chair; "see, everything fresh and new."

"They are your wedding things," said Ethel, fingering the bodice.

The fisher girl reddened.

"We are to be married next week," she said simply.

"And what will Antoine say to your lending your finery?" broke in Leonie's high treble voice.

Josephine's face clouded.

"Hold your tongue," cried madame to her daughter; "Antoine is not such a fool; he will think a handful of francs payment enough."

Josephine looked from one to the other, hesitatingly; but Ethel, unheeding the dispute, slipped on the petticoat.

"Did I not tell mademoiselle it would be the right size," exclaimed Mme. Lenoir triumphantly, "eh, Josephine?"

But Josephine kept her eyes on the ground.

"Their figures are exactly alike," continued madame, nodding her head in approval at both supple, graceful forms.

Ethel gathered up the rest of the apparel in her arms.

"Stop a moment, mam'selle," said Josephine, touching her. "Antoine is strange; he may be vexed, as Mademoiselle Leonie suggested just now."

"You won't lend them?" Ethel's voice was plaintive.

Madame came to her rescue.

"You can't disappoint Mees Etel, after it has been arranged," she said to Josephine. "Antoine need not know unless you are so silly as to tell him, and the money will come in useful."

A smile crept round the corners of Josephine's lips.

"Take the things, mam'selle," she cried; and Ethel, promising to return them the following evening, slipped away.

About eleven o'clock next morning a tap at Stanley's

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door made him open it. He stared for a moment, then uttered a long-drawn whistle.

"Well, do I look nice?" demanded his sister gleefully.

"Capital!" and he laughed heartily.

"How did you manage it so soon? But, Ethel," and his tone was serious, "mind your p's and q's, don't look about you."

She nodded.

"I shall go straight down the Rue Grande to the quay, pop in upon the Stuarts, and back again; while I am gone, Stan, you can buy the gloves. *Au revoir!*" And kissing her hand, she descended the stairs.

Percy, coming up, almost knocked against her. He started at the gay apparition. Then he recognised Ethel.

"Good Heavens!" he groaned, but before he could say more the bird had flown into madame's parlour.

Percy hesitated a moment, and walked into Stanley's room.

"What's up?" asked the young man.

"I have just met Ethel in that fisher-girl toggery," answered Percy irately. "You will please follow her and see that she does not get into mischief, do you hear?"

Percy could not settle himself to work.

But Percy, returning to his study, could not settle himself to work. Ethel had neither father nor mother; little control as he possessed over her, he was still the responsible party.

The thought of possible insult to his madcap sister so disturbed him that he resolved to go after her himself. An unexpected call, however, detained him from putting his resolution into immediate action.

In the parlour Ethel had been duly admired and flattered.

"But mademoiselle's hands will betray her," said Mme. Lenior. "They are far too white and delicate. Leonie, fetch a basket. There," as the desired article arrived, "mademoiselle can tuck them under her shawl round the basket. So—that's better."

Thus equipped, Ethel stepped off.

"She is as like Josephine as two peas from behind," said madame, watching the girl.

"If only Antoine does not catch sight of her!" murmured Leonie, with a frown.

Ethel threaded her way through the throng of people usual at that hour of the day in the Rue Grande, and though she looked neither to the right nor to the left she was aware of the many curious glances and smiles directed at her. Her heart beat loudly, partly with excitement, partly fear of recognition or being accosted. She gained the Stuarts' house without molestation.

Husband and wife were just sitting down to the noon breakfast, when a grinning maid ushered in Ethel.

"Ethel," screamed Mrs. Stuart. "What mad freak is this?"

The Captain, who had not penetrated the disguise as quickly as his wife, now looked grave.

"My dear young lady," he said, "how could you do anything so risky?"

Ethel explained the joke, but her friends shook their heads. How could Percy have allowed it?

She sat subdued and dispirited for a few moments, and rose to depart.

"Yes, get back as quickly as you can, you silly child," said Mrs. Stuart.

The return journey had lost its zest; the flavour had gone from the fun. Ethel, as she went swiftly along the quay, was more alive than ever to the comments of the passers-by, and the glances of other fisher-girls.

The bright colour in her cheeks had given place to pallor, a longing to be safe again at home seized her. How far off the Rue Grande was.

Absorbed in herself, she had not noticed a lithe, dark-browed young fisherman following her at a distance, a sinister, jealous gleam in his black eyes.

But as by degrees he came closer, an instinctive feeling warned her of his approach. He tried to see her face, but Ethel looked straight before her.

Turning a corner, she came face to face with Percy. A sigh of relief escaped her; she grasped at his proffered arm. Before she could take it, a strong hand pushed her aside, a glint of steel flashed in the sunlight, a savage oath, and a knife was buried in Percy's shoulder.

Ethel screamed. At the sound the hot-blooded Gascon staggered back, pale and trembling. He stared at her.

"Antoine, you fool," shouted the bystanders who collected at the fray, "you have killed the Englishman! The girl is his sister!"

They carried the injured man to the nearest surgeon.

Fortunately for Ethel's stricken conscience the wound was not dangerous. During Percy's tedious convalescence she was a devoted nurse, but she never thinks of that day without a shudder at the possible consequences of that woeful wager.

H. W.

RESULT OF "PICTURE STORY" COMPETITION.—No. 4.

The £5 prize has gone to Sam Bellchambers, 145, Gloucester Road, Regent's Park, N.W.

£1 has been sent to each of the following:

James Matthews, "The Elms," Newbury, Berks.
W. A. Lewis, Harrogate Cottage, Yorkshire.
Mrs. H. Fox, 6, Barnard Road, Claughton, Birkenhead.
Allen Grace, 37, Kennington Park Road, Newington, S.E.
Ernest Coulson, 4, St. Andrew's Street (North), Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.

THE WINNING ATTEMPT.

A MODERN ELOPEMENT.

1.

The fair Angelina walked out with her tike,
And her crusty, tyrannical father;
Alphonso, her lover, drew near on his bike,
At a pace that was furious, rather.

2.

The pair, though forbidden, had vowed to be matched,
So Alphonso flew after the daughter;
A saddle in front of his bike he'd attached,
And on nearing her, skilfully caught her.

3.

"Stop thief!" cried the dad—"what the dickens is up?"
Not a moment the two lovers tarried,
But leaving behind them the dad and the pup,
They were off like a shot, to be married!

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The Shadow-Hand

By Louis Tracy.

SUMMARY.

Prologue.—The Hon. Ernest Wentworth lies dying at his estate, Chisholme Park. His wife, a light, pleasure-loving creature, falls under the mesmeric influence of Armand Lemaitre, who, by force of will power, compels her to rob her husband. While in the act of extracting a bundle of notes from a bureau she is interrupted by the appearance of her husband, who enters the room in his bed-clothes, silently points at her with his fore-finger, and then falls down dead. She shortly afterwards leaves for Paris to join Lemaitre.

Nineteen years elapse. Edith Wentworth, who was adopted when a baby by Lord Hilton, is living at Hillcrest Lodge. Among the guests for Christmas are Cécile Delisle, a school-friend of Edith's, Professor Queech, Jack Heathcote, and Captain Arthur Musgrave. At York, on the journey down from King's Cross, Cécile observes that the carriage next to theirs contains a man and a woman. At their destination, a few miles further on, she notices a strange man there alone.

Lemaitre, alias Dr. Danton, arrives at the house as a guest, and exercises an influence over Edith that arouses the jealousy of Arthur, who strikes Danton, and agrees to fight a duel.

A murder is committed at Thorgill Beck. The body of a woman is discovered by one of Farmer Wilson's sons. Cécile deduces from the description of the body that it has been robbed. She visits the spot, and obtains the jewellery from the boy who first discovered the body.

In the duel between Danton and Musgrave only one of the pistols is loaded. Danton is lucky enough to draw the loaded one, but gives Musgrave an opportunity of leaving Hillcrest Lodge, never to return or to speak to Edith. This proposal is refused, with scorn. As the Doctor is about to fire, Cécile comes between the principals. In order to obviate further trouble Arthur agrees to Danton's conditions, and immediately leaves Hillcrest Lodge. Cécile makes appointments with both Edith and Arthur to meet her, the one in a country lane and the other at an inn. She induces Arthur to drink a good deal, and then sends him away in such a direction that he must of necessity pass Edith, whom he speaks to in defiance of his pledge.

CHAPTER IX.

Drayton Races.

What should he do?

He lay in bed in the morning after the meeting in the lane, and looked round the room.

There was his sword; there were his pistols. How should he die? Live he could not.

"What a drunken fool!" he said aloud, his fine, nervous lips curving in unspeakable scorn of himself. Many times he said it:

"What a drunken ass!"

He, a man of noble blood, an officer in Her Majesty's Army, had broken his word, solemnly plighted—and plighted, people would say, to save his life. If it were known he would be hissed from the army, he would be hounded from the society of every decent man. His first instinct, on opening his eyes, was to rip up his bowels with his sword.

"A poor drunken clown!" he said, pitying himself, almost crying for scorn and self-shame. To be ruined like that, utterly and for ever, by punch!—how bestially ludicrous! By a little mad French girl! How wildly grotesque!

What should he do? What could he do? That question a thousand times over, he asked himself.

Suddenly he was resolved. He jumped from the bed, and rang. Tom Wilson, already a creature of buttons and livery, showed his sullen face.

"Look to that busby," said Arthur, "and my boots, and spurs. Have you made the lather as I told you for shaving?"

"Aye," said Tom.

"At the end of every answer you give use the word 'sir,' will you?"

"I doan't know."

"Don't know what?"

"I doan't know as I shall."

"We will look into that together, Tom. I am sure Miss Delisle would wish you to be respectful."

"A'll ask her aboot thot, if 'oo doan't mind waitin'."

"But you won't have time to consult her about every trifle of your duty, you know. Meantime, leave me as soon as you can."

When the Captain was dressed, he sat in the outer room and wrote the following letter, his face perfectly calm, his hand steady:

Sir,—Owing to circumstances almost beyond my control, I have broken my word in the matter of which you know. And I cannot even now promise that the relation set up by this breach of faith will, as far as I am concerned, cease for the future, things having gone to such a point between me and the lady in question. Meanwhile, of course, my existence is entirely at your disposal, and I await your instructions. I may tell you that I have resolved not to take my own life, but in all other respects,—I am yours to command, Arthur Musgrave.

He directed the letter to "Dr. Danton, Hillcrest Lodge, Seaborough—To be forwarded," and sent Tom Wilson to post it.

Tom Wilson . . . showed his sullen face.

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They sat in little groups . . . playing nap.

But the perfect calm which all through the day concealed the agony that boiled and rankled in his heart, broke up towards night. At eight his rooms were full of a company of drinking officers, and Arthur was then in a high fever of uproarious gaiety.

They sat in little groups round tables about the rooms playing nap. Brandy and champagne was the order of the day.

At Arthur's table the stakes went up from shillings to pounds. The rooms were full of smoke and hubbub, and the night grew old towards morning.

"What's the matter with Musgrave to-night?" said Pete Pearson, a sallow, thin fellow, with a high nose, and retreating chin, and goggle eyes, "he's suddenly broken loose, looks like."

Pendragon glanced at Arthur, and saw him holding high a champagne glass, laughing loud with throat thrown back.

"I shall ride that mare to victory, by God, or shoot her!" he cried, his voice rising high above the tumult of the room.

"I think it'll be a case of shooting, then," said Pete Pearson. "My money's going on Filigree."

"Oh, I don't know," said Jack Lascelles, a mere boy, with incipient moustache, and hair combed up high at the temples, "I rather like Musgrave's mare. She can go, you know, if she's coaxed. And she knows him. I've put a pony on her."

"It may be good punning, my boy, but bad business," answered Evelyn Hardy, whose thin-haired head gave out a continual odour of the patent hair-restorers, with which he waged an agonised war against the coming baldness. "Neither Filigree nor the mare is good enough for *my* hard-earned subsistence. What about the little Frenchman, then?"

"What, Bon-gré?" sneered Jack Lascelles. "It's wonderful what things people who have had no long experience of the turf will pitch upon as likely to win a decent race. I've *seen* Bon-gré, if you want to know; I've run my hand over his haunches. He isn't a horse—he's an insect."

"He's an insect with wings, then," said Evelyn Hardy, and he's going to make money for whoever chooses to patronise him. I think a fellow should know what he's talking about."

"But who the deuce is it owns Bon-gré? A French fellow, isn't it?" asked Pete Pearson.

"Yes, a financial sort of medico character. I was at the stables last Friday," said Lascelles. "His name is Danton."

Pendragon started.

At this point Arthur's voice was heard again. He had risen, flushed, to his feet.

"I shall put every penny I am worth on her, I tell you," he cried, his face stern, with frowning brows, and eyes alight.

"Bravo!" cried someone, "and so shall I."

"I already stand involved to the extent of £30,000 on her. To-morrow, at this time, the amount shall be double! If any one thinks——"

Pendragon went and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"*Festina lente*, my dear boy," he said. "It is time to go to bed."

Arthur sat down and emptied another glass.

CHAPTER X.

Hawke and Lemaitre.

About this very time two men were closeted together in a private room in a London hotel. One of them was a squat man, very bulky about the back and shoulders, with massive arms. His face was bronzed; but his chin-beard was gone, though it was the man whom Cécile had seen mysteriously standing in the railway compartment on the day of the murder. His mean, shabby clothes had now given place to a frock-coat, a gaudy tie with a diamond pin, fashionably-cut trousers, gold chain, and diamond ring.

Opposite him, on the other side of a small table, lounged the great bulk of Dr. Lemaitre.

"How much is it you want?" asked Lemaitre.

"A paltry two hundred."

"Ah! That will make three hundred in three weeks, Hawke."

"But that's nothing to a man such as you, mate."

"Not, eh? Suppose I tell you that at this moment I haven't got fifty pounds in the world?"

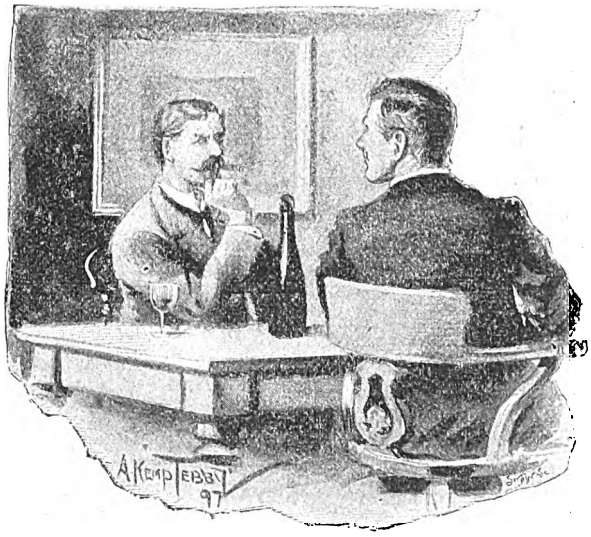
"Must find it, mate. I ain't what you'd call an unreasonable man, you know. Some people 'ud work a secret like this I have got of yours for all it was worth. All I want now is a paltry two hundred just to go on with."

"Well—have some more brandy—I cannot give it you, Mr. Hawke. Suppose I promise you five hundred in three weeks' time instead?"

The Doctor stroked his imperial and looked sideways at the brutal face of Hawke.

"Three weeks? Why, man alive, you don't expect me to wait all that time! If you was hanging for three weeks you'd be pretty dead at the end of it, I suppose."

Lemaitre got suddenly angry. He leant forward and stared at the man.



"How much is it you want?"

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"Come, learn your place, sir! Remember what you were, and what I have made you. You never had two hundred pence in your life till a lucky chance appeared to put me a little in your power. You must wait!"

"*Appeared* to put you a *little* in my power?" laughed Hawke. "Oh, that's good! Why, I can make you swing, mate, by just walking down the stairs and saying two words to the nearest policeman."

"You would lose your income. And you would have no proof of your tale."

"No proof? Well, that's only your little joke, I suppose. Why, wasn't I under the carriage seat all the time, and see you do the whole job?"

"But there would be only your word for it, and the police already know the value of your word, I should imagine. But how the devil came you to be under that seat that day? Have some more?"

Lemaitre had assumed his careless, friendly tone.

"Well, to tell the truth," said Hawke, "I wanted to get to Seaboro' to see a pal, and as I didn't have a copper to pay the fare, I had to go the distance under the seat. You can't get under a third-class seat, you know; but you can under a first."

"It was a lucky trip for you, I think?"

"It was, I own to that. And for you, too. For, if I wasn't there to tell you to get out on the wrong side of the train at the small half-way station, you would have gone on, sure enough, to Seaboro'. You were so flurried like. And that would have been dangerous."

"Why?"

"'Cause a lot of people got out at Seaboro', and some of them, sure enough, must ha' seen you with the lady beforehand: if you hadn't got out at the small station, some of them would have seen you at Seaboro' *without* her: and when they heard of the body——"

"Quite so. I understand. You know your trade, Mr. Hawke."

"Oh, as for that, no one can say as I haven't got my wits about me. The p'lice themselves 'ud tell you that. Do you know I think they are after me for this affair?"

"Is that so?" asked Lemaitre eagerly.

"I fancy so. There's a chap called Wheeler, who's got the case in hand, and I know he thinks it was I as did it. It was he who got me the seven years' hard I told you about. And I know he's been making enquiries about me lately."

"They musn't get you!" cried Lemaitre, leaning forward. "Und rstand that, Hawke! You may have been seen getting out of the compartment at Seaboro', and that alone would certainly convict you, unless you told the whole story—and so lost your income."

"And made you swing," put in Hawke.

"Look here—what do you say?—I think you had better leave the country," said Lemaitre. "Disguise yourself, and get away to Paris."

"It's all very well for you to talk, mate," cried Hawke, "but how am I to go kicking up my heels at Paris without money? You say *you've* got none."

"Not now; I shall have plenty in three weeks' time."

"I see. Well, I guess I'll stick pretty close to you during those three weeks. But I'm keeping low all the time. I shan't be nabbed. See, I've shaved my beard. I know all about Wheeler's little dodges, and can go one better every time, you bet. I suppose it's those Drayton races you're thinking of, where you're going to make your pile, ain't it?"

Lemaitre nodded.

"S'pose you lose?"

A look of intense fierceness passed for a moment over Lemaitre's face.

"I must not lose," he said.

"Your horse is Bon-gré, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"And everything depends on his winning, don't it?"

"Yes."

"And mind you don't get nabbed."

"How much do you expect to win?"

"About £20,000."

This was a lie. He counted on winning not less than £50,000.

"And how can you tell that Bon-gré's so sure to win?" asked Hawke.

"He must. No one knows his powers but me and Simpson. We have kept it dark. But he is made of lightning. He must win. He *shall* win!"

He spoke—more to himself than to Hawke—with an intensity of earnestness.

"Well, I don't know," answered Hawke, "he *may* lose, you know. Simpson's your jockey, ain't he?"

"Yes."

"Bon-gré has won a race before, I think you said, ain't he?"

"Yes. The *Grande Nationale*, in Paris. But under a different name. No one knows he's the same."

"And what are the chief horses you've got against you?"

"They are nothing at all. I tell you Bon-gré is made of lightning, man! He bounds like a wave of the sea. He is not a horse, he is a spirit—an idea. He is bottled flight. He is swiftness made visible in the flesh."

"Ah, that's all very fine, I dare say; but what horses 've you got against you?"

"There is Filigree, the Duke of Grandford's horse. A very good horse, but a mere clod-hopper compared to Bon-gré. He will come in second, I am told."

"That all?"

"There are about eight others. The best of them is Lancet, Captain Musgrave's mare. She'll slip in third."

"He the man you fought the juel with?"

Lemaitre started violently.

"Mr. Hawke! Mr. Hawke!" he said, lowering under his eyes, "you know too much of my affairs! It is dangerous, Mr. Hawke."

"I ain't afraid," said Hawke.

"I can take you off like *that*," said Lemaitre, with a snap-away of his thumb and finger.

"Now, mate, don't talk like that. *I'm* all right," said Mr. Hawke coldly. "You didn't think I knew that little bit, did you? Why I had you under my eye every day while you were at that—what's the name of the place? I saw the whole juel from behind the trees. And wasn't I just frightened you might get hit, too! I watched over you like a mother."

Lemaitre's head and cruel eyes rested upon Hawke with inward musing. But he did not speak.

"I suppose it was all about a woman," said Hawke.

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Lemaitre nodded, musing upon Hawke.

"And *you* won her?"

"Yes."

"Going to marry her?"

"Yes."

"Suppose you lose the race."

"Hold your tongue."

"Well, but how about this money business, mate? Business is business, ain't it?"

"I will give you £25 till the day of the races."

"And how much on that day?"

"£500."

"Say £1,000 for luck."

Lemaitre looked at him, and said;

"All right."

"Well, you've always acted straight to me, I must say," pondered Mr. Hawke. "Give us the money. Where am I to meet you on the race-day?"

"Near the start."

"What o'clock?"

"Say three."

Lemaitre handed him some notes.

"And mind you don't get nabbed," he called, as Hawke reached the door.

CHAPTER XI.

Won by a Nose.

Drayton is a town about fifteen miles north-west of Ilminster. Drayton Common lies south of the town, and is said to be one of the finest racecourses in the world.

On the great race-day it presented quite the appearance of Epsom on a Derby event. The presence of the Prince of Wales on the grand-stand—he was staying in the neighbourhood at Lord Westburgh's—made the day momentous in the county. The common was crammed, as well as the roads, for many miles round. The air was full of excitement and speculation.

This excitement was enormously intensified by the confidence which seemed to reign in the three opposing parties into which the betting had divided sportsmen. Each party seemed somehow so sure of its horse. Bon-gré was the favourite, but the adherents of Filigree and Lancet smiled disdainfully at the notion of Bon-gré turning up a winner.

Jack Lascelles, his flushed face lighting up the whole course, appeared early, full of confidence, and striking his fist into his palm, said:

"I tell you, sir, Bon-gré is not a horse. He's a grasshopper. I've *seen* him, I tell you; and if a fellow does not know a horse when he sees him, who does?"

At about eleven there was a change in the betting. A rumour got abroad that the Prince of Wales had laid heavily on Filigree.

In an incredibly short time Filigree had replaced Bon-gré as favourite, and with a big swing back, almost like a panic, the bookies dropped from records of two to one to twenty-five to one against Bon-gré.

Lemaitre, alone with Simpson, his jockey, in a room at the stables, rubbed his hands gleefully at the news.

"There is no doubt of our winning, is there?" he said, looking hard at Simpson.

"Not a bit," said Simpson, flicking with his whip his swinging toes, "unless Lancet creeps in before me by a nose."

Simpson was a mere wisp of a man, in the shape of a bow.

"What do you mean?" said Lemaitre quickly.

"Well, you know, Lancet is a bigger hanimal than Bon: a more powerful hanimal. I don't for a minute think myself that she's the ghost of a chance, 'cause Musgrave's such a heavy lout. But Lancet's got the wind, you know, no one can take that from Lancet—give the devil 'is due. And you know what wind will do."

Lemaitre stroked his imperial, with nervous, trembling finger.

"You must win—I hope you will win, Simpson," he said, "I shall make you roll in gold, if you do."

"Oh, I ain't afraid of Filigree, for that matter," said Mr. Simpson. "But here's off to the course."

About this time there was another panic. There went abroad a rumour that Lancet had been hip strung for two hours during the night, and had only escaped death by a miracle. She was reported to be in a state of great nervous exhaustion that morning. The excitement rose to fever-pitch. Hardly anybody had the least notion whether the report was true or false. The bookies began to refuse to lay odds against Filigree, who was now prime favourite.

But a cheer went up from the course when Musgrave appeared in red and white on Lancet among the group at the starting post, though some few knowing ones, gifted with accurate eye, said:

"That man's too heavy for that horse, take my word for it."

Musgrave to the last minute was smoking a cigar. His face was perfectly calm.

"But who on earth taught *him* to ride a racehorse?" said one busy bookie to another.

"Well, you know those cavalry officers who have served out Afghan way. They learn to climb up crags on horses as if they were goats. You can't unseat them from a horse. Whether he's got the science to ride a race is another matter. Personally, I'm thinking he'll make a mess of it."

At this moment the starter's flag went down, and away spurted the variegated throng like a scattered rainbow.

Almost from the first the three favourites put the general mob of horses behind their heels. A silence like the silence of night fell upon the uproar of the mighty crowd. Spy-glasses were the order of the day. The dense masses of humanity that thronged, tier above tier, on the stands, seemed suddenly to break out into a wide eruption of tiny moons which moved round with the moving horses.

A minute from the start Filigree was leading by a neck, Bon-gré was second, and Lancet was throwing herself about a good length behind Bon-gré.

"Good biz," whispered Jack Lascelles, nearly mad with excitement, unconscious of the fact that his great toe was supporting his whole weight; "Fil's in the van, as I said; if you fellows had only had the sense to listen to reason——"

"Looks as if you were right, in truth," said Peterson. "What the deuce has become of Musgrave? He isn't anywhere."

"Poor old Mus!" mused Evelyn Hardy, looking through his glass. "He keeps up pretty well though. Golly! he's got his heels in that horse's ribs, too! What think of it, Pen?"

"I haven't bet a sou on anybody," said Pendragon coolly; "but I can tell you which horse will win."

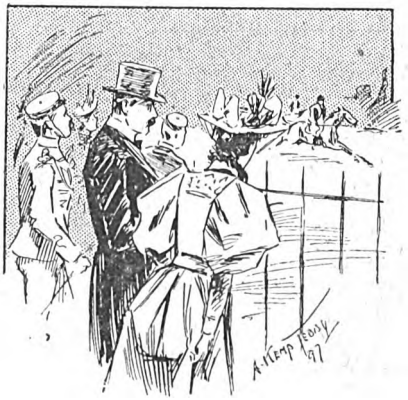
"Which?"

"Lancet. Musgrave's lips are set tight."

"He can set his lips as tight as he likes——"

"But I saw him turn deadly pale just at the start. Arthur Musgrave does not turn pale like that for nothing, I assure you. He evidently *means* to win."

"By Heaven!"



The air was full of excitement.

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cried Jack Lascelles. "Bon-gré has shoved her nose before Filigree! Not bad for the Frenchie. He'll beat a retreat presently, though, you'll see."

"I don't know," mused Peterson. "That Simpson is simply a monkey on his animal. He has no weight. He is merely a human bubble on an equine whirlpool."

"Musgrave is keeping up jolly well, though!" cried Lascelles. "I fancy he's gained a little on Filigree. But, I say! just look at that French horse—why, he's all neck!"

By the time the three leaders had reached the furthest point of the course, Filigree was behind, with Musgrave's Lancet second, and Bon-gré leading by a length.

"It's the Prince has given poor Fil this cursed luck!" said Jack Lascelles with dogmatic certainty. "A prince is sure to lose."

"Bosh! A prince should be lucky," said Peterson.

"Not a bit! It's as much princely to throw money away as it is human to err. I say! Look! Look! Did any of you see Musgrave bend right down and talk into his horse's ear?"

Pendragon was white with excitement. He nodded.

"Yes, I saw him," he said. "I told you he meant to win. When you have blood in the rider as well as in the horse."

The two front horses had now put the others well behind them. Filigree was nowhere.

The dash home, past the stands, was down a gentle hill. Bon-gré and Lancet, with staring eyes, and horribly heaving flanks, felt that the battle was between them, and flew as if from pursuing fire. The spattering hoofs sped nearer. Bon-gré held a steady neck in front.

"I don't believe Mus has used his whip a single time during the whole run," observed Evelyn Hardy under his breath. "What's the use of a whip, then?"

"And look at Simpson! why, his arm is going like a flail all the blessed time. Why the deuce doesn't Musgrave?"

"I say, you fellows, can any of you see Musgrave's face?" cried Jack Lascelles, "it's like a piece of white iron."

"But why the deuce doesn't he use his whip?"

"He isn't a trained jockey, he isn't accustomed to the whip."

"Hasn't he used it once even?"

"Not once," said Pendragon.

"Then that must be intentional."

"I should think so."

"Do you think he is gaining on Bon-gré, Lascelles? I fancy so."

"Losing, you mean."

"No, gaining, I fancy—yes, surely. I'll swear to it."

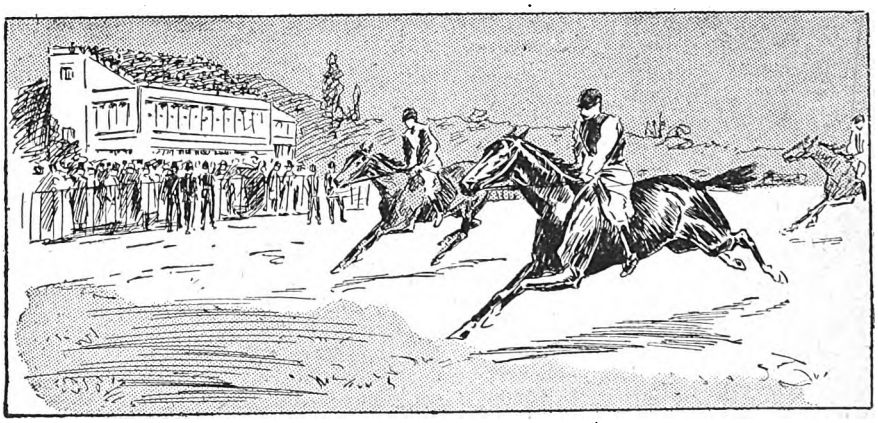
"No—can't you see?"

"No—no—and yet——"

"Bon-gré intends to keep his neck in front. That is clear. Nothing can alter it now."

"Jerusalem! Look! Look! Musgrave has struck!"

Down—for the first time—for the last—in one biting and whistling cut had descended Musgrave's whip upon the tingling, throbbing haunch of Lancet.



The two horses were just then dashing and straining past the stands.

In that one intense chastisement, the iron wrist had done its work. The next moment, almost with a bound of frenzy, Lancet had her nose in front of Bon-gré's.

From ten thousand throats there burst to the skies one ringing yell of cheering. Pendragon, with bawling mouth, was leaning wildly forward, and waving his hat like a maniac. On all the stands sprang up the thronging multitudes in their gala many-coloured costumes, the Prince among them, shouting, waving handkerchiefs, like a sea whipped into foam and madness.

The two horses were just then dashing and straining past the stands. A moment after, Lancet ran past the post, with Bon-gré's red and snorting nostrils at her shoulder.

Musgrave had won the race.

(To be continued.)

A Paper for Sunday Afternoons.

The second number of *The Sunday Reader* is now before the public. Judging by the reception with which the first number met, there can be no doubt that this will be one of the literary successes of the century. It is, in fact, *the* paper for the home. It is suited for all classes and creeds. The articles will please *you*, the stories will please your wife, and the Bible competitions will not only elevate and instruct your children, but will amuse them for hours together.

You can gain some idea of the good things contained in the second number of *The Sunday Reader* from the following selection of articles. *The Sunday Reader* also contains two splendid short stories, besides a thrilling serial:

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Cut out the figures portrayed in the sketches contained in this number, and paste them up to form one picture. £2 2s. will go to the reader whose attempt is considered cleverest, and a bottle of *HOME NOTES BOUQUET* to each of the five next. Date of closing: Monday, March 15th, 1897.

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ONE HUNDRED POUNDS IN PRIZES.

IN the current number of PEARSON'S WEEKLY you will find ten pictures They represent the names of ten well-known Actors and Actresses on the Dramatic and Music-Hall Stage. This is a competition that requires no explanation. If you will look at the accompanying picture you will see the reply is Beerbohm Tree. Who are the other people?

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and then keep the list till two other sets appear. When you have filled in the lists for four weeks send the four sheets to us in one envelope, addressed

"Pictures," Pearson's, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

But remember the sheets must come to us four in one envelope. Don't be discouraged if you cannot find forty names, fill in thirty-five, thirty, or even less. Others may be no more clever than yourself.

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1st PRIZE.	£50 in Gold.
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DO YOU WANT A WATCH?

On February 25th we wound up a watch and placed it in a safe. It was wound up somewhere between the hours of four and six in the afternoon. It is supposed to run down in about thirty-six hours. If you want this watch, which is a superior article manufactured by **Mr. HENRY E. PECK, of 71, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.**, and sold by him at, five guineas, all you have to do is to mark the time at which you think it will stop on the clock face herewith, and on the line left for that purpose. You may make any number of attempts for this prize, but each one must be on a separate clock-face.

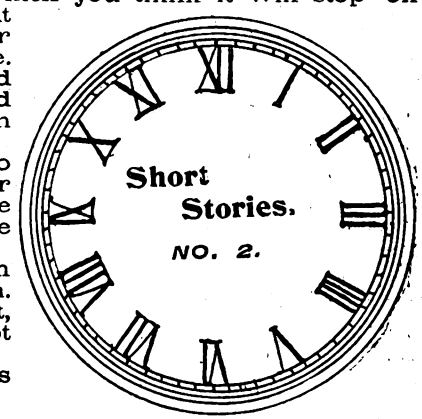
It is an English Lever Watch, ¾-plate movement, jewelled in eight holes, chronometer balance, plain or engine-turned cases, crystal glass, and five years' warranty is given with each watch.

The prize will be given to the competitor who draws the hands pointing most nearly to the hour and minute at which it is found the watch in our safe has stopped. To prevent mistakes, put the time also on the space provided.

There is no entrance fee required, but no competition will be accepted unless traced on the diagram herewith.

In the unlikely event of two competitors being correct, the watch will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt first reaches this office.

Competition closes ***Monday, March 15th.*** Address attempts:



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Name.....

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THE NIGHT BEFORE THE WEDDING.

It was in the year 1839, that this young man, rich, gifted and handsome, came to New Orleans to spend a winter with Charles Marot Bauderet, whose acquaintance he had formed in Paris. The two men were of the same age, and their tastes were similar. Verot had been captivated by Bauderet's wit, learning, and subtle personal charm. In turn, Bauderet's imagination was touched into singular activity and his sympathies borne over by Verot's magnetic charm.

It is rare, indeed, two young men, poets both, find such an overmastering mutual interest flowing between them. Their friendship became at once a passion.

When Bauderet left Paris after a year's sojourn there, he exacted a promise from his new friend that he should come to New Orleans and spend some months with him. Thus it came about that early in the autumn of 1839, Verot arrived, after a pleasant voyage, and took up his abode in the Bauderet mansion in Bourbon Street.

When Verot arrived, Bauderet met him at the wharf with every outward show of irrepressible delight; but the young Parisian at once felt that some great change had taken place in his friend. At first he was inclined to fear that Bauderet was not sincere in his expressions of joy over his arrival; but soon enough the mystery was adequately explained. Bauderet was in love. His whole nature was absorbed in the new passion.

Mademoiselle Des Champs was the daughter of a retired painter, whose home was but a few steps from Bauderet's gate. Recently the poet had met her. To meet her was to love her, and now he could find room for no other thoughts. Isobel Des Champs was the subject of his most eloquent conversation, his strangely melodious poetry, his curiously brilliant sketches in water-colours.

Bauderet was anxious to have Verot see Isobel Des Champs; and, of course, the young visitor, especially after Bauderet's eloquent descriptions, felt quite willing to meet the beautiful girl. Nor was he in the least disappointed when he saw her; indeed, her loveliness so far surpassed expectation, so dwarfed all former vision of maidenly attractiveness, that Verot was struck to the heart by her first glance.

If Isobel captivated Verot, it was not a loss of love at first sight, for the handsome Parisian did not fail to impress her imagination in turn. From the moment of their first meeting they were ardent lovers, as everybody could plainly see, save only Bauderet. So lost in the infatuation of absolute devotion was he that he could see nothing but Isobel's dazzling beauty, could hear nothing but the rich, low music of her Creole voice.

Soon enough Verot was in the seventh heaven of a successful courtship—not courtship, but love-telling and love-listening while poor Bauderet went on in blissful enjoyment of his imaginary lordship of Isobel's heart.

The time was approaching for Verot to depart for France, when, one morning, he informed Bauderet that he and Isobel were to be married, and would set sail within a fortnight to make Paris their home.

At first Bauderet was stupefied by the announcement. He gazed almost vacantly into his friend's eyes, while his face grew deadly white. Not a feature moved, however, nor did the quiet smile go from his thin, firm lips. It was an admirable sight exhibition of that self-control which in those days was so much cultivated by gentlemen who were in the habit of settling all matters of personal disagreement at the point of sword or muzzle of pistol.

Of course Verot had counted the cost, and fully expected a duel; but he was pleasantly surprised to find that Bauderet would not demand a meeting, Furthermore, instead of appealing to the code, the host who had been so cruelly robbed took the turn of affairs with a philosophic resignation truly admirable. After the first great struggle against the terrible disappointment which the disaster to his hopes had brought, he drew close his friend and wished him great joy.

Verot was both touched and awed by the strange change that came over Bauderet's face and manner. It was a slow, mysterious transformation of the man. His face took on an inscrutable mask of quiet, almost serene resignation, behind which something suggested immeasurable depths of acute suffering. In his eyes at times burnt a light which startled Verot and haunted his dreams at night. About this time Bauderet went frequently to see an old negress, a voudoo charm-weaver, and procured from her a phial of hideous poison—a black liquid, thick, rank, frenzy-bearing, made from the heads of snakes, the tails of scorpions, and the roots of various deadly weeds, all steeped together for many days. Among the African voudoo workers, this liquid was known by an appellation which meant "brain-burner," it was said to induce madness of the most hopeless kind. Its concoction was attended with the most solemnly horrible of rites and incantations.

It was the night before Isobel and Verot's wedding-day. Bauderet appeared to be in better spirits than usual; he had some rare old wine brought into the library, and he and Verot sat up till late drinking and smoking, while they permitted themselves perfect freedom in conversation.

Although, as I have said, their tastes were similar, no two men could have been less alike in personal appearance than were Verot and Bauderet. The Parisian was tall, athletic, fair, with blue eyes and yellow curling hair, while the Creole was dark, slight, black-eyed, mysterious-looking, possessing the singular magnetism of a face at once handsome and inscrutable. Bauderet's slightness was not physical weakness, however, for he was a noted swordsman, possessed of extraordinary nervous energy.

It was late in the night, and the lamps were burning low, when Bauderet arose, and said:

"Well, my dear old fellow, it is growing late, and you must not be drowsy on your wedding morn. One more cigar—just one of the best that Cuba ever gave to the lips of man, and then to your dreams."

He fetched from a little hanging cabinet a small ivory box curiously carved and moulded in gold, out of which he took two large *oscuros* separately wrapped in silver foil. One of these he handed to Verot, at the same time lighting the other.

"The last two of a priceless lot sent me two years ago by a friend at Havana," he said.

Verot daintily held the almost black cigar under his nostrils to inhale its fragrance, and instantly recoiled, for there came from it a strange, insinuating and unbearable stench.

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"That is nothing," laughed Bauderet, with a hollow, brutal ring in his voice that startled Verot. "When you light it, the smell disappears, and the smoke is exquisitely fine. See!" and he puffed a light cloud towards his friend's nostrils. "Isn't that incomparable bouquet?"

Verot put the cigar between his teeth, and tried to light it, but the thrill of atrocious evil that flashed through his nerves caused him to let it fall.

"It's horrible!" he exclained. "I can't bear it!"

"Oh, what womanish qualms!" remarked Bauderet, almost testily, picking up the fallen *oscuro* and handing it to his guest, "smoke it; this may be our last night together, and—and——"

Something in Bauderet's voice appealed to Verot's sympathy while at the same time it made his heart almost sink. A man lying in his coffin, ready to be buried alive, might have had such a strain in his voice. His face was white, with that ghastliness which comes in extreme moments to a dark countenance, and his eyes, strangely dilated, burned with a dusky, deep-set brilliance.

"You know how I feel, Verot—you know how I feel."

Again the Parisian essayed to light the cigar; but the thing was not possible. He flung it aside, after inhaling one intolerable draught of its smoke!

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Bauderet. "You have less courage than I supposed; but, then, you Parisians, as I have often told you, are a degenerate set."

Verot had risen, and now stood towering above his host, his magnificent frame expanding, and a determined look in his fine, fair face.

"That cigar was poisoned!" he exclaimed, with dramatic energy of expression.

"Oh, surely not!" said Bauderet, with immediate concern, stooping and picking it up. He put it to his nose.

"Why that is strange!" he cried. "What can it mean?"

The two men looked steadily, searchingly into each other's eyes; and slowly but clearly read the whole situation. One was aware that his deadly purpose had been discovered; the other knew that death was lurking for him in every corner of that gloomy old house. Verot was the first to speak.

"How shall we settle this?" he demanded, in a hard, dry tone.

Bauderet laughed sardonically and puffed lazily at his cigar, meantime shrugging his shoulders as if the matter were of light consequence to him.

"I think the best way to settle it is to go to bed and sleep it off," he remarked with a half yawn.

"Scoundrel, villain, murderer!" exclaimed Verot, permitting for the moment his indignation to master him. "You shall answer to me now!"

"Oh, certainly, if you wish," said Bauderet calmly, "my sword-room is but a step from here, follow me if you're not afraid."

Verot followed, but not without a strange sense of insecurity. It was as if some treachery were about to be sprung upon him at every step while they passed through two or three dim rooms and along a low, narrow passage between damp brick walls, then into a bare, windowless little room.

"Look here," said Bauderet, stopping close to one of the dismal walls, "this doesn't look like a door, does it?"

He fumbled a moment about a certain spot, pressed a hidden spring, and pushed open a low shutter, disclosing another cell-like apartment, dank, grimy and ill-smelling. Into this Verot followed him. They halted, and faced each other, a little lamp carried by Bauderet lighting up their drawn and ghastly faces.

"We can settle our little trouble here without the slightest fear of being interrupted. This is where, as I have heard, one of my reckless kinsmen, who formerly owned the house, used to confine stolen slaves during the time he was awaiting a chance to run them off. Nobody living, save myself, knows this room exists."

He smiled cynically, and lifted the lamp, gazing around at the slime on the reeking walls. Then he made a little petulant motion, and said:

"The swords—the rapiers—I have forgotten them. Hold this lamp a moment, please!"

Verot mechanically accepted the proffered light: but as he did so something in Bauderet's look, or in his movement, put him on his guard, or rather startled him.

"You'll not be afraid to stand here a moment, while I go to fetch the swords, will you?"

He placed peculiar accent on the word "*afraid*," and Verot felt his blood tingle in response to the insinuation.

"You shall soon have your test of skill as well as of courage," he responded; 'but if you are going back after weapons, you'd better take the lamp. I can wait without it."

"This is not a pleasant waiting-room," sneered Bauderet, again letting his eyes slowly sweep the loathsome little cell. He was still smoking the smouldering black cigar, and the pale rings of fragrance slowly strayed in the chill damp air.

"Don't stand there like that," said Verot savagely, "or I'll stamp you into the floor."

"A coward would do that," retorted Bauderet, taking two or three light, backward steps and pausing in the little doorway. "I have some doubts of your honour, or ought to have."

"Fetch the rapiers, sir," was all that Verot said. His terrible anger was mastering him.

Bauderet retreated one more step, then, with a fiendish leer, laid his hand on the heavy shutter.

"You command, but I shall take my own time to obey," he remarked, in a tone of constrained excitement. "How should you like to wait in this little *boudoir* until your bride came to you?"

Like a flash the meaning of the purpose of Bauderet's words and movements leapt through Verot's mind. Already the door was slowly swinging shut. So frightful was the thought, with its infinite suggestions of horror, that the tall Parisian stood for a moment paralysed.

"Good-night, for ever, Augustin Verot. May your dreams be sweet," said Bauderet.

Slowly, steadily, the door, which was in reality a hinged section of the massive wall, swung round.

Verot let fall the lamp, which, clanging brazenly on the brick floor, remained sputtering and burning there with a strange, fantastic light.

One long bound the Parisian made, uttering a low, harsh cry of rage and terror as he was caught between the closing door and the jaw of the doorway.

There was a struggle like the fighting of wild beasts, the men growling and panting in the extremity of their brutal straining and tearing.

Presently a body was heaved and flung; it fell in the centre of the cell, and lay ghastly and motionless beside the fast dying lamp flame. Then the ponderous door went to with a dull thump and a click of the hidden spring.

One of the rivals stood on the outside of the cell panting and quivering, the white froth clotted on his lips; the other lay limp and lifeless within.

Harry Rogers.

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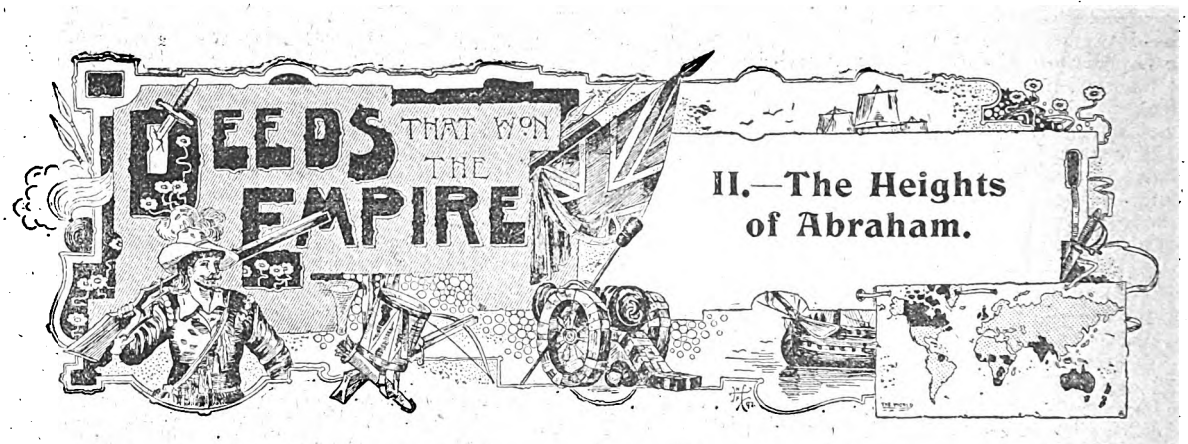

The year 1759 is a golden one in British history. A great French army, that threatened Hanover, was overthrown at Minden, chiefly by the heroic stupidity of six British regiments, who, mistaking their orders, charged the entire French cavalry in line, and destroyed them.

"I have seen," said the astonished French general, "what I never thought to be possible—a single line of infantry break through three lines of cavalry, ranked in order of battle, and tumble them into ruin." Contades omitted to add that this astonishing infantry, charging cavalry in open formation, was scourged during their entire advance by powerful batteries on their flank.

At Quiberon, in the same year, Hawke, amid a tempest, destroyed a mighty fleet that threatened England with invasion; and on the heights of Abraham Wolfe broke the French power in America.

"We are forced," said Horace Walpole, the wit of his day, "to ask every morning what new victory there is, for fear of missing one." Yet, of all the great deeds of that memorable year, the victory which overthrew Montcalm, and gave Quebec to England—a victory achieved by the genius of Pitt and the daring of Wolfe—was, if not the most shining in quality, the most far-reaching in its results. "With the triumph of Wolfe on the heights of Abraham," says Green, "began the history of the United States."

The hero of that historic fight wore a singularly unheroic aspect. Wolfe's face, in the famous picture by West, resembles that of a nervous and sentimental boy—he was an adjutant at sixteen, and only thirty-three when he fell, mortally wounded, under the walls of Quebec.

His forehead and chin receded, his nose, tip-tilted heavenwards, formed with his other features the point of an obtuse triangle. His hair was fiery red, his shoulders narrow, his legs a pair of attenuated spindle-shanks; he was a chronic invalid. But between his fiery poll and his plebeian and upturned nose flashed a pair of eyes—keen, piercing, and steady—worthy of Cæsar or of Napoleon. In warlike genius he was on land as Nelson was at sea, chivalrous, fiery, intense. A "magnetic" man, with a strange gift of impressing himself on the imagination of his soldiers, and of so penetrating the whole force he commanded with his own spirit that, in his hands, it became a terrible and almost resistless instrument of war.

The gift for choosing fit agents is one of the highest qualities of genius, and it is a sign of Pitt's piercing insight into character that, for the great task of overthrowing the French power in Canada, he chose what seemed to commonplace vision, a rickety, hypochondriacal, and very youthful colonel like Wolfe.

Pitt's strategy for the American campaign was specious, not to say grandiose. A line of strong French posts, ranging from Duquesne, on the Ohio, to Ticonderoga, on Lake Chaplain, held the English settlements on the coast girdled, as in an iron band, from all extension westward. While Quebec, perched in almost impregnable strength on the frowning cliffs which look down on the St. Lawrence, was the centre of the French power in Canada.

Pitt's plan was that Amherst, with 12,000 men, should capture Ticonderoga. Prideaux, with another powerful force, should carry Montreal, and Wolfe, with 7,000 men, should invest Quebec, where Amherst and Prideaux were to join him.

Two-thirds of this great plan broke down. Amherst and Prideaux, indeed, succeeded in their local operations, but neither was able to join Wolfe, who had to carry out with one army the task for which three were designed.

On June 21st the advanced squadron of the fleet, conveying Wolfe, came working up the St. Lawrence. To deceive the enemy they flew the white flag, and, as the eight great ships came abreast of the island of Orleans, the good people of Quebec persuaded themselves it was a French fleet bringing supplies and reinforcements. The bells rang a welcome. Flags waved. Boats put eagerly off to greet the approaching ships. But as these swung round at their anchorage the white flag of France disappeared, and the red ensign of Great Britain flew in its place.

The crowds, struck suddenly dumb, watched the gleam of the hostile flag with chapfallen faces. A priest who was staring at the ships through a telescope actually dropped dead with the excitement and passion created by the sight of the British fleet.

On June 26th the main body of the fleet, bringing Wolfe himself and 7,000 troops, was in sight of the lofty cliffs on which Quebec stands, Cook, afterwards the famous navigator, master of the *Mercury*, sounding ahead of the fleet. Wolfe at once seized the Isle of Orleans, which shelters the basin of Quebec to the east and divides the St. Lawrence into two branches, and, with a few officers, quickly stood on the western point of the isle. At a glance the desperate nature of the task committed to him was apparent.

Quebec stands on the rocky nose of a promontory, shaped roughly like a bull's head, looking eastward. The St. Lawrence flows eastward under the chin of the

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head; the St. Charles runs, so to speak, down its nose from the north to meet the St. Lawrence.

The city itself stands on lofty cliffs, and, as Wolfe looked upon it on that June evening far away, it was girt and crowned with batteries.

The banks of the St. Lawrence, that define which we may call the throat of the bull, are precipitous and lofty, and seem by mere natural strength to defy attack; though it was just here, by an ant-like track up 250 feet of almost perpendicular cliff, Wolfe actually climbed to the plains of Abraham. To the east of Quebec is a curve of lofty shore, seven miles long, between the St. Charles and the Montmorenci.

When Wolfe's eye followed these seven miles of curving shore he saw the tents of a French army double his own in strength, and commanded by the most brilliant French soldier of his generation, Montcalm. Quebec, in a word, was a great natural fortress, attacked by 9,000 troops, and defended by 16,000, and if a daring military genius urged the British attack, a soldier as daring and well-nigh as able as Wolfe directed the French defence.

Montcalm gave a proof of his fine quality as a soldier within twenty-four hours of the appearance of the British fleet. The very afternoon the British ships dropped anchor a terrific tempest swept over the harbour, drove the transports from their moorings, dashed the great ships of war against each other, and wrought immense mischief.

The tempest dropped as quickly as it had risen. The night fell black and moonless. Towards midnight the British sentinels on the point of the Isle of Orleans saw, drifting silently through the gloom, the outlines of a cluster of ships. They were eight huge fire-ships, floating mines packed with explosives.

The nerve of the French sailors, fortunately for the British, failed them, and they fired the ships too soon. But the spectacle of these flaming monsters as they drifted towards the British fleet was appalling, The river showed ebony-black under the white flames; the glare lit up the river cliffs, the roofs of the city, the tents of Montcalm, the slopes of the distant hills, the black hulls of the British ships. It was one of the most stupendous exhibitions of fireworks ever witnessed.

But it was almost as harmless as a display of fireworks. The boats from the British fleet were by this time in the water, and pulling with steady daring to meet these drifting volcanoes. They were grappled, towed to the banks, and stranded, and there they spluttered and smoked and flamed till the white light of the dawn broke over them.

The only mischief achieved by these fire-ships was to burn alive one of their own captains and five or six of his men, who failed to escape in their boats.

Wolfe, in addition to the Isle of Orleans, seized Point Levi, opposite the city, and this gave him complete command of the basin of Quebec. From his batteries on Point Levi, too, he could fire directly on the city, and destroy it if he could not capture it.

He himself landed the main body of his troops on the east bank of the Montmorenci, Montcalm's position, strongly entrenched, being between him and the city. Between the two armies, however, ran the deep gorge through which the swift current of the Montmorenci rushes down to join the St. Lawrence. The gorge is barely a gunshot in width, but of stupendous depth. The Montmorenci tumbles over its rocky bed with a speed that turns the flashing waters almost to the whiteness of snow.

Was there ever a more curious military position adopted by a great general in the face of superior forces?

Wolfe's tiny army was distributed into three camps. His right wing on the Montmorenci was six miles distant from his left wing at Point Levi, and between the centre, on the Isle of Orleans, and the two wings ran the two branches of St. Lawrence. That Wolfe deliberately made such a distribution of his forces under the very eyes of Montcalm showed his amazing daring. And yet beyond firing across the Montmorenci on Montcalm's left wing and bombarding the city from Point Levi, the British general could accomplish nothing. Montcalm knew that winter must compel Wolfe to retreat, and he remained stubbornly, but warily, on the defensive.

On July 18th, the British performed a daring feat. In the darkness of the night, two of the men-of-war and several sloops ran past the Quebec batteries and reached the river above the town. They destroyed some fire-ships they found there, and cut off Montcalm's communication by water with Montreal. This rendered it necessary for the French to establish guards on the line of precipices between Quebec and Cap-Rouge.

On July 28th, the French repeated the experiment of fire-ships on a still more gigantic scale. A vast fire-raft was constructed, composed of some seventy schooners, boats, and rafts, chained together, and loaded with combustibles and explosives. The fire-raft is described as being one hundred fathoms in length, and its appearance as it came drifting on the current, a mass of roaring fire, discharging every instant a shower of missiles, was terrifying.

But the British sailors dashed down upon it, broke the huge craft into fragments, and towed them easily ashore. "Hang it, Jack," one sailor was heard to say to his mate, as he tugged at the oar, "didst thee ever take hell in tow before?"

Time was on Montcalm's side, and unless Wolfe could draw him from his impregnable entrenchments, and compel him to fight, the game was lost.

When the tide fell a stretch of shoal a few score yards wide was left bare on the French side of the Montmorenci. The slope that covered this was steep, slippery with grass, crowned by a great battery, and swept by the cross-fire of entrenchments on either flank. Montcalm, too, holding the interior lines, could bring to the defence of this point twice the force with which Wolfe could attack it. Yet to Wolfe's keen eyes this seemed the one vulnerable point in Montcalm's front, and on July 31st he made a desperate leap upon it.

The attack was planned with great art. The British batteries thundered across Montmorenci, and a feint was made of fording that river higher up, so as to distract the attention of the French, while the boats of the fleet threatened a landing near Quebec itself. At half-past five the tide was at its lowest, and the boat-flotilla, swinging round at a signal, pulled at speed for the patch of muddy foreshore already selected.

The Grenadiers and Royal Americans leapt ashore in the mud, and—waiting neither for orders nor leaders nor supports—dashed up the hill to storm the redoubt They reached the first redoubt, tumbled over it and through it, only to find themselves breathless in a semicircle of fire. The men fell fast, but yet struggled fiercely upwards. A furious storm of rain broke over the combatants at that moment, and made the steep grass-covered slope as slippery as mere glass. "We could not see half way down the hill," writes the French officer in command of the battery on the summit. But through the smoke and driving rain they could still see

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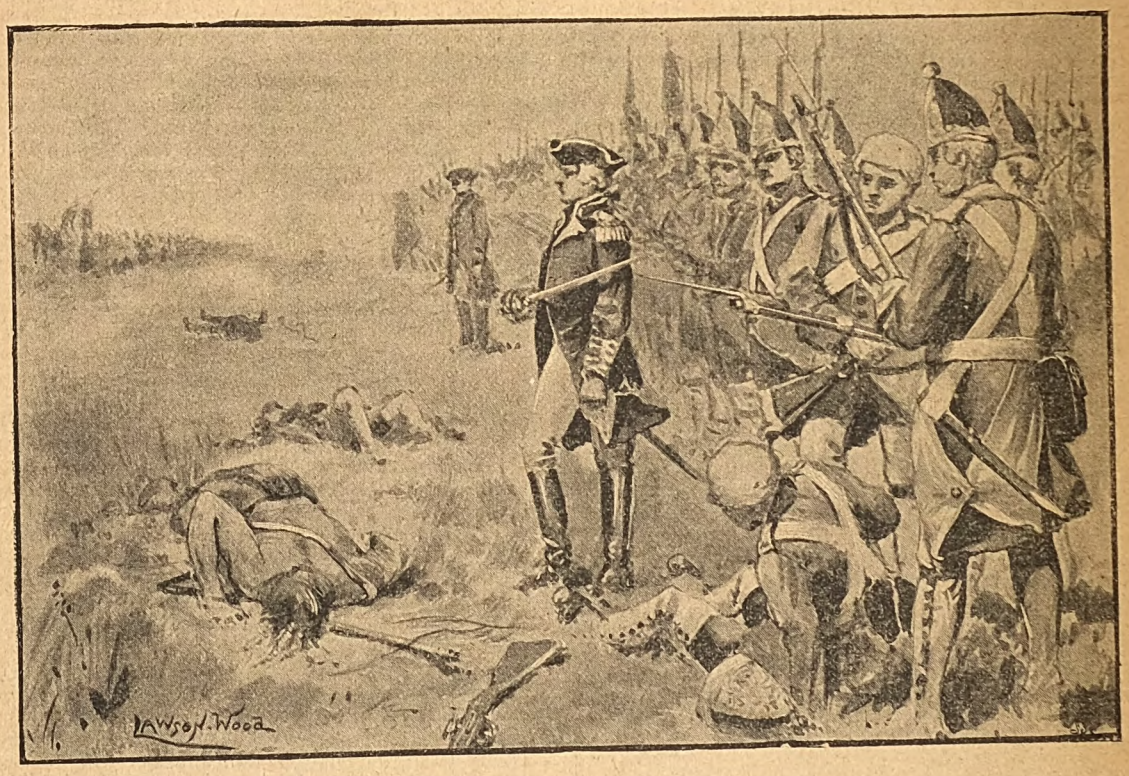

The British army, in line of battle, stood looking down on Quebec.

the Grenadiers and Royal Americans in ragged clusters, scarce able to stand, yet striving desperately to climb upwards.

The reckless ardour of the Grenadiers had spoilt Wolfe's attack, the sudden storm helped to save the French, and Wolfe withdrew his broken but furious battalions, having lost some 500 of his best men and officers.

The exultant French regarded the siege as practically over, but Wolfe was a man of heroic and quenchless tenacity, and never so dangerous as when he seemed to be in the last straits. He held doggedly on, in spite of cold, and tempest, and disease. His own frail body broke down, and for the first time the shadow of depression fell on the British camps, when they no longer saw the red head and lean and scraggy body of their General moving amongst them.

For a week, between August 22nd and 29th, he lay apparently a dying man, his face, with its curious angles, white with pain and haggard with disease. But he struggled out again, and framed yet new plans of attack.

On September 10th, the captains of the men-of-war held a council on board the flagship, and resolved that the approach of winter required the fleet to leave Quebec without delay. By this time, too, Wolfe's scanty force was diminished one-seventh by disease or losses in battle.

Wolfe, however, had now formed the plan which ultimately gave him success, though at the cost of his own life.

From a tiny little cove, now known as Wolfe's Cove, five miles to the west of Quebec, a path, scarcely accessible to a goat, climbs up the face of the great cliff, nearly 250ft. high. The place was so inaccessible that only a post of 100 men kept guard over it.

Up that track, in the blackness of the night, Wolfe resolved to lead his army to the attack of Quebec.

It needed the most exquisite combinations to bring the attacking force to that point from three separate quarters, in the gloom of night, at a given moment, and without a sound that could alarm the enemy.

Wolfe withdrew his force from the Montmorenci, embarked them on board his ships, and made every sign of departure. Montcalm mistrusted these signs, and suspected Wolfe would make at least one more leap on Quebec before withdrawing. Yet he did not in the least suspect Wolfe's real designs. He discussed, in fact, the very plan Wolfe adopted, but dismissed it by saying: "We need not suppose that the enemy have wings!"

The British ships were kept moving up and down the river front for several days so as to distract and perplex the enemy.

On October 12th Wolfe's plans were complete, and he issued his final orders. One sentence in them curiously anticipates Nelson's famous signal at Trafalgar. "Officers and men," wrote Wolfe, "*will remember what their country expects of them.*"

A feint on Beauport, five miles to the east of Quebec, as evening fell, made Montcalm mass his troops there; but it was at a point five miles west of Quebec the real attack was directed.

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At two o'clock at night two lanterns appeared for a minute in the maintop shrouds of the *Sunderland*. It was the signal, and from the fleet, from the Isle of Orleans, and from Point Levi, the English boats stole silently out, freighted with some 1,700 troops, and converged towards the point in the black wall of cliffs agreed upon. Wolfe himself was in the leading boat.

As the boat drifted silently through the darkness on that desperate adventure Wolfe, to the officers about him, commenced to recite Gray's "Elegy":

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

"Now, gentlemen," he added, "I would rather have written that poem than take Quebec." Wolfe, in fact, was half poet, half soldier.

Suddenly from the great wall of rock and forest to their left broke the challenge of a French sentinel: "*Qui vive?*" A Highland officer of Fraser's regiment, who spoke French fluently, answered the challenge:

"*La France.*"

"*A quel régiment?*"

"*De la Reine,*" answered the Highlander.

As it happened, the French expected a flotilla of provision boats, and after a little further dialogue, in which the cool Highlander completely deceived the French sentries, and the British were allowed to slip past.

The tiny cove was safely reached, the boats stole silently up without a blunder, twenty-four volunteers from the Light Infantry leapt from their boat and led the way in single file up the path, that ran like a thread along the face of the cliff. Wolfe sat eagerly listening in his boat below. Suddenly from the summit he saw the flash of the muskets, and heard the stern shout which told him his men were up.

A clear, firm order, and the troops sitting silent in the boats leapt ashore, and the long file of soldiers, like a chain of ants, went up the face of the cliff, Wolfe amongst the foremost, and formed in order on the plateau, the boats meanwhile rowing back at speed to bring up the remainder of the troops.

Wolfe was at last within Montcalm's guard!

When the morning of the 13th dawned, the British army, in line of battle, stood looking down on Quebec. Montcalm quickly heard the news, and came riding furiously across the St. Charles to the scene of danger.

He rode, as those who saw him tell, with a fixed look, and uttering not a word. The vigilance of months was rendered worthless by the amazing night escapade. When he reached the slopes, Montcalm saw before him the silent red wall of British Infantry, the Highlanders with waving tartans and wind-blown plumes all in battle array. It was not a detachment, but an army!

The fight lasted fifteen minutes, and might be told in almost as many words. Montcalm brought on his men in three powerful columns, in number double that of Wolfe's force. The British troops stood grimly silent, though they were tormented by the fire of the Indians and Canadians lying in the grass.

The French advanced eagerly, with a tumult of shouts and a confused fire; the British moved forward a few rods, dressed their lines, and when the French were within forty paces threw in one fierce volley. Again, again, and yet again, the flame ran from end to end of the steadfast line!

When the smoke lifted the French column were wrecked. The British instantly charged. The spirit of the clan awoke in Fraser's Highlanders! They flung aside their muskets, drew their broadswords, and with a fierce Celtic slogan rushed on the enemy. Never was a charge pressed home more ruthlessly!

After the fight one of the British officers wrote: "There was not a bayonet in the three leading British regiments, nor a broadsword amongst the Highlanders, that was not crimson with the blood of a foemen."

Wolfe himself charged at the head of the Grenadiers, his bright uniform making him conspicuous. He was shot in the wrist, wrapped a handkerchief round the wound, and still ran forward. Two other bullets struck him—one it is said fired by a British deserter, a sergeant reduced by Wolfe for brutality to the rank of a private.

"Don't let the men see me drop," said Wolfe as he fell, to an officer running beside him. An officer of the Grenadiers, a gentleman volunteer, and a private, carried Wolfe to a redoubt near. He refused to allow a surgeon to be called. "There is no need," he said, "it is all over with me."

Then one of the little group, casting a look at the smoke-covered battlefield, cried:

"They run! See how they run!"

"Who run?" said the dying Wolfe, like a man roused from sleep.

"The enemy, sir," was the answer.

A flash of life came back to Wolfe; the eager spirit thrust from it the swoon of death; he gave a clear, emphatic order for cutting off the enemy's retreat; then, turning on his side, he added:

"Now, God be praised; I die in peace."

That fight determined that the North American continent should be the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon race.

"When we first heard of Wolfe's glorious deed," writes Thackeray in "The Virginians," "of that army marshalled in darkness, and carried silently up the midnight river—of those rocks scaled by the intrepid leader and his troops—of the defeat of Montcalm on the open plain by the sheer valour of his conqueror, we were all intoxicated in England by the news."

Not merely all London, but half England flamed into illuminations. One spot alone was dark—Blackheath, where, solitary amidst a rejoicing nation, Wolfe's mother mourned for her heroic son, like Milton's "Lycidas," "dead ere his prime."

RESULT OF PICTURE COMPETITION.—No. 2.

£5 has gone to Mr. W. Shipway, 32, Howard Street, Reading; and the remaining £5 has been divided among the following five competitors: Mrs. Pullin, 215A, Hornsey Road, Holloway; T. W. Randle, 33, Malvern Road, Hornsey Park; W. Spencer, 8, Bettridge Road, Hurlingham; A. G. Shrivelle, Thomsons, Golden Green, Tonbridge; and Miss Maud Power, 15, The Avenue, Castle Hill, Ealing. The following is the winning attempt:

"LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP."

Two travellers bold, whose destination
Lay far above all habitation,
Meet unexpected oppugnation
From "Leo," lord of brute creation.

Leo feels mad with indignation
(Such fearlessness needs reprobation),
Springs forth in joyful expectation
Of feasting without limitation.

Leaping in unpremeditation,
He finds, much to his consternation,
That anger, race, and disputation
Are sometimes met by condemnation.

Having attained their elevation
By pluck and cool determination,
They now descend by slow gradation,
Bearing their spoil with exultation.

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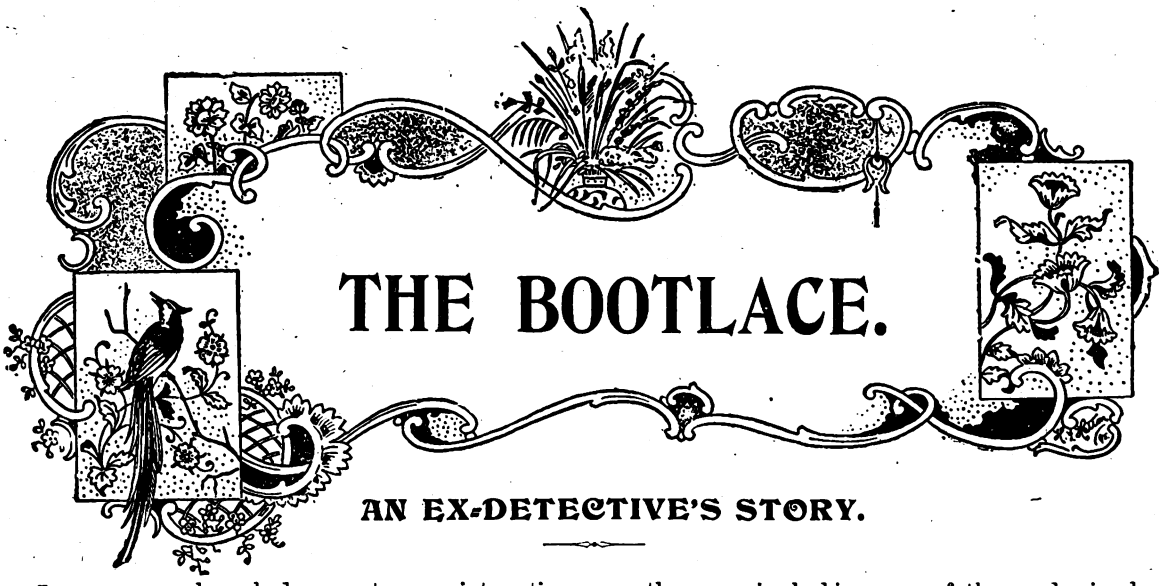

THE BOOTLACE.

AN EX-DETECTIVE'S STORY.

"I suppose you have had a great many interesting experiences?" I remarked to an ex-detective, now a great friend of mine.

"Yes," he replied, "I must say that I have solved a few mysterious cases in my time. There was one in particular which puzzled me tremendously, and was so clever a dodge as to seem almost incredible. It was at a little country village. There had been a murder with extensive robbery. I was wired for, and hastened to attend with all promptitude. I was cordially welcomed by the local inspector, who informed me that they had arrested a man on suspicion, and that the evidence was black against him. He then related all the particulars of the case to me, which were as follows:

"The murdered man was a very eccentric character, aged about fifty. With the exception of an extremely old man who waited on him, he lived alone, being a confirmed woman-hater.

"'The old man,' I asked, 'have you arrested him?'

"The inspector shrugged his shoulders. 'He is eighty years of age; it is not possible for him to kill a man in his prime; besides, there are signs of a severe struggle. No, we have not arrested him.'

"'How long has he been in the murdered man's service?'

"'About a year and a half.'

"'Thank you.' I jotted that down. 'Pray continue.' He did so.

"'We know nothing more about him except that he was reputed wonderfully rich. On the morning his old servant, as was his custom, took his master some hot water. He knocked twice, but finding there was no response, opened the door, intending to stand the jug inside. An awful sight met his eyes. On the floor lay his master, stone dead, while everywhere were signs of a severe and protracted struggle. Chairs, tables, boxes, everything was topsy-turvy.'

"'One moment,' I broke in. 'Does it not seem strange to you that the old man should have slept through it all?'

"'Not at all. He is as deaf as a post; besides, their rooms are far apart. But to continue: The old man communicated with us, and I wired to you. I carefully searched the house and grounds. In the library there was a rather superior-looking man of the mechanic class. He was lying unconscious. On the table stood a decanter of wine. "Hallo, my man," thought I, "what does this mean?" We raised him up and examined him. On the back of his head was a terrible bruise, most likely where he had fallen. He showed no signs of returning consciousness, and I sent for the old man. I told him how matters stood, and the old chap shouted out: "He's been at the wine; master always keeps a decanter of drugged wine on the table." There was nothing to be got out of him yet, though, so I went and examined the garden. I found footprints leading to a window which had been forced, and closely examined them. Then I went back and measured the arrested man's boots; they corresponded exactly with the footprints. That's my case; what do you think of it?'

"'Well,' I admitted, 'it seems very strong against the suspected man. Still, I cannot understand him drinking wine after committing murder.'

"'Well, you see,' said the inspector, 'one glass is enough to drug a man for hours.'

"'I see,' I replied, 'that alters the case. By-the-bye, does he plead innocent or guilty?'

"'Innocent. He has some faked story about receiving a blow on the head and remembering nothing more.'

"'Ah,' I said, 'you never know in such a case as this what's true or not true; however, we shall see. I should like to have an interview with the arrested man.'

"Fortunately I was allowed to go and examine him, and form my own opinion. I found him an ordinary type of the better class British workman. Somehow the moment I set eyes on him I felt sure he was innocent. I explained who I was to him, and that if he was innocent it would be my endeavour to prove it. He swore that he had no knowledge of the crime, nor of how he entered the room.

"'Well,' I said, 'you must tell me everything you know. I shall possibly be able to arrive at some conclusion.'

"'I know but very little, sir. I was walking along the road in front of the house, when, without a second's warning, I received a severe blow on the head. I remember nothing more.'

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"'Were you quite sober?' I asked.

"'Yes, sir; I had only one pint of beer.'

"'What seems strange to me,' I said, 'is the fact of your footprints right across the garden.'

"'My footprints, sir? What do you mean?'

"I told him that he had been traced over the garden, and he looked rather perplexed; then he looked down at his boots, and blurted out:

"'Sir, someone has taken my boots off and put them on differently.'

"'How?' I said.

"'I tied them in a bow—now they are in a hurried knot. See.' And he held them up for my inspection.

"He was quite right; they were tied in a knot, as he said.

"'Are you sure you tied them differently?' I enquired.

"'Positive. I could swear it in a law court.'

"I put that down in my note-book; it was one point in his favour. Another thing that impressed me was where he could have put the stolen property if he had fallen suddenly after partaking of the drugged wine? The spoil ought to have been in that room. It was not, for I had examined the apartment.

"All this time the man had been silently engaged in thinking, now he said:

"'Look here, sir. In front of the house the grass is rather long. I was walking on it at the time, and when I received the blow I was right in front of the gate. You examine that grass and see if there are any signs of a fall on the grass, or if anyone has been dragged along it, for I feel sure that I was carried from that spot into the house.'

"'I will go and examine it,' I said, much struck by his intelligence; 'and now good-bye for the present, and don't get downhearted.'

"'Good-bye, sir! God bless you!' he cried, and then I left him and went towards the house.

"On the way I met the Inspector, who enquired if I had learnt anything.

"'Yes,' I replied, 'a good deal. I think I can almost prove the arrested man's innocence.'

"He looked rather disappointed, but did not ask for any particulars. I believe he thought I was mad. I reached the front of the house, and carefully searched the grass. Soon I found a place where it looked disarranged, and, getting out my lens, I carefully examined it. Yes, there was the mark of the fallen man. A little farther back was the mark of another man, who had evidently stood there some time. But, search as I would, there were no signs of anyone being dragged along. But stay; I suddenly alighted on a deep footprint, then another, and another right up to the gate, then across the garden, till they ended close by the forced window. Suddenly an idea struck me; the footprints seemed very deep. I made one or two beside them; mine were not nearly so deep. What did this point to? The maker of them had been heavily laden. There could be no doubt of it, the villain had taken off his own shoes and put on those of the arrested man; then he had carried him across the garden and thrown him through the window unconscious, pouring a glass of the drugged wine down his throat; then he had robbed the dead man and departed.

"First: How did he know the wine was drugged?

"Second: How was it there was no signs of his departure?

"Third: How could he carry the valuables away? For I had been informed they were very heavy. In my own mind I had proved one man's innocence; but a harder task lay before me—to prove another's guilt.

"Search as I might, I could find no more traces, and the matter became all the more puzzling. The burglar seemed either to have flown away or to be still in the house. This feeling was augmented later on, when I went to the nearest station and enquired if any strangers had been about. To my surprise, they positively affirmed that I was the only stranger that had come or gone for the last few days. The next station was some ten miles off; it was not likely they would have carried their spoil that distance. When I reached my lodging and thought the matter over, there was only one possible conclusion. The murderer must be still in the village, and some of the stolen property must be still hidden in the house or grounds, and in the evening I determined to watch the house, for there I was convinced lay the key to the mystery.

"About ten o'clock I cautiously crept into the garden and scaled a tree which stood in a direct line with the old man's bedroom. I have been in a few strange positions, but never in such a one as that, before or since. For there I sat, perched in that tree for two mortal hours, in the most uncomfortable of positions, and nothing occurred.

"Presently I saw the light in one of the bottom rooms go out, and soon after the old man himself came up to bed. First he very carefully drew his window curtains together, which shut me out from all view. But I meant to see somehow, and noticing that the ends were left uncovered, I cautiously descended from my perch, and after taking off my boots, began to climb up the creeper which covered the house, and was as thick as a man's wrist in some places.

"My heart beat violently as I neared his window. The stem of the creeper was getting thinner, and one false step might ruin all; but I reached it at last, and by bending under the window had a fine view. The first thing that surprised me was that he had not begun to undress; but a greater was in store, for, after walking across the room and locking the door, he touched a board in the wall—which was of panelled oak—and it came open, revealing a small secret chamber. It might have been Aladdin's cave, for it glittered and shone, even in that pale light. It contained the stolen property!

"What happened during the next few minutes I cannot tell; my brain was too dazed to observe. All I knew was that the old man had the stolen property. When next I looked, he was packing the things into parcels, wrapped in rags and old paper, so that they looked like rubbish. As I watched him I observed that he no longer painfully hobbled about, but rather flew over the floor in his joy. Soon they were all wrapped up, and the secret panel was slid noiselessly into its place. I watched with great interest for the next development, but I am bound to admit that it almost staggered me. The old man fumbled about his beard for some time, when it suddenly fell off, revealing the face of a man about forty; then the wig followed suit, and the metamorphosis was complete. It was a young man in disguise. The mystery was solved. Soon after he extinguished his candle, and I went to my lodgings to ponder over the strange case.

"In the morning we arrested him, to his great surprise; but after having his beard and wig removed, he was too astounded to lie, and confessed his guilt. Needless to say, the suspected man was released at once."

S. P. T.

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A TEST OF LOVE.

At that time I was engaged (and very pleased to be) to a most enigmatical young person. She spoke rarely and in a way always a little mysteriously, making voluntarily secrets of a hundred little actions of life, and loving solitude in an alarming manner.

All this was off-set by eyes so beautiful, by a colouring so marvellous, by an expression so divine, that I had not the courage to reflect on the singularity of her character. I loved her, and I often passed hours of the night sitting before her doorstep, simply dreaming "that she lived here," and meditating on her Presence as does the believer on the Transubstantiation.

I did not know, in the first place, whether she loved me or not; she always refused to answer that question, referring to the wishes of her parents and her confidence in their wisdom. If I insisted, she generally ended by saying "that she knew nothing about it, but that she felt no antipathy towards me, and that, according to her ideas, was enough to decide a young girl on marriage! In vain I supplicated, in vain I tried to animate this enigmatical being; she remained as distant as the manner in which she loved, as unknown as she was dominating.

One evening as I was dreaming a little sadly of these things, alone on the Terrace of the Syrtes, a commotion was heard in the house. I returned to the salon, where everything was in disorder, my hosts were distressed, their friends embarrassed and troubled, and old Madame Desparcs horribly pale and trembling.

"What in the world has happened?" I asked. They explained incoherently that Madame Desparcs' diamonds were stolen—old family diamonds of great value. All the servants had been summoned into an adjoining room, in short a formal search was to be instituted. An old gentleman, Monsieur de la Hestre, had been unanimously selected to direct this investigation, just as I was entering, and his first proposition was that everyone submit, or rather offer himself to be searched. Although the thing was rather offensive, no one protested, and it was decided that, after the servants, each one present should be examined.

To tell the truth, all this seemed of small importance beside my personal cares; and, with several others, I awaited the end of the adventure, while M. de la Hestre, his two witnesses and our host, began the inspection of the domestics.

Very soon I fell again into my meditation, my eyes fixed on the fireplace as though there were a fire, when suddenly I felt a slight touch on my elbow. I raised my head with a start to see my *fiancée* looking at me, most beseechingly. We were alone near the fireside and could talk in low tones without being overheard. She murmured very low:

"If you love me, arrange that they search you first—then try to be near me and, without being seen, try to conceal the object that I shall pass you from behind."

My blood ran cold. This annoying incident became terrible, filling me with the most passionate trouble. I looked at the girl in agony, but forced myself to smile, and whispered:

"It shall be done as you wish!"

My knees trembled, my mouth was dry and hot. The feeling that overwhelmed me was inexpressible. It was a strange mingling of bitterness and pleasure, that my loved one should be weak to such a degree. I forced myself to have a sort of disdainful pity, and in reality love beat ardent, strong, stern in my breast. I understood, in a flash, how beauty could become divine above baseness of soul, how one could respect it even in his honour—and a hundred other things in which were confused, fervent love, devotion without limit, a desire noble and perverse.

Jeanne had thanked me with hardly perceptible movement of the lips; she stood by the wall with an air of indifference and pride!

"They are very long about it!" she said sternly. "M·

In vain I supplicated.

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de la Hestre is a man of method," someone replied. And a silence followed which told more and more on one's nerves, for even the waiting in a peaceful frame of mind finished by disturbing and empting the brain, like a pump. However, the moment arrived when, the searching of the servants ended, the door opened, disclosing our host, the two witnesses, and the old gentleman.

My heart beat furiously; I felt myself become terribly pale; but, concealing my agitation and steadying my voice, I asked to be searched first.

M. de la Hestre smiled at what he considered the whim of a young man, and proceeded methodically to my examination. I blushed, I became pale, without anyone finding that peculiar under the circumstances. When it was over, I made two or three steps backward and I found myself near Jeanne. She lowered her fan and handed me something with a coolness that was only equalled by my calmness in seizing the object and placing it in a pocket of my coat. After which I leant against the fireplace, being now merely a witness and above all suspicion.

M. de la Hestre's search was unproductive of results. There remained nothing to do but to visit all the rooms and then inform the police.

Still my trouble of mind increased as I remained standing by the fireplace. My brain was in a whirl, and I felt the crime weigh on me as though I were indeed the thief!

Jeanne at last came towards me, with that undulating step of hers, and gave me a look of such passionate gratitude that it almost seemed to scorch me. Then in an imperative low tone she said:

"Do you still love me?"

I did not hesitate. I replied firmly:

"Yes."

"In spite of all that I have done?"

"In spite of everything!"

"Will you marry me?"

"I will marry you."

She enveloped me with the same look, still warmer and more lingering. I fully comprehend the power of woman, above all law, human or natural, drawn from the fountain-head and against which nothing ought to prevail.

I felt strangely happy in this equivocal adventure, and I could not throw off this happiness for which I reproached myself and of which I was terribly ashamed.

As I was struggling with these contending emotions, exclamations were heard and I saw M. de la Hestre reappear holding a little box.

"We have the jewels and the guilty one!" he said very calmly.

I had only time to hear this much and to see the livid face of the valet—the guilty one—when I found that Jeanne was gently urging me out into the terrace where the shadows lay thickly. There I felt my head seized with two hands, while two pure lips were pressed to mine, as Jeanne murmured:

"The thief adores you! She has tricked you! To test your love she gave you her own box!"

S. T. L. Tramm.

GILBERT ANSTRUTHER'S REVENGE.

"Confound it!" muttered Commander Robinson, R.N., of H.M.S. *Minerva*. "I believe it's getting thicker," and indeed the fog had now settled down like a wall around the vessel, while the damp, cold, drizzling rain only added to the discomforts of the impenetrable atmosphere.

Suddenly the *Minerva* seemed to give a mighty shudder. The sound of splintering timbers and the agonised wail of human beings in distress rang out into the darkness. In a moment all was confusion. Loud shouts from the cruiser answered the shrieks from the unknown vessel with which she had collided.

But the steel ram had done its deadly work. The inexorable fog shut in the catastrophe. A cry, a confused scurry of awe-struck sailors—and yet another vessel had been claimed by the cruel Fog Fiend.

And with her bows in a shattered condition, the *Minerva* put into the nearest port for repairs.

Ill luck had followed the *Minerva* from the first. On her trial trip she had broken a propeller shaft. A brief space and one of her quick-firers had jammed and killed a marine. And now she had rammed some unfortunate barque beating up Channel in the dense fog.

Dry-docked, it was found that some little time must elapse before she could be again fit for sea.

It was no use for Commander Robinson to rave and storm at the catastrophe. The official enquiry was annoying enough in all conscience. To make his annoyance more, the vessel was to be over-run with convicts, for it so happened that the only labour available at the port was that which Portland could supply—small wonder, then, for the commander's fury.

But he made himself as unpleasant as he could. The goal-birds should be given no chance to make themselves objectionable. A strong guard of marines was posted ashore, and the soldiers were given strict orders to fire should any necessity arise for their so doing.

Thus Private John Jenkins found himself on sentry-go, an interested spectator of the hideously-garbed convicts who sullenly and silently moved about in the occupation of their enforced labour.

A smart, well-set-up young fellow was Private Jenkins. His face, too, seemed strangely refined for a common soldier's. For though he had changed his name he could not eradicate the mark of breeding which was his birthright, and Gilbert Anstruther had at one time had a fairer future before him than that of a private of marines.

It was the old story. He had fallen into bad hands at the outset of his career. Six years ago he had been standing in the dock, charged with forgery. Thank goodness the charge was a false one; thank goodness,

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too, the right man had been brought to book; but Gilbert Anstruther was ruined.

So Harold Delton, his false friend, had gone into penal servitude, and he himself had enlisted into the marines under an assumed name.

Small wonder, then, that as he gazed at the convicts a shudder shook his frame. He might have come to that himself. He pulled himself smartly together and resumed his monotonous march up and down.

A convict was working some yards away from him, who was softly whistling to himself. The tune was "Home, Sweet Home"! Private Jenkins could not see the fellow's face, but the back that was turned towards him was square and straight. "A good figure," thought Jenkins. Suddenly the man turned, and the blood rushed from the marine's face, for in that cruel, dark face he recognised the man who had wrecked his life—Harold Delton.

But the convict's face wore no expression of recognition. He merely stooped again as if to pick up a spade that lay at his feet. "Have you a plug of tobacco?" he muttered eagerly.

Jenkins turned abruptly on his heel, and continued his march. His brain was in a whirl. Delton! He could have killed the fellow—yet he turned again, and, as he passed the man for the second time, pulled out a cake of tobacco, and began to cut it in half.

Then he glanced carelessly at the convict, whose eyes were glittering wolfishly at sight of the longed-for weed. Jenkins hesitated. Then he dropped a portion of his tobacco, and continued his walk.

Delton pounced on the fragment like a hawk! Pah! what a tiny piece it was, and that hulking marine could get as much as he wanted, while he—the sentry again approached him.

Jenkins' fury had given way to a deep exultation. He thought of the last occasion on which he had seen the man, smiling, cool, collected in the crowded court, and now he was a common convict. Triumph had——

"Give me that other piece, or, as I live, I report you!" The words fell on the soldier's ears like a thunderbolt.

Delton's face was more like that of a beast than a human being. For a moment Jenkins was staggered. Could it be that the convict recognised him? But, no, that was impossible. And then hatred of the man took possession of him again. Oh! to be revenged—for it was no revenge to see him as he was now—oh, for some even greater disgrace to fall upon the villain who had cost him so much.

Then, swift as a flash, an idea seized upon the marine. He would lay a trap for his foe, and perhaps luck would favour him.

"In my great-coat pocket in the sentry-box," he said hoarsely, "you will find a large plug of tobacco. Slip in there and take it, only look sharp."

In a moment Delton's face changed its ferocity. He muttered something inarticulate. As the sentry, apparently dismissing the subject from his mind, sauntered on, the convict turned round, and began quietly stealing forward towards the sentry-box.

The marine watched him, however, like a cat. He saw the man reach the box, fumble in the great-coat pocket, and noted the malignant look of joy with which the fellow slipped something into the breast of his coarse shirt; then suddenly the soldier wheeled round.

"Hands up, you blackguard!" he roared, "or I fire!"

With an invective, Delton stopped still and faced his foe.

The sentry's rifle was pointed full at his chest. His face turned an ashen hue beneath its sunburn. Another moment and a couple of warders were upon the convict.

"Hullo!" cried one of them. "295 showing fight?"

"No," answered Jenkins curtly, "but he has been collaring something out of my coat pocket from the sentry-box. You will find it in his shirt! A plug of tobacco, and I expect a two-shilling piece!"

For Jenkins, with commendable astuteness, had remembered the existence in his coat pocket of not only the tobacco but the piece of silver. He had, moreover, correctly gauged the cupidity of the convict. So in spite of Delton's protestations, he was hauled off to the guard-room, and Gilbert Anstruther had revenged himself.

Nor was that all. As the convict was being led away the sentry stepped up to him.

"Delton," he muttered.

The convict caught the word. An oath escaped his lips, and his black eyes flashed out a terrible look of recognition. And that was the last meeting between the two.

E. Le Breton Martin.

Pearson's Magazine.

March, 1897.

CONTENTS:

Photography as a Fine Art, by Levin Carnac. Illustrated with Photographs.

Tales of the High Seas, by Conan Doyle. No. II.—The Two Barques. Illustrated by Warwick Goble.

The Making of the Bible, by H. J. W. Dam. Illustrated with Photographs and Early Manuscripts.

Aghra Gal Mochree, by G. D. Lynch. Illustrated by Hana.

The Most Majestic of Mountains, by George Griffith. Illustrated by E. W. Haslehust.

A Prince of Swindlers, by Guy Boothby. No. II.—How Simon Carne Won the Derby. Illustrated by E. F. Skinner.

The Terrible Trades of Sheffield, by Robert Machray. Illustrated by Warwick Goble.

Wisdom Let Loose, by W. L. Alden. Illustrated by Charles May.

The Divining Rod, by J. Holt Schooling. Illustrated with Photographs and Sketches.

Queen of the Jesters, by Max Pemberton. No. III.—The Purple Glass. Illustrated by H. Piffard.

England's Catacomb, by J. Malcolm Fraser. Illustrated with Photographs.

An Angelus, by Frederic Breton. Illustrated by A. J. Gough.

The Last Hours of a French Criminal, by Tighe Hopkins. Illustrated by E. F. Sherie, from Old Prints.

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Result of the "Telephone" Competition.

In this competition several clever attempts were forwarded, the best of which was devised by Mrs. Thorne, 96, Gilmore Road, Lewisham, S.E., whose conversation will appear next week.

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SHOULD STOUT PERSONS STARVE THEMSELVES?

We are afraid that semi-starvation as a cure for corpulency prevails very much to a dangerous degree. Mr. Archer, the late well-known prominent jockey, was in the habit of going without food for a long stretch in order that he could ride a certain horse at its weight, and there is not much doubt that the debility resulting from this habit of abstemiousness was certainly not conducive to combating the dire attack of fever which was perhaps indirectly responsible for the untimely end, in the zenith of his fame, of this unfortunate but accomplished horseman. Even Mary Jane in the kitchen will eat sparingly of the food allowed her, while she will seek to reduce her fat by copious draughts from the vinegar cruet, and succeeds only in injuring the coats of her stomach—the forerunner of dyspeptic trouble which will be difficult to overcome. The Continental medicos seem to advocate this great reduction of ordinary foods, but one of these savants suggests that the stout person should eat considerably of fatty meats, in order that the appetite be appeased, and consequently less food required, so that practically this is indirectly advocating semi-starvation. On the other hand, Mr. Russell, the British specialist, takes a different course. He says: "Eat as much as you like," and as it is an acknowledged fact that under his treatment persons lose from 2lb. to 12lb. per week, it beyond doubt stands out pre-eminent against those so-called starvation cures "made in Germany." Some claim that Mr. Russell has to insist upon his patients drinking hot water every morning; but, on the contrary, he avers that it is dangerous to do so, and has, of course, never advised it. No; the success of Mr. Russell's treatment is incomparably beyond other specialists, for he resorts to no stringent dietary, and simply prescribes a harmless vegetable tonic combination which is the outcome of years of study and botanical research. We advise all those interested in this question to get this book, the price of which is only twopence. It is entitled "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages), and is published by him at Woburn House, Store Street, London, W.C. It can be had direct.—*Ilfracombe Gazette and Observer*, January 12th, 1897.

IS OBESITY THE RESULT OF RICH DIET.

Fat begins to accumulate as soon as the system has attained its full development, and will go on increasing, if not checked, until the decline of life; then it ought again to decrease. Independently of the importance of fat as a non-conducting substance in impeding the too rapid escape of animal heat, it may be regarded as a store of material to compensate for waste of tissue under sickness or other circumstances entailing temporary absence from food. Most writers consider that obesity is promoted by a rich dietary, corporeal inactivity, tranquility of mind, etc.; and, although admitting these to be conducive to the formation of fat, "I am of opinion," writes Mr. F. C. Russell, the eminent specialist on "Corpulency and the Cure," which is the title of a book (256 pages) now going through the Press with the eighteenth edition, "that obesity arising from such causes solely is comparatively rare. There is a diseased state of the system which, independently of all these influences, will increase the production and deposition of fat." We are of this gentleman's opinion. Mr. Russell, however, does not leave his readers who suffer from obesity "in the lurch," for he prescribes a remedy, and a most effectual one, too, consisting solely of herbs which do not contain a particle of any deleterious ingredient, and yet he can reduce a person's weight from 2lb. to even 10lb. a week, without having to swallow nauseous physic or resort to drastic measures. This successful combination of vegetable extracts was not obtained without considerable research and painstaking investigation. It is rather pleasant to take. Three small doses will in many instances reduce from 11b. to 3lb. in the short space of twenty-four hours. However, the cost of the book is only two stamps, and can be obtained direct from Mr. Russell, Woburn House, 27, Store Street, London, W.C. There are matters highly interesting to stout persons to be gleaned from his book, also hundreds of letters (reprinted) from persons describing the particulars and various fluctuating weights after taking so much of the compound. These are not the ordinary stereotyped sort of quack testimonials, but really from intelligent persons who certify to the extraordinary results of the medicine, in many cases to invite public attention to the marked effects demonstrated.—*Montrose Review*, January 8th, 1897.

A POSITIVE REMEDY FOR CORPULENCE.

Any remedy that can be suggested as a cure or alleviation for stoutness will be heartily welcomed. There has recently been issued a well-written book, the author of which seems to know what he is talking about. It is entitled "Corpulency and the Cure" (256 pages) and is a cheap issue (only twopence) published by Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. It appears that Mr. Russell has submitted all kinds of proofs to the English Press. The editor of the *Tablet*, the Catholic organ, writes: "Mr. Russell does not give us the slightest loophole for a doubt as to the value of his cure, for in the most straightforward and matter-of-fact manner he submitted some hundreds of original and unsolicited testimonial letters for our perusal, and offered us plenty more if required. To assist him to make this remedy known, we think we cannot do better than publish quotations from some of the letters submitted. The first one, a marchioness, writes from Madrid: 'My son, Count ——, has reduced his weight in twenty-two days 16 kilos=*i.e.*, 34lb.' Another writes: 'So far (six weeks from the commencement of following your system) I have lost fully two stone in weight.' The next (a lady) writes: 'I am just half the size.' A fourth: 'I find it is successful in my case. I have lost 8lb. in weight since I commenced (two weeks).' Another writes: 'A reduction of 18lb. in a month is a great success.' A lady from Bournemouth writes: 'I feel much better, have less difficulty in breathing, and can walk about.' Again, a lady says: 'It reduced me considerably, not only in body, but all over.'" The author is very positive. He says: "Step on a weighing machine on Monday morning, and again on Tuesday, and I guarantee that you have lost 2lb. in weight without the slighest harm, and vast improvements in health through ridding the system of unhealthy accumulations."—*Cork Herald.*

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Answers to Correspondents.

I wish here to call the special attention of readers to the series of stories now appearing in *S.S.* under the general heading: "Deeds that Won the Empire." The statements made in these narratives are historically correct, and, in view of this fact, surely no more stirring reading matter could well be found. I should count it a great favour on your part if you called the attention of at least one friend to their publication.

Seaman.—The flags to be hoisted at one time in signalling at sea never exceed four. It is an interesting arithmetical fact that, with eighteen various coloured flags, and never more than four at a time, no fewer than 78,642 signals can be given.

J. S.—Leave your nose alone. If Nature intended it to be broad and fleshy at the point, do not attempt to make it otherwise. Nothing can be gained by meddling with your physiognomy.

Jeweller.—Provided that you can produce evidence of the regular and previous purchase of the current and two previous weeks' issue of *P.W.*, there is no reason why you should not purchase your copies from a bookstall every week.

R. N. and Minnie.—You will possibly be able to obtain particulars of the Canadian North-Western Mounted Constabulary from the office of the Canadian Government, 17, Victoria Street, Westminster, and particulars of emigration from the Emigrants' Information Bureau, 31, Broadway, Westminster.

Nicotine.—I agree with you that in many instances it is a very unwise thing for a physician to insist upon a patient abstaining from smoking with a jerk, as it were. At the same time, in your case it may be absolutely necessary; but if you have no faith in your medical adviser, of course you had better try someone else.

J. P. L. appears to be subject to most curious dreams. Whenever he goes to sleep and dreams at all, the picture that presents itself to his mental vision takes the form of his body in a dying condition. Amongst many other things, he has been shot in battle, has broken his neck by tumbling off a bicycle, has fallen off a four-hundred feet chimney, has tobogganed down the stairs, and has got entangled in the paddle-wheels of a steamer, and he always wakes up at the moment of his death. He is getting very morbid about it, and altogether the young man is in continual dread of meeting with an untimely end. Consequently, he takes all sorts of stimulants to prevent sleep, with the result that his health is giving way.——In this respect you are not alone. The mere fact of your dwelling upon the incidents—at the moment of falling asleep—is conducive to a repetition. There are no grounds for believing that any significance can be attached to the experience. There is no necessity here to go into details with regard to the psychological phenomena known as dreams, but you may take it for granted that they have no bearing whatever upon future events. If one dreams of a tom-cat and one's friend or lover is afterwards discovered in some act of treachery, the person dreaming immediately jumps to the conclusion that the fact of having dreamt of a tom-cat brings about this most unpleasant result. There is no more truth in this than there is in the fact that the moon has an effect upon the weather.

Joshua.—*Short Stories* is printed much more slowly than *P.W.*, owing to the care needed in reproducing the illustrations.

Grampus.—Elephants were last used in battle in 1601. This is not taking into consideration their employment by the British in India at the present time.

Flipper.—Your suggestion is an excellent one—very excellent, in view of the fact that it was adopted in *P.W.* four years ago.

E. J. (Ravenscourt Park).—Thanks for conundrum. I have an idea, though, I have seen it somewhere before.

C. B.—I regret that it is impossible for me to answer your enquiry, as it is of a legal tendency, and I never give advice on subjects of this description.

Anent a recipe which appeared a week or so ago in *Short Stories*, U. R. C. writes: "For chilblains on the hands and feet, there is a most excellent recipe from the pen of a celebrated Parisian doctor, which will be found to succeed after a few applications: Take a piece of alum about the size of a nut, and melt it in enough hot water to cover the hands. When the alum is melted, soak your hands in the liquid for nearly a quarter of an hour, then cover them at once with gloves, which you keep on all night, and as long as you can during the day. The feet should be treated in a similar way to the hands, drawing on thin cotton stockings over them.

Farmer.—It is estimated that twenty-two acres of land are necessary to sustain one man on fresh meat. The same space of land if devoted to wheat culture would feed forty-two persons; if to oats, eighty-eight; potatoes, Indian corn, and rice, one hundred and seventy-six, and if to the plantain or bread tree, over six hundred people.

The Shadder.—The summary has two uses: it enables a new reader to pick up the thread of the story, and, at the same time, refreshes the memory of the regular reader. Glad you like the "S.-H." so much.

E. J. (Upper Norwood).—Thanks for the suggestion. For several reasons, however, it cannot be carried out.

Constant Subscriber.—You will find a lot of pretty serviette designs in the early numbers of *Home Cookery*. The excursions to the Continent will be commenced in connection with *P.W.* very shortly.

P. N.—The railways of the world carry forty millions of people weekly.

H. T. L.—Yes. British warships are always fitted with lightning conductors.

S. P.—So far as I know, the front heading of *Short Stories* will be changed every week. There will be no more Jumbled Stories.

H. L.—You can put a fine gloss on glass by rubbing it with a piece of newspaper.

Hero Worship.—Your remarks on the Nansen "boom" cover the opinions of many of my readers. Nansen is the author of several works of travel and scientific research, all of which, with other Nansen literature, may be had through any bookseller. As to the relative merits of "Darkest Africa" and "Farthest North," my opinion is that Nansen's work will prove the more popular. Of course, the price of the work is heavy, and many people who might purchase it if issued at a fourth of the price are prevented from so doing. There are the libraries, however, for you, and I may add that if you write the Glebe Sugar Company, 86, Wilson Street, Glasgow, they will inform you of an inexpensive way in which you may obtain from them a reading of "Farthest North."

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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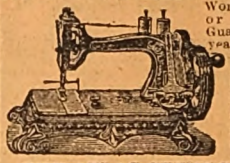

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Yours faithfully
Leonard Caselton

Now, it should be remembered that the man or woman with the strongest nervous system wins in the battle of life, for the nervous system controls and directs all the powers of a vigorous existence. This being the case, the duty of all is to strengthen this controlling power, and it has been proved by the experience of Mr. Caselton that nothing has been so effective in doing this as Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa.

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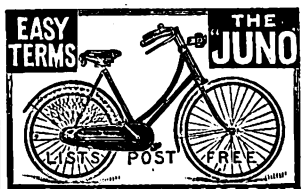

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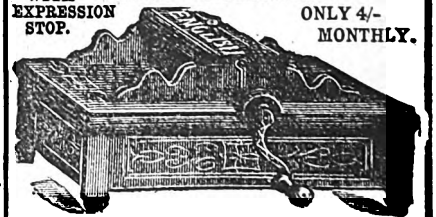

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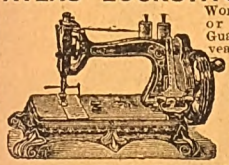

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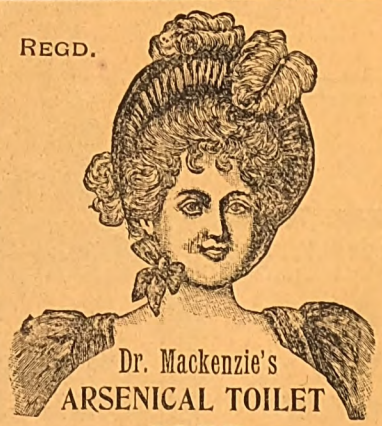

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON

No. 429.] For the week ending March 20th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

DEEDS THAT WON THE EMPIRE.

III.—THE GREAT LORD HAWKE.

"THE great Lord Hawke" is Burke's phrase, and is one of the best-earnt epithets in literature. Yet what does the average Englishman to-day remember of the great sailor who, through the bitter November gales of 1759, kept dogged and tireless watch over the French fleet in Brest, destroyed that fleet with heroic daring amongst the sands of Quiberon—while the fury of a Bay of Biscay tempest almost drowned the roar of his guns—and so crushed a threatened invasion of England?

Hawke has been thrown by all devouring Time into his wallet as mere "alms for oblivion," yet amongst all the sea-dogs who ever sailed beneath "the blood-red flag," no one ever less deserved that fate.

Campbell, in "Ye Mariners of England," groups "Blake and mighty Nelson" together as the two great typical English sailors. Hawke stands midway between them, in point both of time and achievements, though he had more in him of Blake than had Nelson.

He lacked, no doubt, the dazzling electric strain that ran through the warlike genius of Nelson. Hawke's fighting quality was of the grim, dour, home-spun character; but he was a true genius for battle. And as long as Great Britain is a sea-power the memory of the great sailor who crushed Conflans off Quiberon deserves to live.

Hawke, too, was a great man in the age of little men. The fame of the English navy had sunk to the lowest point. Its ships were rotten; its captains had lost their fighting tradition; its fleets were paralysed by a childish system of tactics which made a decisive battle almost impossible.

Hawke describes the *Portland*, a ship of which he was in command, as "iron-sick"; the wood was too rotten, that is, to hold the iron bolts, so that "not a man in the ship had a dry place to sleep in." His men were "tumbling down with scurvy"; his mainmast was so pulverised by dry-rot that a walking stick could be thrust into it.

Of another ship, the *Ramilies*—his favourite ship, too—he says: "It became water-logged whenever it blowed hard." The ships' bottoms grew a rank crop of grass, slime, shells, barnacles, etc., till the sluggish vessels needed almost a gale to move them. Marines were not yet invented; the navy had no uniform.

The French ships of that day were better built, better armed, and sometimes better fought than British ships. A British 70-gun ship in armament and weight of fire was only equal to a French ship of 52 guns. Every considerable fight was followed by a rank crop of court-martials, in which captains were tried for misconduct before the enemy, such as to-day is inconceivable.

Admiral Matthews was broken by court-martial for having with an excess of daring pierced the French line off Toulon, and thus sacrificed pedantic tactics to victory. But the list of court-martials held during the second quarter of the 18th century on British captains for beginning to fight too late, or for leaving off too soon, would, if published, astonish this generation.

After the fight off Toulon in 1744, two admirals and six post-captains were court-martialled. Admiral Byng was shot on his own deck, not exactly as Voltaire's *mot* describes it, *pour encourager les autres*, and not quite for cowardice, for Byng was no coward. But he had no gleam of unselfish patriotic fire, and nothing of the gallant fighting impulse we have learnt to believe is characteristic of the British sailor.

He lost Minorca and disgraced the British flag because he was too dainty to face the stern discomforts of a fight. The corrupt and ignoble temper of English politics—the legacy of Walpole's evil *régime*—poisoned the blood of the navy. No one can have forgotten Macaulay's picture of Newcastle, at that moment Prime Minister of England; the sly, greedy, fawning politician, as corrupt as Walpole, without his genius, without honour, without truth, who loved office only less than he loved his own neck. A

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Prime Minister like Newcastle made possible an admiral like Byng.

Horace Walpole tells the story of how, when the much enduring British public broke into one of its rare but terrible fits of passion after the disgrace of Minorca, and Newcastle was trembling for his own head, a deputation from the city of London waited upon him, demanding that Byng should be put upon his trial.

"Oh, indeed," replied Newcastle with fawning gestures, "he shall be tried immediately. He shall be hanged directly."

It was an age of base men, and the navy—neglected, starved, dishonoured—had lost the great traditions of the past, and did not yet feel the thrill of the nobler spirit soon to sweep over it.

But in 1759 the dazzling intellect and masterful will of the first Pitt controlled the fortunes of England, and the spirit of the nation was beginning to awake. Burns and Wilberforce and the younger Pitt were born that year; Minden was fought; Wolfe saw with dying eyes the French battalions broken on the plains of Abraham and Canada won. But the great event of the year is Hawke's defeat of Conflans off Quiberon.

Hawke was the son of a barrister; he entered the navy at fourteen years of age as a volunteer, was a third lieutenant at twenty-four, and became captain at thirty.

He knew the details of his profession as well as any sea-dog of the forecastle; was quite modern in the keen and humane interest he took in his men; had something of Wellington's high-minded allegiance to duty; while his fighting had a stern but sober thoroughness worthy of Cromwell's Ironsides.

The British people came to realise that he was a sailor with the strain of a bulldog in him, an indomitable fighter, who, ordered to blockade a hostile port, would hang on, in spite of storms and scurvy, while he had a man who could pull a rope or fire a gun; a fighter, too, of the type dear to the British imagination, who took the shortest course to the enemy's line, and would exchange broadsides at pistol-shot distance while his ship floated.

In 1759 a great French army threatened the shores of England. At Havre and Dunkirk huge flotillas of flat-bottomed boats lay at their moorings; 18,000 French veterans were ready to embark. A great fleet, under the command of Conflans—one of the ablest seamen France has ever produced—was gathered at Brest. A French squadron was to break out of Toulon, join Conflans, sweep the narrow seas, and convey the French expedition to English shores. The strategy, if it had succeeded, might have changed the fate of the world.

To Hawke was entrusted the task of blockading Conflans in Brest, and a greater feat of seamanship is not to be found in British records. The French fleet consisted of twenty-five ships, manned by 15,200 men, and carrying 1,598 guns. The British fleet numbered twenty-three ships, with 13,295 men, and carrying 1,596 guns. The two fleets, that is, were nearly equal, the advantage, on the whole, being on the side of the French.

Hawke, therefore, had to blockade a fleet equal to his own, the French ships lying snugly in harbour, the English ships scourged by November gales and rolling in the huge seas of the Bay of Biscay.

Sir Cloudesley Shovel, himself a seaman of the highest quality, said that "an admiral would deserve to be broke who kept great ships out after the end of September, and to be shot if after October." Hawke maintained his blockade of Brest for six months. His captains broke down in health, his men were dying from scurvy, the bottoms of his ships grew foul; it was a stormy season in the stormiest of seas.

Again and again the wild north-west gales blew the British admiral off his cruising ground. But he fought his way back, sent his ships, singly or in couples, to Torbay or Plymouth for a moment's breathing space, but himself held on, with a grim courage and unslumbering vigilance which have never been surpassed. On November 6th a tremendous westerly gale swept over the English cruising-ground. Hawke battled with it for three days and then ran, storm-driven and half-dismantled, to Torbay for shelter on the 10th.

He put to sea again on the 12th. The gale had veered round to the S.W., but blew as furiously as ever, and Hawke was once more driven back on the 13th to Torbay. He struggled out again on the 14th, to find that the French had escaped! The gale that blew Hawke from his post, brought a French Squadron down the Channel, which ran into Brest and joined Conflans there; and on the 14th, when Hawke was desperately fighting his way back to his post, Conflans put to sea, and, with the gale behind him, ran on his course to Quiberon.

There he hoped to brush aside the squadron keeping guard over the French transports, embark the powerful French force assembled there, and sweep down on the English coast. The wild weather, Conflans reckoned, would keep Hawke storm-bound in Torbay till this scheme was carried out.

But Hawke with his whole fleet, fighting his way in the teeth of the gale, reached Ushant on the very day Conflans broke out of Brest, and, fast as the French fleet ran before the gale, the white sails of Hawke's ships, showing over the stormy rim of the horizon, came on the Frenchman's track.

Hawke's frigates, outrunning those heavy sea-waggons, his line-of-battle-ships, hung on Conflans' rear. The main body of the British fleet followed, staggering under their pyramids of sails, with wet decks and the wild north-west gale on their quarter. Hawke's best sailers gained steadily on the laggards of Conflans' fleet. Had Hawke obeyed the puerile tactics of his day he would have dressed his line and refused to attack at all unless he could bring his fleet into action. But, as Hawke himself said afterwards, he "had determined to attack them in the old way and make downright work of them," and he signalled his leading ships to attack the moment they brought an enemy's ship within fire. Conflans could not abandon his slower ships, and he reluctantly swung round his van and formed line to meet the attack.

As the main body of the English came up, the French admiral suddenly adopted a strategy which might well have baffled a less daring adversary than Hawke. He ran boldly in shore towards the mouth of the Vilaine. It was a wild stretch of most dangerous coast; the granite Breton hills above splinters of rocky islets, on which the huge sea rollers tore themselves into white foam below; and, more dangerous still, and stretching far out to sea, wide reaches of shoal and quicksand.

From the north-west the gale blew more wildly than ever; the sky was black with flying clouds; on the Breton hills the spectators clustered in thousands. The roar of the furious breakers and the shrill note of the gale filled the very air with tumult. Conflans had pilots familiar with the coast, yet it was bold seamanship on his part to run down to a lee shore on such a day of tempest.

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Hawke had no pilots and no charts; but he saw before him, half hidden in mist and spray, the great hulls of the ships over which he had kept watch so long in Brest harbour; and he anticipated Nelson's strategy forty-years afterwards.

"Where there is room for the enemy to swing," said Nelson, "there is room for me to anchor."

"Where there is a passage for the enemy," urged Hawke, "there is a passage for me. Where a Frenchman can sail, an Englishman can follow. Their pilots shall be ours. If they go to pieces in the shoals they will serve as beacons for us."

And so, on that wild November afternoon, with the great billows that the Bay of Biscay hurls on that stretch of ironbound coast riding shoreward in league-long rollers, Hawke flung himself into the boiling cauldron of rocks and shoals and quicksand. No more daring deed was ever done at sea.

Measured by mere fighting courage there were thousands of men in the British fleet as brave as Hawke. But the iron nerve that, without an instant's pause, in a scene so wild, on a shore so perilous, and a sea sown so thickly with unknown dangers, flung a whole fleet into battle was probably possessed by no man but Hawke amongst the 30,000 sailors who fought at Quiberon.

The fight, taking all its incidents into account, is perhaps as dramatic as anything known in the history of war. The British ships came rolling on, grim and silent, throwing huge sheets of spray from their bluff bows.

An 80-ton French ship, *Le Formidable*, lay in their track; and each huge British liner, as it swept past to attack the main body of the French, vomited on the unfortunate *Le Formidable* a dreadful broadside! And upon each British ship, in turn, as it rolled past in spray and flame, the gallant Frenchman flung an answering broadside! Soon the thunder of the guns deepened, as ship after ship found its antagonist.

The short November day was already darkening; the thunder of surf and of tempest answered in yet wilder notes the deep-throated guns, the wildly-rolling fleets offered one of the strangest sights the sea has ever witnessed.

The green waters rushed through, quenched the fire of the guns, and swept the sailors from their quarters.

Soon Hawke himself, in the *Royal George* of 100 guns, came on, stern and majestic, seeking some fitting antagonist. This was the great ship that afterwards sank ignobly at its anchorage at Spithead, with twice "four hundred men," a tale which, for every British boy, is made famous in Cowper's immortal ballad. But what an image of terror and of battle the *Royal George* seemed, as in the bitter November storm she bore down on the French fleet.

Hawke disdained meaner foes, and bade his pilot lay him alongside Conflans' flagship, *Le Soliel Royal*. Shoals were foaming on every side, and the pilot warned Hawke he could not carry the *Royal George* further without risking the ship.

"You have done your duty," said Hawke, "in pointing out the risk; and now lay me alongside *Le Soliel Royal*."

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A French 70-gun ship, *La Superbe*, threw itself betwixt Hawke and Conflans. Slowly the huge mass of the *Royal George* bore up, so as to bring its broadside to bear on *La Superbe*, and then the English guns broke into a tempest of flame. Through the spray and mist the masts of the unfortunate Frenchman seemed to tumble; a tempest of cries was heard; the British sailors ran back their guns to reload.

A sudden gust cleared the atmosphere, and *La Superbe* had vanished! Her topmasts gleamed wet for a moment through the green seas, but, with her crew of 650 men, she had sunk, as though crushed by a thunderbolt, beneath a single broadside from the *Royal George*.

Then from the nearer hills, the crowds of French spectators saw Hawke's blue flag and Conflans' white pennon approach each other, and the two great ships, with slanting decks and fluttering canvas, and rigging blown to leeward, began their fierce duel. Other French ships crowded to their admiral's aid, and at one time no fewer than seven French line-of-battle ships were pouring their fire into the mighty and shot-torn hulk of the *Royal George*.

Howe, in the *Magnamine*, was engaged in fierce conflict meanwhile with the *Thesée*, when a sister English ship, the *Montague*, was flung by a huge sea on the quarter of Howe's ship, and practically disabled it. The *Torbay*, under Captain Keppel, took Howe's place with the *Thesée*, and both ships had their lower deck ports open, so as to fight with their heaviest guns. The unfortunate Frenchman rolled to a great sea; the wide-open ports dipped, the green water rushed through, quenched the fire of the guns, and swept the sailors from their quarters. The great ship shivered, rolled over still more wildly, and then, with 700 men, went down like a stone! The British ship, with better luck and better seamanship, got its ports closed, and was saved.

Several French ships by this time had struck, but the sea was too wild to allow them to be taken possession of. Night was falling fast; the roar of the tempest still deepened, and seven huge French liners, throwing their guns overboard, ran for shelter across the bar of the Vilaine, the pursuing English following them almost within reach of the spray flung from the rocks. Hawke, then, by signals, brought his fleet to anchor for the night under the lee of the island of Dumat.

It was a wild night, filled with the thunder of the surf and the shriek of the gale, and all through it, as the English ships rode, madly straining at their anchors, they could hear the sounds of distress guns.

One of the ships that perished that night was a fine English seventy-four, the *Resolution*.

The morning broke as wild as the night. To leeward two great line-of-battle ships could be seen on the rocks; but in the very midst of the English fleet, its masts gone, its hull battered with shot, was the flagship of Conflans—*Le Soleil Royal*.

In the darkness and tempest of the night the unfortunate Frenchman, all unwitting, had anchored in the very midst of his foes. As soon as through the grey and misty light of the November dawn the English ships were discovered, Conflans cut his cable and drifted ashore.

The *Essex* was ordered to pursue her, and her captain, an impetuous Irishman, obeyed his orders so literally that he, too, ran ashore, and the *Essex* became a total wreck.

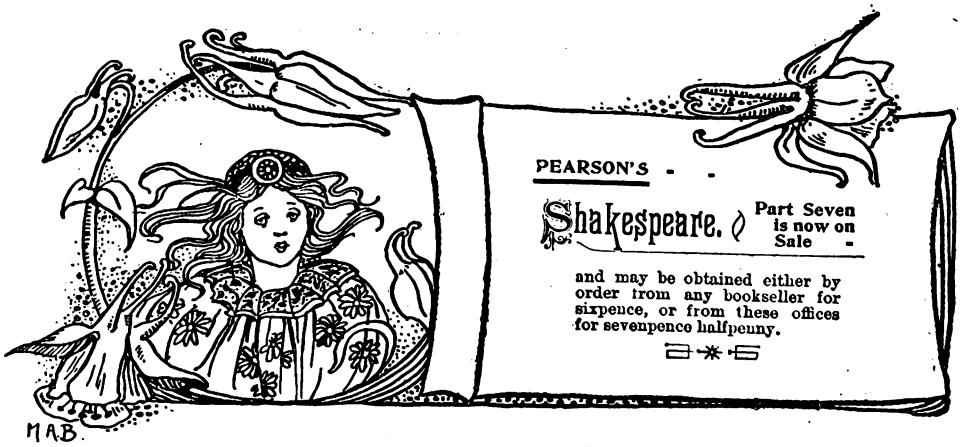
"When I consider," Hawke wrote to the Admiralty, "the season of the year, the hard gales on the day of action, a flying enemy, the shortness of the day, and the coasts they were on, I can boldly affirm that all that could possibly be done has been done."

History confirms that judgment. There is no other record of a great sea-fight fought under conditions so wild, and scarcely any other sea-battle has achieved results more decisive.

Trafalgar itself scarcely exceeds it in the quality of effectiveness. Quiberon saved England from invasion. It destroyed for the moment the naval power of France. Its political results in France cannot be described here, but they were of the first importance.

The victory gave a new complexion to English naval warfare. Rodney and Howe were Hawke's pupils; Nelson himself, who was a post-captain when Hawke died, learnt his tactics in Hawke's school. No sailor ever served England better than Hawke.

And yet, such is the irony of human affairs, that on the very day when Hawke was adding the thunder of his guns to the diapason of surf tempest off Quiberon, and crushing the fleet that threatened England with invasion, a London mob was burning his effigy for having allowed the French to escape his blockade.



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A GAME OF BLIND MAN'S BUFF.

"What creatures they are—those women! A glance of an eye, a chance touch of a soft little hand, a little ear peering out beneath shining bands of brown hair, a twinkling mouse of a foot in its satin slipper, and it's all over with a man. But, if he just chance to get a kiss in the dark, he's lost for ever, carried off by enchantment."

"Hush, Jean!" here up spoke the pretty little lady sitting opposite Mr. Laroque, at his own table, Mrs. Laroque by name; and a blush that made her prettier and more piquant than ever crimsoned her somewhat pale cheeks, and even the pearly tips of her ears that just showed themselves beneath "shining bands of brown hair."

"It is true, is it not, *m'amie?*" persisted Mr. Laroque laughing at the pretty threat of that upraised finger. "Here's Besnon, almost bursting with curiosity to know how I, Jean Laroque, six months ago, when he went to Paris a sworn bachelor and *bon camarade*, should have been entrapped, bewitched, inveigled by the arts of an enchantress, and transformed into a sober husband and master of a household. I must tell him, *petite*, and if you would not listen you must run away."

"I found there was a large party."

With a defiant shake of the little hand, and a pout of the red lips that only made them more tempting, Mrs. Laroque rose from the table. As her husband held the door for her to pass, he said: "It will be told when thou hast prepared for the opera. Adorn thyself, *ma belle*, and in one little half hour return to us magnificent and ravishing."

A wealthy bachelor, of quiet habits, and, unlike the majority of his countrymen, shrinking from society, Mr. Laroque was quite the last man I had expected to find, on my return from a half-year's sojourn in France, married and settled in a handsome but unostentatious household. Where had he found this beautiful, piquant, dark-haired girl of twenty, who presided so gracefully at his table, and was evidently very much in love with her shy, stately, middle-aged husband?

This was just what he was about to tell me. Mr. Laroque, having been resident in England since his boyhood, spoke good idiomatic English, with only a slight accent, interspersing his conversation usually, however, with a good many French words. As these are far from being essential to the narrative, we will not record them.

"Tom Hungerford—you know Tom?" he began, "spent a month with me a year ago last autumn, at my little place at the north, where I go always for the shooting; and in return he exacted from me a promise that I would go down with him to his father-in-law's house in the country, for the Christmas holidays.

"'Only a family party,' said Tom, and I was foolish enough to take him in a literal sense. I knew Tom's wife, and had been introduced to that wonderful boy of his that transcends all other children, and I fancied I was to meet just them and the papa and mamma. I thought I might endure that for a few days, especially as Mrs. Tom Hungerford is only a pretty statue, and never annoys one with small talk.

"Fancy my astonishment, then, when I found there was a large party—Mrs. Tom's married sister and husband, and her married brothers and their wives, and a host of babies and nurses, and—ah, what was worst of all!—a half score of girls. Think, my friend, of that! Jean Laroque, bachelor and woman-hater, trapped and imprisoned in a country house, with at least ten girls with bewildering eyes, and curls, and voices, and hats and dresses, all levelled at me because I was the only single man of the party, excepting always a lad of sixteen who was brother or cousin to every one of them.

"We arrived on Christmas eve, and as I took Mrs. Sheldon, Mrs. Tom's mamma, in to dinner, and talked politics with the Judge all the evening, I managed to survive the hours pretty well. Next day we all went to church, I still in attendance on Mrs. Sheldon, who was a little old lady, very grand and stately, like the picture of a *marquise* of the *ancien régime*. Afterwards came a long walk with Tom, then dinner, and I had been twenty-four hours in the house without speaking to a girl. Of course there had been a general introduction the previous evening, but to have saved my life I could not have told the name of one of them.

"But in the evening we must needs have games for the children, so they said, and blind man's buff among other things. I soon found that I was not able to escape my share of it.

"I give you my word, I could not see a particle, except

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a glimpse straight downward of my chin and the side of my nose. I had been blind-folded carefully by the aid of two or three pairs of hands, and then twirled three times round, and set off on my journey by a push.

"Here was a dreadful embarrassment—blind—yes, blinded with a handkerchief—and set to catch somebody—one of those girls, or a married sister or aunt, who could tell? and oh! fearful task! to tell the name or kiss the one I should catch.

"That was the penalty of being introduced as Tom's friend. 'We are quite a family party,' they said; 'we will not make a stranger of Mr. Laroque.' And so I must be blindfolded and set to catch somebody; and if I could not guess who I had caught—and how could I where all were strangers?—I was to pay the forfeit of a kiss.

"I knew most of the names, but it was quite impossible that I should identify the individuals to whom they belonged, even with the help of my eyes. How then was I to do it by the touch alone? The kiss was already a foregone conclusion.

"I groped about with little alacrity, and of course caught nobody—just what I had intended. Garments rustled near, and even brushed me as their wearers leisurely moved out of my way. I had only to reach out my hands to catch some of these languid beauties, but I knew very well what must follow, and had not courage for the feat. If only the children had not been sent to bed, I would have brought that fact to an end very soon! I did not see then how right it was that I had not been drawn into the game while they stayed.

"Presently they seemed to read my thoughts, or perhaps Tom Hungerford gave them a hint, for they—those girls, I mean—began to inflict intolerable abuse upon me. They pinched my arms, they pulled my hair and my coat, and then, hoydans that they were, ran away tittering and jeering.

"'It was quite time to end this,' I said, for I was aroused to retaliation. The catching and, and—which was to follow—should soon be over. Suddenly I began to dart about, and the fluttering and musical little screams increased. There was frantic haste, and sundry crashes and collisions that convinced me that the 'play' had become extremely earnest.

"Looking straight downward I could sometimes catch a glance of a stooping figure gliding past me; but presently I lost the power of seeing even so little. I was groping in a narrow passage, for my hands touched the wall on either side, and probably a dark one. Before me I could hear a soft rustle of garments, and a low hurried breathing. Probably one of my tormentors was hidden there, and could not make her escape. If so the game was nearly ended.

"Pressing forward, as I expected, my hands soon came in contact with the head of a crouching figure drawn closely into a corner.

"I felt smooth strands of hair, a little wreath or bunch of ribands, a warm, satin-like cheek. The hair might have belonged to any of the younger ladies, with the exception of two or three who wore ringlets, and their cheeks were all round and smooth with health. Of course, I could not guess who this was.

"If she would only speak; I knew the voice of Tom Hungerford's wife, and it might be she. But not a sound issued from her lips—the figure trembled violently and breathed hurriedly, but gave no other sign of life.

"'Rise up, mademoiselle,' I said at last. 'Tell your name, and then I shall announce it, and go away at once.' I thought I had hit on a brilliant expedient, and the lady, rising, seemed about to give me the required explanation, when with a great shout, three or four persons entered the other end of the passage.

"'Mr. Laroque has caught someone,' I heard them say. 'Who is it? Tell us whom you have caught!'

"'Yes, Laroque,' shouted Tom, 'give us the name, or honestly pay the forfeit.'

"'Speak,' I whispered to the lady whose arm I held, but, trembling, she remained silent.

"'Indeed, I cannot tell,' I said, and then another great shout rose from rosy lips. I was angry and desperate. I drew the slight figure towards me. I tore the handkerchief from my face, and, bending down, I pressed a resounding kiss upon a pair of lips that pouted with annoyance as their owner struggled to release herself.

"There was another shout, but I was scarcely conscious of it. In my own country I have dark, rare wines which seem to send an electric thrill, as of new and abundant life, through my veins. In effect like this, but a thousand times more intoxicating, was the draught I had just tasted. Elate, triumphant, yet half giddy under the new exhilaration I experienced, I advanced towards the group that thronged the entrance to the drawing-room. I had drawn within my arm the hand of the lady I had caught and—but no matter. I was recalled to myself by the sound of angry voices, and by feeling the little figure trembling and swaying by my side.

"'Go to your room at once, Miss Ray,' old Mrs. Sheldon was saying, while angry exclamations burst from the lips of the younger ladies—'astonishing assurance!' 'such impertinence!' 'prowling in the passage on purpose!'—all directed apparently to the little creature I was supporting.

"Before I could find words to express my surprise at a scene I was far from comprehending, Miss Ray had quietly withdrawn from my arm. Facing the group that frowned upon her, she spoke with spirit, though with a piteous tremour in her sweet, clear voice.

"'Indeed, Mrs. Sheldon and ladies, I assure you I had no intention of committing an impertinence. I came down to speak to Mrs. Charles Sheldon about Bella, who is very restless and feverish. While I was endeavouring to attract Mrs. Sheldon's attention this gentleman came out, I moved back, but he followed me up the passage, and I could not escape. For what has passed further, I am not responsible.'

"'Indeed, madam, she is not,' I found voice to say. 'I caught her fairly, and was, of course, unable to name a lady I had never seen. If, however, in my ignorance of your customs, I have done wrong, I trust to be pardoned by all present, especially by this lady, who, it seems to me, has been the greatest sufferer.'

"'No pardon is required by you, Mr. Laroque,' replied Mrs. Sheldon coldly; and she added, return to your room, Miss Ray, and if you want anything in future, please ring or send Miss Bella's nurse.'

"Miss Ray bent her head and turned away in silence. I gave her my hand to lead her to the stairs, but she declined it with thanks, and I heard a low sob as she went wearily up the long flight.

"'I beg you will forget the impertinence of that girl,' said Mrs. Hungerford, as we all returned to the drawing-room. 'She is my sister's nursery governess, and though generally well-behaved has probably enough of the curiosity of her class to lead her to intrude here. I hope Sarah will dismiss her at once. Nothing is more destructive to household quiet than the slightest insubordination of dependents. Miss Ray must be taught her place.'

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"'But what, then, is her place, madam?' I asked, I fear not very politely, for, with the intoxication of that kiss lingering about me, these remarks jarred painfully upon my feelings. 'She surely has the manners and refinement of a lady.'

"'No one could expect a lady to make a companion of her nursery governess, or introduce her as an equal to her friends,' said Mrs. Hungerford; and her mother, who had been listening, explained further:

"'Miss Ray has been well and carefully educated. Her father once held a high position, and her mother was a well-bred and pleasing woman. Their daughter, an orphan and poor, sinks to a lower sphere. It is an undoubted impertinence in her to venture beyond its confines.'

"I listened with deference to these ladies, but I was not satisfied. How could I be when all my memories of Miss Ray were so fresh—her gentle young beauty, her spirited, yet lady-like manners, her quiet dignity, and, above all, the kiss that yet thrilled like fire along my veins? I felt the spirit of a champion aroused within me. I had brought this trouble upon the unoffending girl—was I not bound to protect her? Yet I had the tact to see that it were better for me not to plead her cause at present.

"There were no more games after this—the excitement of this scene had destroyed all desire for them. Mrs. Charles Sheldon withdrew to look after her sick child, possibly to scold Miss Ray, the ladies drew into groups, whispering of what had occurred, and the gentlemen went away to slippers and cigars.

"All but myself. I could not pollute the lips that had touched Miss Ray's with the vile weed. I went to my bed in a delirium, half induced by the ecstasy of my new sensation, half by impotent anger against those I named my persecutors.

"These thoughts pursued me through my dreams and were with me when I awoke. From my window, in the early morning, I saw Miss Ray with the children in the grounds, and I hastened to join her, that I might seek forgiveness for the unintentional wrong I had done her. The presence of the children removed all impropriety from the act, and I thought I should feel more in charity with myself if I assured this young lady that, let her position here be what it would, I felt for her as much respect as for the highest lady in the land.

"When I had returned to the house, half-an-hour later, I had made a discovery, and that was that I should never be quite happy until I had the right to repeat the kiss I had stolen as often as I chose—and, further, that that was likely to be very often indeed. If Miss Ray had looked very pretty, delicate, and refined under the advantageous circumstances attending our first meeting, all these attractions were enhanced by the clear morning air, her own modest self-respect, and the charming embarrassment which the sight of me caused her. I had come down to the Elms priding myself on my confirmed bachelorhood, and contrasting my free, 'unhoused condition' most favourably with that of my friend Tom, who was the salve of the multitudinous fancies of a capricious wife. But all was changed! That kiss had wrought the miracle of revitalising the heart which I thought was dead to all tender emotions. I was as desperately in love—I at thirty-five—as any boy of twenty with his earliest flame.

"I did not see Miss Ray many times at the Elms. My respect for her, her own sense of propriety, alike forbade clandestine meetings. Sometimes she came into the drawing-room to play for the children's dances, when I always showed her marked deference. Once or twice I encountered her abroad. I learnt she had been discharged, and was about to go to London. I obtained her address there, and pleased myself with the thought of meeting her.

"I was disappointed in this. Only one night she spent with the relative to whose house I had been directed, and then went away to a distant situation which Mrs. Sheldon had procured for her. For a whole year—(do you not recall the restlessness that used to excite your mirth?)—I wandered about, my soul disquieted with an intense longing to see her once more, to snatch her from a life of toil, to claim her as mine, to make the kiss which was such a delicious memory, a sweet, ever-renewed reality.

"At last, when I had come almost to despair of the realisation of this intense desire, I suddenly and all unexpectedly encountered her one day in a public street. She had returned, and was staying with the relation of whom I knew. She met me with a blush and a smile, and a timid pressure of the hand that I interpreted as favourable to my hopes. And she did not deny me the pleasure of meeting her at her house.

"Encountered her one day in a public street."

"There is not much more to tell. I have told you about the kiss, and its consequences were for me the dearest, sweetest, brightest of pretty little wives—for her a home where she is cherished and beloved, and where I believe my efforts to make her happy have been entirely successful.

"Her only fault consists in the bit of sly malice with which she sometimes insinuates how different the consequences must have been had I chanced to catch and kiss somebody else on that memorable occasion—for instance, one of those black-eyed or flaxen-haired girls, who are now the very dear friends of Mrs. Laroque, once the poor Miss Ray."

Oscar Reffel.

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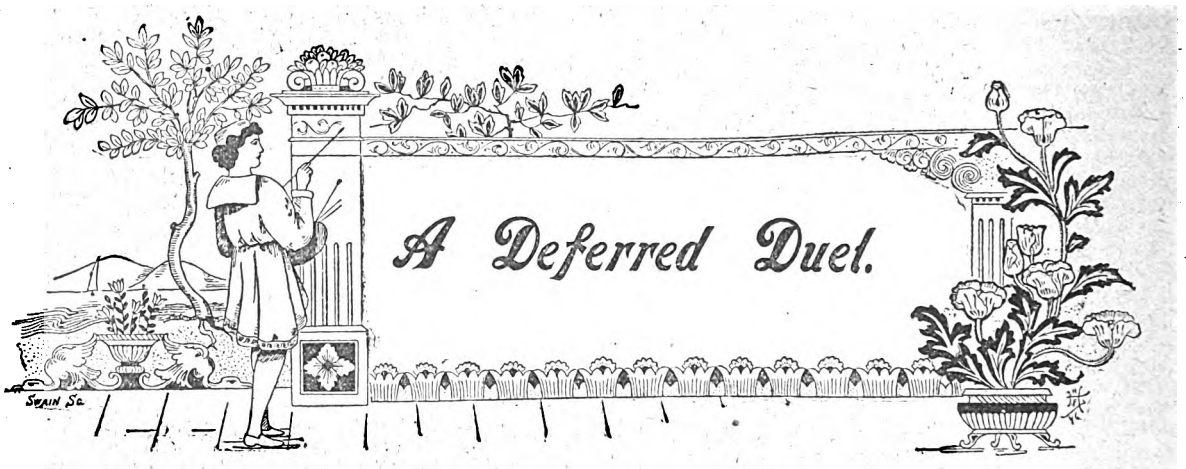

A Deferred Duel.

We were stationed at a small town. The life of an officer of the line is well known; exercise and review in the morning, dinner at the captain's or at the tavern, in the evening a bowl of punch and cards. In the whole town there was no one who even dreamt of such a thing as receiving company. We used often to meet at a brother officer's in the evening, and only there caught sight of an epaulette.

In our little circle there was one Russian, a man about thirty-five years of age, and therefore considered quite a veteran among us. His greater experience gave him a certain authority, and his habitual serious, almost gloomy aspect and sharp tongue awed us. His very existence was enveloped in mystery. Although a typical Russian, his name was a foreign one; he had distinguished himself as an officer of the Tenth Hussars, and no one could imagine why he had left that regiment to live in a wretched little place, where life was not only monotonous, but costly.

He always went on foot wrapped in his black cloak, and though always cordial and pressing in his invitations to dinner, that meal consisted of merely two or three dishes, prepared by an old retired soldier; champagne, however, was poured forth freely. No one really knew whether he was rich or poor, but neither did anyone dare question him thereupon.

We had the freedom of his library, consisting almost entirely of military and romantic works. If perchance we forgot to return a borrowed book, we were never reminded to do so, but, on the other hand, I never knew him to return a book borrowed from us. His principal occupation was practising pistol-shooting; the walls of his room were literally honeycombed with pistol shots. A magnificent collection of pistols seemed to be the one luxury he allowed himself, and his skill in the use of the weapon was such that if he had proposed to shoot an apple off our very heads, not one of us would have hesitated to allow it.

Duels were often the theme of our conversations, but Sylvio, as we called him, never took part in such discussions; and if asked whether he had ever fought in a duel, would drily answer "Yes;" but the details of his encounter never followed, and it was well known that such questions were extremely disagreeable to him. We all felt certain that some victim of his fatal skill lay heavy upon his conscience.

Never was he suspected of cowardice; there are some men who carry in their very aspect a refutation to any such suspicion. Yet something occurred that greatly astonished us. One day there were ten of us dining at Sylvio's, and, as usual, drinking hard. After dinner we asked our host to take a hand at cards. Although contrary to his custom, he yielded to our entreaties, and throwing fifty ducats in the pool, began to deal. We all crowded round the table, and the game began. He played in silence, never raising a question nor asking an explanation. If the marker made a mistake he made good the deficiency, and if the error were in his favour, at once made a note of it.

We knew his ways of old, and let him alone; but this time there was present a comrade who had but lately joined us, and he, in a moment of distraction, doubled his bet. Sylvio made a note of it. The officer, thinking he had made a mistake, tried to explain, but Sylvio went on cutting the cards without heeding him. Losing patience, the officer seized a pencil and crossed out the extra sum: Sylvio took up the pencil and re-wrote it. Excited by drink and goaded by our laughter, his antagonist thought himself insulted, lost his temper, and catching up a candelabrum which lay near to his hand, hurled it at Sylvio's head, who dodged, narrowly escaping the dangerous missile. Rising, white with ire, and his eyes flashing:

"Leave the room!" he cried, "and thank God this has happened beneath my roof."

It was easy to foresee the result of such an encounter, and we all looked upon our comrade as a doomed man.

He left the room, saying that, having insulted his host, he was ready to give him any satisfaction he demanded.

We went on playing for a few moments, but seeing that Sylvio's mind was no longer on the game, we left for our respective lodgings, discussing the impending vacancy in our regiment. Next morning, at review, we were wondering whether the poor lieutenant was still alive, when he himself appeared on the scene. He had not yet heard from Sylvio. Going to the latter's house, later in the day, we found him in the yard, pistol in hand, shooting bullet after bullet into an ace of spades stuck on the back door. He received us as usual, and made no allusion to last evening's occurrence.

Three days went by, and our lieutenant was still in the flesh. We wondered if Sylvio would not fight. He did not, contenting himself with a slight excuse on the part of his opponent. This event cost Sylvio much of his prestige. At a certain age nothing is harder to

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forgive than cowardice, valour being considered the highest of all virtues and an excuse for all vices.

However, little by little the incident was forgotten, and Sylvio regained part of his ascendancy over us. Only I could never feel the same towards him, for more than all others had I been fascinated by him, my youthful imagination endowing him with all the attributes of the mysterious hero in a novel. I think he in turn liked me, for only when alone in my company did he forego his cynical manner, and talk openly, simply, and agreeably.

But, after the above incident, when, in my eyes, his honour had received a stain which he did not remove, I could not be the same with him, and found it perfectly impossible to meet his eye fairly. Sylvio was too clever not to perceive this change and divine its cause—indeed, he made several advances towards an explanation, which I refused to meet, until at last he apparently gave up. From that time I never saw Sylvio alone, and all intercourse between us ceased.

Inhabitants of great cities know nothing of the sensation caused by post days in a little town like ours. Tuesdays and Fridays, the officers' headquarters were filled with eager, expectant faces; one expects money, another letters, another newspapers. Letters are devoured at once, and the news goes the rounds, and is discussed on the spot. On such days headquarters present an animated appearance.

Sylvio received his letters through the military post, and was always with us on post days. On one such occasion he was handed a letter. I watched him as he tore it eagerly open and perused its contents with flashing eyes. His strange manner passed unnoticed, each one being absorbed in his own affairs.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am obliged to leave here at once—to-night, in fact—but beg you will all previously dine with me for the last time. And I expect you, especially, without fail," he added, turning to me. He then hurriedly left us.

When I reached Sylvio's lodgings in the evening, my fellow-officer had preceded me. The furniture had already been removed, leaving nothing but the bare walls, so curiously honeycombed with bullet-holes. Our host was in good spirits, and we soon all followed suit; champagne-corks flew about, glasses were filled and refilled, and we heartily bade our friend God-speed. It was when we rose to go, when my turn came to say good-bye, Sylvio seized my hand and whispered:

"I must have speech with you."

I remained with him. When the last guest had left, he seated himself opposite me, and for some time we smoked in silence. Sylvio was deep in thought; not a sign remained of his nervous gaiety. As I looked at his pale face and eyes, encircled by the thick smoke of our pipes, he had the appearance of a spirit of the nether world. At last he broke silence:

"We shall probably not meet again. I wish to speak a few parting words. You may observe that I care little for public opinion, but I like you, and would regret leaving you under a false conception of my character."

He stopped to refill his glass. I remained silent.

"You have thought it strange I did not exact satisfaction from that drunken idiot who insulted me at cards. Having the choice of weapons, his life was in my hands, and mine in comparative security. I might attribute my behaviour to grandeur of soul, but disdain to lie; could I have punished him without risking my life, he would not have escaped."

I raised my eyes to Sylvio in horror.

"Yes, that is the truth," he continued. "I had no right to risk my life. Six years ago I received a blow, and the man who struck me still lives."

My curiosity was quickly excited.

"You did not fight?" I asked.

"We fought and here is the proof," he answered, at the same time taking up a soldier's cap and placing it upon his head. I noticed a small round hole just above his forehead. "I served in the Tenth Hussars. You know me, and perhaps have seen that I am used to be first in everything. In my youth it was to me an absolute necessity that it should be so. In my day it was fashionable to be fast; I was the wildest youngster in the regiment—in the army, I might say. Hard drinkers were much applauded. I could out-drink the famous Dobroski, whose prowess in that line was celebrated. In our regiment duels were of more than

"Seeing him courted by all."

daily occurrence, and in each one I was either principal or second. My brother officers worshipped me, and my superiors let me alone as an incurable case.

"I was enjoying my laurels when a young man, rich and of illustrious lineage—permit me to withhold his name—joined us. Never had I met a more gifted man—young, talented, handsome, gay to excess, brave as a lion, of unbounded wealth—all these advantages were his besides his great name. You can well imagine the place he at once took among us. My sway was over. He at first sought my friendship, but was repulsed and drew back with indifference. I hated him; his popularity filled me with rage. I tried to draw him into a quarrel, but his answer to all my sarcastic speeches were so

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much wittier than mine that my rage and jealousy grew apace, for I felt his superiority.

"At length, one night at a ball, seeing him courted by all, and specially by a young lady I greatly admired, I approached him and whispered a bitter insult in his ear. This was too much, and, losing his temper, he struck me full in the face. We drew our swords. The ladies fainted! and although bloodshed was prevented on the spot, a duel was arranged that very night.

"At daybreak I was at the appointed place with two seconds, awaiting my rival with much impatience. It had been a sultry night, and the sun, just rising, was oppressively hot. In a few moments I saw him coming leisurely towards me, on foot, and with only one second. I advanced and saw he held his cap, which was full of cherries, in his hand. I had the right to shoot first, but my pulse beat so that I could not be sure of my aim, and therefore insisted that he should shoot first. He refused. We then agreed to draw lots. Fortune favoured her darling. He shot, and the bullet pierced my cap.

"It was my turn now—at last his life was in my hands. I looked eagerly at him, trying to find the slightest sign of fear. He was quietly awaiting my shot, eating cherries, the stones of which he threw at my feet. It was exasperating. 'What is the good,' thought I, 'of taking a life so little valued?' A devilish thought struck me. Dropping my hand I said:

"'Since you are breakfasting so calmly, you are scarcely prepared to die. Allow me to wait until you have finished your cherries.'

"'Do not distress yourself, sir, I pray,' he answered. 'You have one shot at me. At present, or at any time, I am at your service.'

"I turned to my seconds, saying: 'I will not shoot to-day.'

"The duel was over.

"I asked for leave of absence, and came to this little town, where revenge has been my daily thought. The time has come."

Sylvio handed me the letter he had received that day. Someone—an agent, I believe—wrote to say that the "individual in question was about to marry a beautiful young girl."

"You know," continued Sylvio, "who is the 'individual' alluded to. Well, I go to Moscow, and we will see if to-morrow or the day after he will be as indifferent to death as the morning he was eating cherries."

Sylvio stood up and paced up and down the room like a caged tiger. I watched him intently, and could see the fierce struggle the conflicting passions held in his breast.

In a moment the servant entered to say the horses were ready. Sylvio grasped my hand, we embraced, and, hurriedly seizing a travelling bag and a brace of pistols, which proved his only luggage, he sprang quickly into the carriage and was gone.

Many years after, business made it imperative for me to settle in the little town of Staroduv. In spite of steady occupations, I often missed the careless, happy life of former years. I never could get used to the long, companionless spring and winter evenings. The days were well enough spent, talking to my overseer, looking over the crops, or attending to the buildings I was having erected, but after sunset I was at a loss what to do with myself.

The few available books I knew by heart, my old housekeeper Nerolowna's stories wearied me, and the labourers' songs gave me the blues. I tried brandy, but "melancholy drunkards" abounded. My only neighbours were of this number, and their constant complaints and dullness were too much for me. Thus my sole refuge was to dine late and retire early, in this manner I could shorten the days and lengthen the nights.

Within four miles of my house lay a fine property belonging to the Countess Bercheneff. No one but the overseer lived there—the Countess had spent only the first month of her marriage on her beautiful estate. About two years after my coming to Staroduv, it was rumoured that the Countess and her husband would come to spend the summer at their beautiful country-seat. In fact, they arrived at the beginning of June, and, as was to be expected, their advent caused quite a commotion in our little town.

For my part, the coming of such charming neighbours made quite a change in my life. I was especially anxious to meet the Countess, and, accordingly, the first Sunday after their arrival I called to present my respects. As being their nearest neighbour I was shown into the Count's private sitting-room, which was luxuriously furnished—books, bronzes, rugs, *bric-à-brac*, an immense mirror over the mantelpiece, etc. It was so long since I had seen any finery of the kind that a strange shyness came over me, and I awaited my host's entrance with feelings akin to the trepidation of an office-seeker.

The door opened to admit a handsome, noble-looking man, about thirty-three years of age, who advanced and held out his hand with a pleasant smile. His frank and cordial reception somewhat restored my equanimity, and I was beginning to regain my usual manner, when the Countess entered and I at once relapsed into my former shyness. A truly beautiful woman! The Count presented me, and I floundered about trying to appear at ease, but in reality feeling very hot and uncomfortable. Perceiving my embarrassment, and with true tact and good breeding, the Count and Countess conversed between themselves, treating me as they would an old acquaintance.

As my eye wandered round the room it fell upon a picture hanging opposite me. It was not the painting itself—a Swiss landscape, I think, that arrested my attention, but two small round bullet-holes which pierced the picture, one immediately above the other.

"Humph! that was a wonderful shot," I could not help remarking.

"Yes, indeed," said the Count. "And you, are you a good shot?"

"Middling; with a pistol I am used to I can hit a card at thirty paces."

"Pretty good," said the Countess; then, turning to her husband: "Could you do as well?"

"I doubt it," he answered. "I used to be a good shot, but have not tried my hand for over four years."

"In that case, I'll wager you could not even hit a card at twenty paces. Without constant practice, one loses all dexterity. The best shot I ever knew split three bullets on the edge of a knife every day before dinner—but the practice was as great a necessity to him as the meal. Why, if there were a fly on the wall—you smile, Countess, but I swear 'tis true—he called to his servant: 'Cousma, a pistol!'—and bang! scarcely taking aim, there was the fly flattened out on the wall."

"Wonderful!" ejaculated the Count. "And what was your friend's name?"

"Sylvio."

"You knew Sylvio!" exclaimed the Count, excitedly starting up. "You knew Sylvio!"

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"I more than knew him—we were friends. In the regiment he was considered one of us. I have not heard of him for five years: but to judge from your exclamation, Count, you also knew him?"

"Right well. If you were his friend, he must have told you a somewhat singular story——"

"About a blow received at a ball?"

"Yes; and did he tell you who struck him?"

"No." I glanced at the Countess. "It was you, Count?" I said.

"Yes, it was I," exclaimed he, much agitated; "and that picture there is a memento of our last interview."

"Oh, dearest," pleaded the Countess, "do not tell that story. I cannot bear it."

"I must. This gentleman knows how I insulted his friend. Let him now hear how that friend was revenged. I was married," he proceeded, "five years ago. The first month of our honeymoon was spent here. This house holds the happiest and saddest memories of my life. One evening, returning late from a ride, I found before the door a travelling chaise, and was told that a stranger, who had refused to give his name, was awaiting me in my study, having come on business relating to myself alone. I entered, and saw a tall, bearded man, dusty and travel-stained, leaning on the mantelpiece. I stood for a moment, gazing at him.

"'You do not know me, Count?' he asked.

"'Sylvio!' I exclaimed, and confess that my hair stood on end.

"'It is my turn to shoot,' he said; 'are you ready?'

"There was a pistol in his belt. I bowed in recognition of his right, and stood fronting him, only requesting him to shoot at once, before my wife came in.

"'I cannot see clearly,' he said, 'send for lights.'

"This was done, and I returned to my place, again asking him to be quick. He took aim, and I counted the seconds. My thoughts dwelt on my bride; it was a frightful moment. He dropped his hand and remarked:

"'Pity this pistol is charged with a bullet instead of a cherry stone.' Then, after a moment's pause, which seemed a century: 'Truly, I am not in the habit of shooting at a defenceless man; that would be more like a murder than a duel. We will draw lots again, and see who is to shoot first.'

"I think at first I refused, but remember finally loading my pistol. We then wrote our names on slips of paper, and drew lots from the very cap my ball pierced in our first duel. Fortune favoured me again.

"'You are very fortunate, Count,' said Sylvio, with a smile I shall never forget. I know not how it happened, but my ball struck that picture. Sylvio raised his hand and took aim. The expression on his face told me that I had no mercy to expect. At that supreme moment the door opened and Maria rushed in, and with a cry of horror threw her arms round my neck. Her entrance restored my equanimity. Laughing gaily, 'You foolish girl,' I said, 'why are you so frightened? Do you not see it is a joke—a wager? Come, now, go and drink a glass of water, and come back to be introduced to my old friend.'

But she did not believe me.

"'In Heaven's name, sir,' she said, turning to Sylvio, 'is this true? Is it only a wager—a joke?'

"'Of course—oh, of course,' answered he, 'it is only a joke. The Count likes to joke. He once, in joke, struck me a blow; again, in joke, he put a bullet through this cap, and now, of course in joke, he missed killing me for the second time. It is now my turn to joke.' So saying, he levelled the pistol at my breast.

"Maria understood, and cast herself at his feet.

"'Oh, for shame!' I cried; then turning to Sylvio: 'Come, sir, enough of this. Will you shoot—yes or no?'

"'No,' he returned; 'I am satisfied. Twice have I made you shoot at me, and twice have you missed. I have seen your fear, your anguish, your terror. Remember, I leave you to your conscience.'

"He turned towards the door to leave, but wheeling suddenly, almost without an instant's aim, fired and went out. To mark his skill he had put a ball through that picture immediately above mine.

"My wife had fainted. Sylvio passed out unmolested, the servants who saw him go not daring to interfere. He was off before I had recovered my surprise."

The Count was silent.

I had heard the end of a story, in the beginning of which I had been so deeply interested.

The Count had never seen Sylvio again. Later, in 1820, when Alexander Ipsilanti gave the signal for the uprising in Greece, it was surmised that Sylvio was in command of a Greek regiment, and met his death in the battle of Drazachan.

Richard Elsmere.

RESULT OF
JUMBLED PICTURE COMPETITION
NO. 1.

The sum of £2 2s. has been forwarded to Miss G. Trotter, care of Mrs. Pendred, "Crohill," Pendennis Road, Streatham, S.W.

The following five have received a bottle of *HOME NOTES BOUQUET*:

C. Puttock, 123, Malvern Road, Kilburn, N.W.

J. M. Child, 4, Cromwell Street, Mount Pleasant, Swansea.

W. F. Fowler, St. John's College, Battersea, S.W.

W. McBeath, 45, West Preston Street, Edinburgh.

Walter Pontin, care of Mrs. Sorey, Stubbington, near Fareham, Hants.

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A really bright and interesting paper for Sunday afternoon, which shall at the same time be elevating and instructive, you should go at once to your newsagent and ask him for ***The Sunday Reader.*** This is the biggest, brightest, and best journal for Sunday reading that is published, and it is illustrated profusely throughout by some of the leading black and white artists of the day.

Here are some of the contents of No. 3 of ***The Sunday Reader,*** now ready:

Propitiating the God of Rain; a Strange Ceremony of the Starving Hindoos.
A Monument to Horses Killed in Battle.
Moveable Churches in Russia. **A Pulpit Made by Boys.**
Two Entrancing Short Stories. **The Serial.**
Scores of other Articles and Anecdotes.

THE SUNDAY READER.

EVERY THURSDAY. ONE PENNY.

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The Shadow-Hand

By Louis Tracy.

SUMMARY.

Prologue.—The Hon. Ernest Wentworth lies dying at his estate, Chisholme Park. His wife, a light, pleasure-loving creature, falls under the mesmeric influence of Armand Lemaitre, who, by force of will power, compels her to rob her husband. While in the act of extracting a bundle of notes from a bureau she is interrupted by the appearance of her husband, who enters the room in his bed-clothes, silently points at her with his fore-finger, and then falls down dead. She shortly afterwards leaves for Paris to join Lemaitre.

Captain Arthur Musgrave: In love with Edith Wentworth.
Doctor Danton: Armand Lemaitre, a mesmerist, in love with Edith Wentworth.
Professor Queech, Jack Heathcote. } Friends of Musgrave.
Tom Wilson: Servant to Arthur Musgrave.
Hawke: Danton's accomplice.
Edith Wentworth: Daughter of the late Hon. Ernest Wentworth.
Cécile Delisle: A young French girl with detective proclivities.

CHAPTER XII.

How the Debt of Honour was Paid.

Among the clapping of hands on the Grand Stand, as Lancet with her aristocrat-jockey forged past the winning-post a neck in front of Bon-gré, were the hands of Cécile Delisle. She was here with the rest of the house-party of the St. John-Heygates from Giltwood Towers. Wild with excitement, Cécile cried:

"Did I tell you not so? *Tarare!* From the first leap-off I knew the winner. I have gained three thousand pounds!"

Away she went flying down the stairs, across the swarming course towards the weighing-shed, where Musgrave, in the middle of a flushed and jabbering crowd of officers, stood in a long overcoat reaching to his spurred heels, smoking a cigarette.

Jack Lascelles had him by one hand, Evelyn Hardy was shaking off the other with congratulations.

"It's the most heroic piece of fighting that was ever done!" rose the voice of Lascelles above the noise.

"Thank you, my dear boy, but really—oh, confound it! let me go, there's a lady!"

It was Cécile. In a moment Arthur was bowing before her like a palm-tree courtly to the simoon. His face was no longer the "piece of white iron"; its colour had come back freshly, and it wore an amused and rather bored expression.

"I present you all the compliments," said Cécile. "You did that grandly."

"Thank you. I am glad you were not bored."

"I gained three thousand pounds."

"Excellent!"

"I knew you would win. I shall *always* believe in your luck now. You are sublime."

Arthur laughed.

"And you know there was a report that Lancet was hip-strung? Guess who caused it to be put out."

"I can't, really."

She put up her mouth to his ear.

"I!"

At this unblushing avowal of feminine immorality Arthur was pierced with laughter.

"That was naughty," he said, between his spasms.

"Oh, I don't think. Good-bye! Heard from Edith this morning."

She was gone.

Arthur's eyes, following her, fell upon the face of Lemaitre standing near. Lemaitre was looking steadily upon him. As he encountered Arthur's eyes, he beckoned to him with his forefinger.

For one instant Arthur paled to the lips. His life was in this man's hand—this man whom he had just made a beggar.

Lemaitre remained master of the situation. He was Arthur's god. Arthur walked towards that beckoning finger as though it were the summons of doom.

"I received your letter, Captain Musgrave," said Lemaitre; "but did not reply to it, knowing that I should meet you here. I congratulate you on your victory with Lancet. It was rather well done."

"Do you wish to speak to me *now*, on the subject of my letter, Dr. Danton?" said Arthur.

"Yes."

"Then if you will be good enough to follow me, I will lead you to a private room."

Arthur went elbowing a lane through the crowd, followed by Lemaitre. In one of the plank rooms of the saddling shed they sat on two cane-bottomed chairs, alone, facing

It was Cécile.

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each other: both quite placid in manner; both with hatred boiling in their bosoms.

Lemaitre began:

"So you have broken your word, then?"

"Yes."

"That was singular conduct, Captain Musgrave."

"I was drunk, to tell the truth. Drunken men act singularly."

"That is no answer."

"No?"

"Are you now 'engaged' to Miss Wentworth?"

"Practically."

"But so am I."

"That is nothing. She would not marry you. I think not."

"Why?"

"Her affections appear to be given to me."

"We shall see. But as to this conduct of yours, it would look bad—*nasty*—among gentlemen, I think."

"Dr. Danton, you perceive this whip? I shall flog you to the bone if you speak in that tone to me."

Dr. Danton, the chair creaking beneath his weight, smoothed down his imperial, looking up with an amused, open-mouthed speculation at the planking. But his pasty face was somewhat haggard from the ruin which had that day befallen him.

"But you admit," he said, "that your life is mine?"

"Fully," replied Arthur. "But you are not allowed to speak to me as if you were my equal. In spite of my broken pledge, I remain a gentleman, a man of honour. If you forget it, I shall be obliged to flog you again."

"I see." Danton gently stroked his imperial. "What penalty, may I ask, do you anticipate for your broken pledge?"

"It is of no importance what I anticipate. It is for you to direct. I am prepared to obey."

"I think, in honour, you should take your own life," said Danton musingly. "It is hard to expect one man to kill another in cold blood. And there is the chance of detection—afterwards."

"I do not consider that I am bound in honour to take my own life. I have told you so. I refuse to do that. And the danger of detection to you could be reduced to a minimum by a little ingenuity."

"Suppose you live. You must never see Miss Wentworth again."

"Yes, I shall see her—if I live. I am as much bound to her now as I am to you. I can never desert her—if I live."

"So you refuse at least *two* of my directions."

To this point Danton had cunningly and designedly brought the dialogue. Everything that he said was with a purpose. He smoothed his imperial, looking up, musing, speculating. A grand scheme had matured in his brain.

"At least *two* of my directions," he repeated. "And yet you profess to hold yourself at my service."

"*Those* two I refuse," said Arthur. "In any other points I am willing to obey you."

"In *any* other points, you say?"

"Yes."

"But I can't think of any other points. Except I take your life with my own hands."

"Then that you must do."

"'*Must*' is the right word," said Danton. "There remains nothing else. You yourself have pushed me, as you say, 'into a corner.'"

"I am prepared—at whatever time is most convenient to yourself—with whatever weapon you will. My address for some weeks will be The Barracks, Ilminster. Or, I am ready at this moment, if it suits you."

"Very well, Captain Musgrave. I shall write to you. You cannot yourself suggest any other way out of the difficulty?"

"No."

"There is perhaps the pecuniary——"

"So you refuse at least two of my directions."

Arthur burst into a laugh. The idea of *money* occurring to the mind of the man in such a question between gentlemen inexpressibly tickled him. Then, all of a sudden, his laughter ceased, he turned utterly white—sick with hope—with the sudden sweet hope that perhaps he might be able to *purchase* Edith, to purchase happiness, life itself, from this man, with gold coin of the realm.

Danton was looking away from him.

"There is the pecuniary motive," he repeated, "which we have not referred to. It is the only one left."

"Yes—yes," said Arthur, tingling with hope. "Let me hear. I am, you know, a fairly rich man to-day."

"Just so. I won the duel; you the race——"

"Yes, yes; let me hear."

"As you have deprived me of the fruits of my victory at the duel, which I fairly won, perhaps we might compromise, if you repay me with the fruits of your victory at the race, which *you* fairly won."

In an instant, as the words passed Danton's mouth, Arthur was himself again. A new youth seemed to laugh in him, and the burden of a world was lifted from his shoulders.

"Dr. Danton," he said laughing, "you are a sad ruffian, but you are a brilliant genius. I am perfectly at your disposal, and I shall thank you most awfully."

"Stay, Captain, not too fast. Your allusions to my character do not, you see, trouble me. I regard you, believe me, as a mere brainless soldier, beneath the contempt of a serious man of the world. First of all, let me hear how much you are worth at this moment."

"As nearly as possible about £100,000."

"Not more?" Danton glanced sharply at him.

"You see the whip. I shall not fail to use it if you express doubt of my word. You are, really, a frightful ruffian, Danton!" laughed Arthur.

Danton scratched his bald temple a little.

"A £100,000," he said; "that, I take it, represents the amount of your gains to-day?"

"No. I won £50,000 more to-day."

"Are you prepared to part with the £100,000?"

"No. That is not what you proposed. It is no good my purchasing my life if I am to be a beggar. But I am prepared to part with my gains. I don't care a hang for money.

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If your voracious maw can take it all in I will give you £75,000, my win to-day and the money I put up to win it. I think that should satisfy even you."

Danton was looking upward smoothing his imperial with a beatific smile.

"Well," he said, "I do not wish to be hard. It is only a question of when. I am about to leave the country immediately. If you can give me the amount at once I agree."

"I can't, of course, give it you at once. But I dare say I could manage it in a couple of hours."

"How will you give it me?"

"In cheques, notes, and the like."

Danton looked at his watch.

"It is now nearly two. Shall we say four?"

"Very good."

"I am at the Bear Hotel in the town. Will you send me the amount?"

"Yes. And now let us distinctly understand the conditions. I purchase my life from you; and I am henceforth free of the promise to which I bound myself—free to speak to Miss Wentworth, to visit her, to marry her?"

"I agree."

"And you, on your part, cease wholly from the absurd solicitations with which I suspect you have hitherto pestered Miss Wentworth?"

Danton smiled benignly upon him.

"That was no part of my proposal," he said; "why do you drag in that stipulation? I do not at all accept it."

"But you must."

"Why so?"

"I may reconsider my decision, otherwise."

"There is no fear of *that*, I think. And are you so jealous of me?"

"You are a frightful wretch, Danton. Imagine my being jealous of vermin like you."

"Well, the condition you name," said Danton, "is not worth talking over. I agree. I give Miss Wentworth to you. You can have her. I shall never see her again, most likely. You have my benediction."

"At four, then. At the Bear," said Arthur, rising.

"When, by-the-way," said Danton, "will you see Miss Wentworth again?"

"To-morrow. Why?"

"To-morrow! You leave for London to-night, then?"

"No. To-morrow by an early train. Why?"

"Nothing. I wished to know if you would be in Drayton to-morrow in case I wished to see you about any detail. I suspected you would be anxious to hurry to the presence of the lady."

Arthur was gone. The face of Danton wore a broad and beaming smile of beatitude.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Flight from Home.

Danton had to meet Hawke at three at the starter's shed.

From two to three he sat dreamily looking upward where Arthur had left him, as though he had not a care in the world, but immediately before three he was up with a brisk jerk, and walked rapidly forth to the shed.

"I *told* you the darned horse would lose," said Mr. Hawke, coming to meet him in a horsey-looking grey overcoat and soft hat.

"Hold your tongue, Hawke," said Lemaitre.

"Oh, that's all very fine, mate ——"

"Hawke, I think I told you to hold your tongue. You are a lucky man. I have got a job for you."

"But about this horse business ——"

"A job for you. What do you think is the figure you will get?"

"A job? Are you in funds, then, after all?"

Lemaitre winked.

"Good biz!" exclaimed Hawke. "Well, you *are* a one, I must say! A job, is it? I am your man."

"What do you think is the figure?"

"Two thousand?" said tentative Mr. Hawke.

"Say ten," hinted Lemaitre.

Hawke made a twist of joy with his elbow and clenched fist into the air, looking as if he wanted to cut capers.

"When can you let us have it?"

"To-morrow."

"What, not to-day?"

"Some of it to-day. Be at the Bear Hotel, in Drayton at four sharp. And meanwhile—no drink, remember! We have to leave for London to-night."

"I told you the darned horse would lose."

"Oh, I say—not to-night, mate."

"To-night, Hawke."

"Can you let us have a quid now? I'm broke."

Lemaitre handed him a sovereign, turned away, and jumped into a cab.

The first thing he did on reaching the inn was to search the railway-guide for the trains leaving Drayton for London. He dashed it down with an oath.

"Spoiled! foiled! ruined!" he hissed between his teeth. "Curse the trains!"

He had found that the last train for London left Drayton at five minutes to four, and he was bound to wait till four, or after for the money.

Presently he took up the guide again. At his second glance his face brightened.

"One leaves at six in the morning," he muttered, moving his big, fat finger along the line; "he will not go by that. Flaccid, lackadaisical British officers do not rise at six in the morning. *I* will go by that. The next does not leave till eight. Good! I shall have two hours' start of him. Two hours is the universe. I am safe. But stop! the eight train is an express; the six train is not. I shall *not* have two hours! That is abominable luck. Still—still—we must see! Edith, you are mine, my child!"

Sharp at four Tom Wilson was ushered into the presence of Lemaitre in a private room of the hotel.

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"Hoo am A to know that thoo's t'right man?" said Tom, in his over-cautiousness, though Arthur had described Lemaitre to him.

Lemaitre handed him a card. Tom began fumbling in an inner pocket, and presently drew out a packet bound with elastic.

Lemaitre took a sheet of paper, and began totting up the amounts registered on all varieties of paper-money, as, one by one, he examined the documents.

"It is right," he said at last. "Here is a duly stamped receipt."

"Thank 'oo," said Tom.

"What time does your master leave for London in the morning?" asked Lemaitre.

"He did na' tell me to say," replied Tom.

"That is right," said Lemaitre. "You are a good servant. Never blab too much, my boy. Here's half a sovereign for you. You do not know, for instance, if he is going by the six o'clock train?"

"A know. But he did na' tell me to say. All the gold A want A get from Cécile Delisle, thank 'oo."

"From whom?"

"Cécile Delisle."

"Why, I know that lady—intimately. I am sure she would be so angry at a servant of hers who refused to answer a question which *I* put to him."

"Well, she did na' say that, 'oo see," said Tom. "A will ask her."

Tom turned and walked away.

As soon as he reached Arthur's inn, he sought him out and said:

"T'gent'eman wan'ed to know if you're going by t' six o'clock train, t'morn, sir."

"Did he, Tom?" yawned Arthur. "It is of no importance."

"He seemed gar anxious to know, sir."

"Did he? Very well. Do not trouble yourself, Tom."

The next morning, while it was yet dark, Hawke and Lemaitre stepped into the early train. Arthur and Tom, in a far swifter train, were flying towards London at a few minutes past eight.

It was a mad race—a race far more momentous than the last which Arthur and Lemaitre had run on the course at Drayton Common; a race in which minutes were to decide the fate of several lives.

The two men in the front train knew that they were running it. At every stoppage at a station, Lemaitre groaned inwardly. In the train behind, Arthur lounged with half-closed eyes, which only opened with an occasional flash of interest when he now and then realised that he was about to see her—his life; was about to explain the strangeness of his conduct in constantly shunning her; to clear up the mystery of the statements which Danton had made about him to her.

At the time Lady Hilton had not yet returned from Cannes. The London season was hardly begun. Two days later Cécile was to leave the St. John-Heygates and join Edith at the Hilton town-house at Hyde Park, whither Edith had come in advance, in order to spare Lady Hilton the trouble of making certain domestic rearrangements.

They were half-way to London before Lemaitre explained to Hawke the object of their flight.

"But how are you going to prove it?" said Hawke.

"Hawke, you are a fool," replied Danton. "Can't you guess, without being told, that in that class of life people are not for ever doubting what other people of the same class tell them? They simply accept the facts of which they are informed as true—and they are usually right. Besides, we must *find* proofs."

"*You* find them, then; *I* can't."

"I told you that I knew something of her mother from her own lips. She already has a suspicion that her mother was not all she should have been. And it was my knowledge that she has this suspicion that put the scheme into my head. As she already has the suspicion, it will not be difficult to make her believe that her mother was even worse than she thinks her. You see, Mr. Hawke, you see?"

"But you want some *proof*, mate. Listen to me: I know my way about better'n you. You must have proof. What was the mother's name?"

"Juliet—was it Juliet she told me?—yes, Juliet."

"And what did she look like?"

"I have no idea. But it is of no consequence. She never saw her mother."

"Why, *your* wife was named Juliet, or something similar, wasn't she?"

"Mr. Hawke, be quiet," said Lemaitre.

The train drew up at a station. Lemaitre fidgeted in his seat, and impatiently scratched his temple, crying out at last: "Oh, curse the slow train!"

"But how of these proofs?" said Hawke, when they were once more in motion; "don't go dragging me in anything that you don't see the way out of, mate."

Lemaitre undid his huge fur-lined overcoat, then the undercoat, than the mauve waistcoat, and from an inner pocket of this he drew a small photograph.

"Take this, Hawke," he said, "and show it to her as the portrait of her mother. It isn't unlike herself about the eyes, now I look at it; and it is something tangible—what you call a proof. She will not stop to think that that might be *any*body's likeness. Young ladies are not als gaol-birds, Mr. Hawke."

While the train was moving Lemaitre continued to speak in this half-playful way, as if utterly unconcerned about anything. The moment it stopped, he was like a restless lion.

Hawke took the photograph and glanced at it.

"Golly! but this here is the portrait of your own old girl, ain't it?"

"Silence! Silence, you elephant!" cried Lemaitre angrily.

"But suppose she's got an old portrait of her mother? *You* don't know, you know," said Hawke.

"It is highly improbable," answered Lemaitre. "We must risk that. For the rest, you must trust to me. I will manage."

When the train drew up at the London terminus, the two men instantly pelted themselves into a cab and drove in the direction of Hyde Park. They had little time to spare. The train, which, with flying shrieks, was sweeping Arthur to the rescue of his beloved, was due in London in half-an-hour's time.

Lemaitre and Hawke alighted before the Hilton mansion overlooking the Park from the east side.

"Is Miss Wentworth at home?" asked Lemaitre of the footman, with hurried breath.

"Yes, sir."

"Give her this card—quick."

It was five precious minutes before Lemaitre was standing in the drawing-room, waiting, waiting, counting the ticks of the clock. Hawke he had asked permission to leave below in the breakfast-room. And, indeed, Mr. Hawke had by no means the physiognomy and appearance of them who frequent the drawing-rooms of Vere de Vere.

Edith sailed in—rather white and scared of face.

"Edith—dear child——" Lemaitre had her hand. "My poor girl—I come to-day an ominous visitor. I have no time to talk. You must nerve yourself to hear something not pleasant—poor—poor—little Edith!"

"What is it? Speak."

She had gone utterly pallid.

"A misfortune—a calamity has befallen me—and you. There is a man—a dreadful being—how can I tell my child?—who claims to be your father——"

"*My* father?"

She tittered a little frightened laugh.

"Yes. And undoubtedly his claim is well-founded. That is the worst of it. He has been seeking you, he says, for five years. A month ago, just as he had discovered your

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whereabouts, and was about to claim you, I ran across him by a series of extraordinary chances. Since then, by means of bribes, threats, cajoleries, I have succeeded in keeping him away from you. But I can no longer control him. To-day he broke from me, and started to come to you. I thought it better to come with him, to break the news to you. Poor Edith—my little child!"

"But," she cried, gazing wildly round, "am I mad? or are you? My father is Ernest Wentworth, brother of Lord Hilton."

"No. Ernest Wentworth was your mother's husband, but not your father. Your mother was not—was not—a correct lady, Edith. You guess how I pity you—pity myself—for you are me—but it is useless to kick against the pricks. You must envisage facts, my poor child The brute below is your father. He has shown me proofs which no mind can resist."

"*Below* you say? He is *here?*" she whispered, a mortal ashen terror overspreading her face.

"Yes. He could not be kept out. But do not be frightened. He is locked into the breakfast-room. My proposal is that you fly with me at once."

"With you?" She repeated the words mechanically after him, without meaning.

"Yes. Or would you care to see your father first, and examine his proofs."

"His proofs?" She repeated the words absently, and stood with open lips, blanched and dry, all stunned and powerless.

"Will you see him? He is your father, you know."

"My father — I know?"

"Come, Edith—dear—collect yourself — one minute," he said, frowning deeply upon her with his old intense frown. "He is your father. Will you see him?"

"You know this—yes or no?"

"Yes—if he is my father—I will see him," she said in a sort of trance.

Lemaitre touched a bell.

"Show the stranger up here," he said to the footman.

Edith stood with open, white lips, amazed and stupid.

Hawke's broad mass rolled into the room.

"Oh, not he!" burst in a shrill shriek from Edith.

"None of that!" said Hawke in a deep bass of paternal authority. "Learn to respect your parents, or I'll teach ye! Do you know this?"

Edith had backed in shrinking panic to the furthest corner of the room. Hawke, step by step, followed her, holding before her the photograph of Julie Lemaitre.

"You know this—yes or no?"

The hard heart of Lemaitre could not bear to witness this awful scene. He had walked out of the room, and stood waiting in the corridor outside.

"Why don't you answer me? Don't you know the face of yer own mother?"

Edith glanced at it, cringing in her corner.

"Yes," came in a faint whisper from her.

"You do know it?" asked Hawke, surprised.

"Yes."

"You have a photo of her, then?"

"Yes."

"Well, I've come for yer. You b'long to me. Will you come?"

"Oh!—call Dr. Danton for me—will you, like a good—a good father? Call him for me—pray—he has deserted—he has left me——"

Her voice broke down in a long wail.

"Here, Doctor!" called Hawke in a harsh voice.

Danton came in hurriedly, and Hawke retired.

Edith put her hand on Danton's shoulders.

"Oh, save me from him!" she whispered—"save me!—see if you can get him down again—pray do! Take me away—I will go with you—anywhere——"

"Now, look here, my man," said Danton roughly to Hawke, "you will have to wait, and behave yourself. You will make your daughter ill. Go downstairs for a while."

Hawke rolled away, and left the two together.

"Now," said Danton, "while he is in the breakfast-room we shall be able to slip out. I promise you to rid you of him for ever. Go—put on your hat quickly. I will wait here."

She cast a scared glance at him, a hunted dismay in her face, like the hopelessness of a deer surrounded by hounds. She ran from the room, flew up to her chamber, put on a hat and cloak, covered her face with a thick veil, and threw the contents of her jewel-box in a pocket. She seemed now, once freed from the proximity of Lemaitre, to have acquired an intense collectedness of mind. She forgot nothing; she took her purse, a small travelling-bag with a few things crammed into it. Then she sat at a desk and scribbled three notes—one to Arthur, one to Cécile, one to Lady Hilton, three lines each to each, in the same words:

I am gone for ever. I am not what you think me. I am no fit companion for you and yours. Do not try to follow.

Love! love! from EDITH.

She enclosed and directed the three notes, then slipped quietly down the stairs, out into the garden at the back, out by a gate in the garden wall to a small lane, out from this to crowded Piccadilly, and into a passing cab. She drove away towards Victoria.

Lemaitre was waiting with feverish anxiety for her in the drawing-room, Hawke in the breakfast-room.

At this time Arthur had arrived in London, and, with

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Slipped out by a gate in the garden wall.

Tom Wilson, was driving westward in a cab. A strong impatience to be with Edith had seized upon him, and the horse was tearing through the streets.

Lemaitre looked at his watch in a madness of uneasiness as the time dragged bitterly on. He saw that his half hour of grace was gone. What should he do? He rang, and sent the servant post haste to look for Edith.

"Say that one minute more will be all too late!" he hissed with distorted face.

The servant was away more than two minutes, and returned with astonished face. She found Lemaitre nearly frantic.

"Miss Wentworth is certainly not in the house, sir," she said. "I have looked for her everywhere."

With a gurgled oath, Lemaitre dashed down the steps. He wanted no more duels in England. He looked in at the breakfast-room an instant with a "Come, you ass!" and hurried by the astonished footman through the front door.

As Arthur drove up to the door, Tom Wilson caught sight of Lemaitre's broad spread of back hastening away some distance to the north. Hawke had gone another way.

"There's the Frenchman who wanted to know what train 'oo left by, sir," said Tom.

Arthur glanced and saw him. In a moment he was inside the house.

"Miss Wentworth seems to have gone out, sir," a servant said.

"Vile luck, that's all," said Arthur. He returned to his cab, and drove to his hotel.

He thought that Edith had gone out for an hour or two. The apparition of Danton suggested nothing to him.

Within twenty minutes from the time Edith had left the house, Lady Hilton arrived. She was expected, and was astonished at the absence of Edith. Looking about in much wonderment, she found the three notes on the *escritoire* in Edith's boudoir.

The old lady fainted in the arms of a maid.

Half-an-hour later she opened her eyes, and sat up in the bed, an eager straining look in her eyes.

"My child! my child——" she moaned. Then, stretching out her arms in wild appeal:

"Oh, Cécile! Cécile! if you were only here to get me back my child!"

(To be continued.)

TELEPHONE COMPETITION.

The following is the attempt sent in by winner, whose name appeared last week:

Bur-r-r-r-r-r.

"Are you there? Number 46,532, please. Hurry up."

Bur-r-r-r-r-r.

"Ah! That you, Charlie?"

"*Yes, who are you?*"

"Jack."

"*Just the fellow I want to see. How do you feel after last night?*"

"First-rate, thanks."

"*I wish I did. I'm in the deuce of a scrape.*"

"No; really?"

"*Fact. It's all through that beastly ball.*"

"Oh, I say, you had it pretty hot last night, old man, didn't you?"

"*Never such a fool in my life, I'm in danger of an action for breach. I'm afraid——*"

"Eh, what?"

"*It's a fact. I actually proposed, and you know I am engaged to the dearest little girl in the world.*"

"By Jove! I'm glad it wasn't me. Tell me all about it."

"*She didn't come in till late, and I don't think you saw her. A fetching little woman in red.*"

"No, I didn't; I got home fairly early."

"*Wish I'd gone with you. She quite turned my head.*"

"Poor beggar, I pity you; go on."

"*Well, we danced once, and then sat out all the rest.*"

"Good gracious! You don't say so!"

"*Fact. And the champagne was heady and—and she was so pretty and—well, before we parted we got quite confidential.*"

"What in the world did you say? I hope to goodness you——"

"*I talked no end of nonsense, and you'll have to get me out of the scrape. You see I gave her one of your cards instead of my own.*"

"Great Scott! whatever shall I do. She'll, she'll——"

"*Oh, no she won't, for when she saw the card she went into fits of laughter, and called me an imposter. I ought to have remembered that she heard my name when we were introduced. I got out of it by saying you were my dearest friend, and a perfect Don Juan.*"

"Hang you! What a fool you are."

"*Not a bit, she wasn't the sort to be shocked, and directly she heard the character I gave you she said she'd call upon you, just as I knew she would. When she does so you must tell her I have been called away to Jericho or Timbuctoo. By-the-bye, of course your wife hasn't got home yet from her mother's?*"

"No, no, not yet."

"*Then it's all right. You are just the man to console her for my absence. You admire little women, don't you?*"

"Yes."

"*Well, then she's just your style, and the task won't be difficult, for I rather think in spite of all that she's married.*"

"Well, you are——"

"*Nonsense. It was only a lark and she's a fearful flirt. She told me her name was Nellie Brown, but the letters on her bangle were N. J., and I fancy I heard the hostess call her Mrs. Jones. I shouldn't like to be her husband, and, by Jove, I feel so sorry for him that I'm half inclined to think I behaved badly.*"

"You did."

"*I don't know. She deserved it, and her husband ought to look after her better. I don't think I did him such a very bad turn.*"

"But I say you did."

"*Oh, it's all very well for you to be a St. Anthony. You don't know what a syren she is. Black eyes, black hair——*"

"Oh, be quiet."

"*What's the matter? Good gracious. Your name's Jones? You don't mean to say——?*"

"I do, and I never want to hear of you again."

"*Oh, Lord—upon my word, old fellow—I'm very sorry—but—*"

"Oh, you——"

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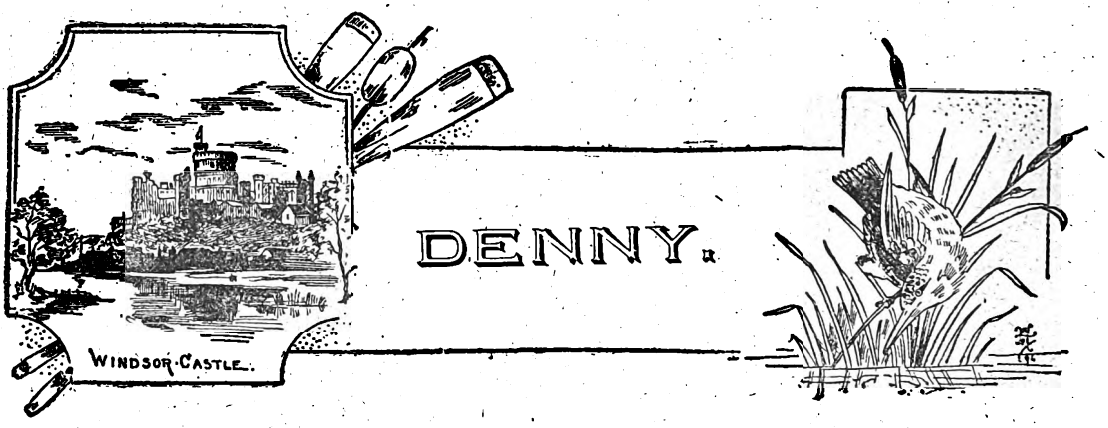

DENNY.

The incident was told to me years ago, when I was second assistant engineer with the Golden Crown Mining Company at Red Dog. At the time it raised by several notches, in my opinion, those rough miners with whom I was so constantly associated; and in later years I have often recalled it when the course of events has brought me face to face with the hypocrisy of a large city.

It was told me the eve before St. Patrick's Day, for I remember having started for a ball given by the Irish element. The night was clear and cold, but the wind was so sharp that I was chilled through, and stopped at the Traveller's Rest for a warming glass of stimulant.

I pushed the door open—the old bullet-scarred door with its heavy hinges—and entered the bar-room. The usual crowd was not in evidence, and of the five occupants, four were in the act of taking their departure. They carried their shovels with them, and as they passed me and went out on the windy street they wished me a good evening. The door closed behind them and I was left alone with Parson Sam.

I walked to the big stove, and while warming my hands asked if the boys were going that night.

Sam pulled at his pipe, and replied, "No."

I remarked the fact that they had their shovels with them, and asked for what use they were intended. Sam took the pipe from his mouth, expectorated in the direction of the base of the bar, and replied:

"Goin' to give Denny an airin'."

"And what is the matter with Denny? Where is he?" I asked.

"Nothin' at present," he replied; "he's in the cemetery on the hill."

"Dead?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied.

"And who was Denny?"

A look of surprise came over his face as he asked:

"You haven't heard of Denny, Mr. Hopkins?" and then, after a moment's pause, he added: "Well, maybe that ain't so strange, after all. You've only been in Red Dog some six or eight months, and Denny died just five years ago, comin' to-morrow."

"And why do they remember him so well now?" I asked.

Sam removed his arm from the back of his chair, rested his elbows on his knees, and, gazing through the open door of the stove at the flickering flames, told me the story of Denny:

"You see, Denny was sorter mild like, awfully gentle and quiet spoken, you know, so the boys didn't pay much attention to him, 'cept when they were in bad humour, and wanted someone to take it out on. He took it all in a quiet, good-natured sort of way, never thinkin' of hittin' back, so we all thought he didn't have no sand. At least that's what we thought until that St. Patrick's Day about which I'm tellin' you.

"There was a good deal of drinkin' goin' on the night before, and four patriotic Irishmen kept it up until they were regular blind. They were a sorry lot when they showed up for work the next day, and the boss gave them a regular rakin' down.

"That mornin' was the first time I ever saw Denny show any temper. He was mad clear through at the thought of workin' on St. Patrick's Day, and refused to take his pick out of the tool shed. When the boss comes up to him and asks what's the matter, Denny just points to the green ribbon pinned on the front of his shirt, and says: 'It's St. Patrick's Day, and I don't work.'

"Any other man would have been given his walkin' papers as quick as shootin', but, somehow or other, the boss always made an allowance for Denny.

"'But we can't stop work, Denny,' he says.

"Denny stood sort of stubborn-like and replied: 'Well, you oughter have some sort of celebration, or, at least, run up a green flag over the office.'

"The boss was for humourin' him, and says: 'And we are goin' to celebrate. At ten o'clock we be a-goin' to fire off a blast in honour of old St. Pat that will blow all the snakes out of Ireland.'

"'At ten?' says Denny.

"'Yes, at ten,' replied the boss.

"That sort of satisfied him. Without another word he seized his pick and went after the boys, a-singin' some Irish song.

"The boss wasn't jokin', for just about the time he said, he called for all hands to leave work, and the engineer came in, and placed the dynamite cartridge and the machine for settin' it off.

"We all got at a safe distance, and stood there awaitin' the explosion. Denny was almost beside himself with delight, and steppin' out a little in advance, he called out for his pal, Jim, to join him, and see the snakes

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come wrigglin' out of the shaft. But Jim didn't answer, for he wasn't there.

"The engineer, who was a-holdin' his watch, seein' that things went off in time, turned round when he heard this, and got awful white. It didn't take no time for us to find we were four short, and them four the ones that had been so drunk the night before. Not a man spoke, 'cept the engineer, and he just said: 'good Heavens!' We all knew them fellows were still in the mine.

"Then it was that Denny made the sixty of us out to be cowards, and him a hero. Without a word he ducked his head atween his shoulders, and set off for the shaft as fast as his legs could carry him, the green ribbon a-flutterin' over his shoulder.

"One or two of us made a move as if to follow him, but the engineer threw out his arm to stop us, and his voice sounded mighty strange when he yelled: 'It's death—forty seconds.'

"We all knew then that the cartridge would go off in forty seconds, and that we had seen the last of Denny. It sort of paralysed the boys, and they just stood round like so many statues.

"To me it seemed as if there was something closin' in on all sides of me—a sort of interferin' with my breathin'—and for the life of me I couldn't take my eyes off the engineer as he stood there holdin' his watch. He was as white as a piece o' paper, and the moisture was runnin' down his face just like it was mid-summer.

"Forty seconds ain't much, Mr. Hopkins, but it seemed like a year to me. I was just beginnin' to think that maybe Denny had got there in time after all, when the engineer let go his watch, and sort o' slipped down, prayin' like. The time was up, and the cartridge exploded.

"They say that drunken men has luck, and I reckon it's so, for them four drunken Irishmen weren't hurt at all. They were lyin' flat in the side tunnel when the cartridge went off, and aside from bein' nearly smothered, got off without a scratch. But it wasn't that way with Denny. He must have been right by the machine when the explosion took place, for he was all sort o' caved in, and his green ribbon was as black as a piece of coal.

"Men had been killed in the mines afore, but never like this, and for the first time there was a complete shut-down—all in the honour of Denny. He had the biggest funeral that ever took place in Red Dog.

"We all felt as though we should like to do somethin' for him, for you see we hadn't treated him just right when he was with us; but we didn't know just what to do, until the engineer purposed that we plant grass on his grave. There wasn't no grass in the graveyard, you know, and we thought it would please him to have somethin' green growin' over him. You see, it was green he was a-wearin' when he died tryin' to save the boys.

"So we had the engineer sent to Chicago for the best grass seed that could be had, and when spring arrived we hauled dirt from the valley and planted it.

"Ever since then, on the night before St. Patrick's Day, a committee—one man from each workin' gang—goes up and shovels away the snow and makes things ship-shape. So when the sun comes a-peepin' and a-smilin' over Balden's Ridge, a-lightin' up St. Patrick's Day, there'll be one little spot of green in the big white wilderness, and the ribbons will be a-flutterin' from the stakes as mark out Denny's claim.

"That's what the boys be a-doin' now."

LANDIS MILLS.

AN EASY WAY TO EARN A WATCH.

On March 4th we wound up a watch and placed it in a safe. It was wound up somewhere between the hours of four and six in the afternoon. It is supposed to run down in about thirty-six hours. If you want this watch, which is a superior article, manufactured by **Mr. HENRY E. PECK, of 71, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.**, and sold by him at five guineas, all you have to do is to mark the time at which you think it will stop on the clock face herewith, and on the line left for that purpose. You may make any number of attempts for this prize, but each one must be on a separate clock-face.

It is an English Lever Watch, ¾-plate movement, jewelled in eight holes, chronometer balance, plain or engine-turned cases, crystal glass, and five years' warranty is given with each watch.

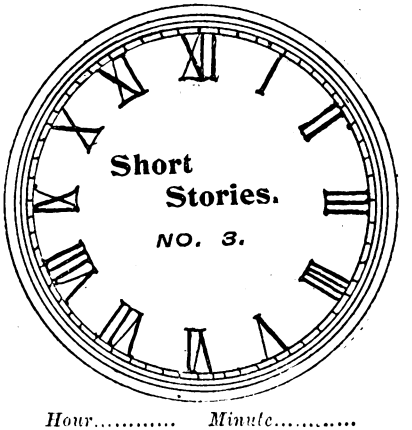
The prize will be awarded to the competitor who draws the hands pointing most nearly to the hour and minute at which it is found the watch in our safe has stopped. To prevent mistakes, put the time also on the space provided.

There is no entrance fee required, but no competition will be accepted unless traced on the diagram herewith.

In the unlikely event of two competitors being correct, the watch will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt first reaches this office.

Competition closes ***Monday, March 22nd.*** Address attempts:

"WATCH" ***Short Stories,*** PEARSON'S BUILDINGS, HENRIETTA STREET, LONDON, W.C.



Hour..... *Minute*.....

Name.....

Address.....

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All Competitions must be sent through the Post.

RESULT OF THE FIRST COMPETITION WILL APPEAR NEXT WEEK.

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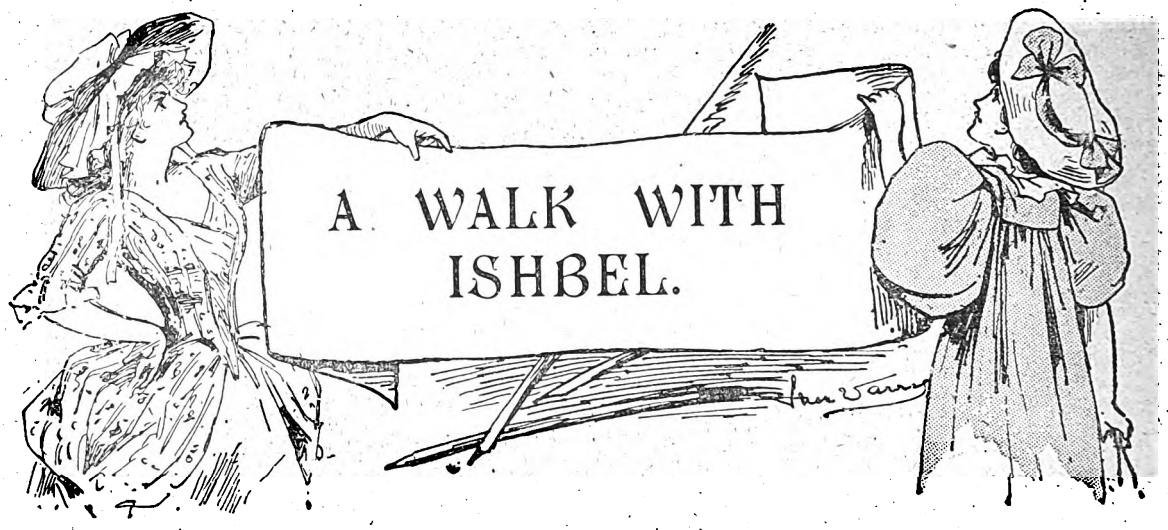

A WALK WITH ISHBEL.

"I DON'T mind talking to you, you know," said Ishbel—she insists on being spelt that way—"because you're not a stupid boy, and you have a nice, detached point of view; but you must promise when I tell you things not to imagine I mean myself."

"How could I imagine you a thing?" I asked reproachfully.

"You know what I mean," said Ishbel with severity. "When I was quite young," she pursued—she is twenty-two—"I used to fancy that authors put themselves into their stories. Now I know they never do."

"Well, *I* am not quite young," I said crossly. "Go on."

"But you didn't promise."

"I promise."

Ishbel adjusted her hat-pin. "Once there was a girl," she began, "who, at the age of seventeen, was sent to Scotland to visit her father's people. That's rather a nice beginning, isn't it?" she interrupted herself. "It sounds as if it might be print. Do you think if you saw a story with a beginning like that you would read it?"

"Candidly?"

"Of course."

"I don't think I should."

There was a dangerous glitter in her eye.

"But," I hastened to add, "reading a story is very different to having you tell it, you know. I could listen to you for a thousand years."

She was mollified. "It won't take that long," she assured me with a smile. There is no word for her smile but delicious.

"Do go on," I said. "Did she like the people?"

"Well, some of them," doubtfully. "You see they were Scotch and she was English."

"Yes."

"And—and young, and they bullied her a little. The next time"—with animation—"I mean—when I go, I don't think they'll bully me."

"I don't fancy they will."

"And so, you see, she didn't have as good a time as she might exactly. But she did have a love affair."

"Oh," said I.

"Yes," said Ishbel, poking the ground with her parasol, "with a detrimental."

"Oh," said I again.

"Yes," said Ishbel. "He was a sort of distant connection of hers, a solicitor, you know. He—he said he was very much in love—and so was she."

"Confound——" I begun.

"I beg your pardon!" said Ishbel.

"I mean," I said sternly, "it is very wrong of detrimentals to make love to girls."

"It is," agreed Ishbel. "But he was very—oh, very honourable. Things had gone, well, they had gone rather far, you know, but the week before she returned,

She had a love affair.

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when he proposed—at least, he didn't exactly propose, but he told her he had only three hundred a year, and that, of course, it was out of the question to marry on that, and he couldn't bear the idea of hampering her with a long engagement, and—what did you say?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Are you sure? You put me out. Well, he said she must not be engaged to him, but he would hold himself engaged to her, and some day when the senior partner dropped off—I do wish," petulantly, "you wouldn't mutter like that!"

I grovelled.

"Where was I?" demanded Ishbel. "Oh, well, then they said good-bye, you know, and she was perfectly miserable—if you look so horribly cross I shall send you home—oh, dreadfully miserable! She felt that she didn't care a straw about other men. Balls and parties had no attraction for her, and fancy, for ever so long she hardly took any interest in her frocks! Oh, it was horrid! She only lived for his letters—and somehow they—well, they were not exactly satisfactory. She supposed it was because he was so very honourable, and they were not exactly engaged, you know. But one day she thought it all over, and decided that sort of thing would have to come to an end. She knew she would never be really happy for a moment till he came, as she knew he would some day, to claim her; but she made up her mind to stop thinking about him as much as possible, and to be a little nice to other men, and try to seem happy, no matter how perfectly miserable she was in reality. The idea was, you see—I think she got it out of a poem—to lock his image up in her heart."

"I see," said I. "And how did it work?"

"It worked very well," said Ishbel reflectively. "She knew she was wretched, but she didn't allow herself to think about it."

"And what happened?" I asked briskly.

"Well, after three years he came."

"Oh! he did!"

"Of course!" said Ishbel sharply. "Did you imagine he didn't?"

I coughed. "And she unlocked her heart?" I enquired.

"Yes," said Ishbel.

"And the image?"

"It's a very odd thing," replied Ishbel slowly, "but it wasn't there!"

I coughed again. "Was her heart—did she find the receptacle—er—empty?" I asked.

"She didn't tell me that," said Ishbel.

We walked on.

"So that," I remarked presently, "was the reason why that long-legged Scotch fellow——"

"But you promised!" cried Ishbel.

A. G. Warwick.

The Incendiary.

I.

BORN on Saffron Hill, her mother English, her father an Italian, handed over for a consideration to a *padrone* when seven years old, married at eighteen to a brute, Lucrezia Batti could scarcely be expected to develop angelic attributes. This is the story of her career:

When a compatriot stabbed her ruffianly husband to death in a drunken brawl, Mrs Batti was left with a couple of wheezy organs, a small quantity of battered furniture, and a two-year-old daughter. The funeral expenses swallowed up the organs; her landlord seized all the furniture of any value for rent. Not being strong enough to drag a heavy organ about, even if she had been able to hire one, she and her little Lucia soon found themselves face to face with starvation. In searching a broken desk which had belonged to the murdered man, she came across a document, partly printed, with a red stamp in the left-hand corner, and "£100" written very large, in the right. Hopefully she carried it to Moses Levi.

"I can't lend nodings on dis," he said, a grin of amusement wrinkling his yellow face. "It's an insurance policy—of no value votefers at present. If your 'ouse vas to gatch fire," he went on, "den you could claim money for all dot vas lost and a few tings perhaps dot you nefer had. Dot's vat de paper's for. Idt's a goot shance for a poor woman."

Mrs. Batti began to understand.

"Then if my sticks was burnt," she rejoined eagerly, "and I claimed twenty pounds, would they pay it?" Twenty shillings would have been an excessive valuation of the little furniture her landlord had left behind, but she did not tell the Jew that.

"Perhaps," he replied, with a knowing wink, "I tells you vot—if you brings me dot paper and agrees to pay me fifty per shent, most likely I'll get you t'irty pounds. You can't get noddings yourself, because you don't know the vay. But I warns you—if dey find out you set de place afire, you gets six monts."

Mrs. Batti understood.

"Do many do it?" she asked.

"Hundreds. Idt's a goot business."

When the reckless woman reached her miserable home.

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little Lucia was crying for food. Few mothers can stand that test and remain honest in thought and deed, even when they have been brought up in a strictly moral atmosphere. Mrs. Batti stole a pair of boots from a shop door, pawned them for two shillings, and bought a loaf. The theft might be extenuated; she had not a penny. But she expended the balance in naptha, and that night the wretched home in which she dwelt was gutted, and the broken, unsaleable furniture wholly destroyed by fire.

Early in the morning, before her tempter, Moses Levi, had opened his shop, she was arrested and charged with arson. Little Lucia was taken from her and sent to the workhouse. The Jew trembled in his dirty carpet slippers when her trial came on, but he was quite safe. His name was not mentioned. The jury found Lucrezia Batti guilty, and the judge sentenced her to twelve month's imprisonment.

II.

In gaol her conduct was almost as bad as it could be. "Give me my child!" she cried, when bidden to perform her allotted task. "I won't do a stroke till you bring me my Lucia!" Starvation and the dark cell were tried in vain. She remained rebellious to the end of her time.

When set free she walked to the workhouse and demanded her child. Lucia, pale and fragile, with black eyes that seemed at least two sizes too large for her small head, was brought to her. She took her in her arms and pressed her to her bosom, cried and laughed over her by turns, nearly suffocating her with kisses. In savage natures, such as hers, the maternal instinct is often strongly developed. Presently the pair set out for the old neighbourhood, where the newly-released prisoner hoped to meet a *padrone* who would let her have an organ. She did not succeed. Night found little Lucia again crying for food, and her mother, who had not earned the customary prison pittance, half frantic. Lucrezia Batti's evil genius impelled her to visit Levi's shop. The Jew stood at the door.

"I never said a word," she whispered. "Give me something to buy bread."

Levi was not benevolent by nature, but gratitude, or something else, prompted him to present her with a shilling.

"I vas glad you did not shplit," he muttered. "Idt proved dat you can be trusted. Come in. I vant to talk."

He led the way to an evil-smelling parlour behind his shop and bade her sit down.

"Idt vas vant of egsperience," he resumed. "S'elp me, it vas! You know nodt de safe vay. Now I tells you——" sinking his voice to a whisper. "You makes a rope of paper dot reaches all oop de shtairs, a t'ick, loose rope. You soaks dot rope in naptha, and you ties a fuse to de bottom end. De oder end you carries oop to de garret. Den you lights de fuse and goes away. Dot does de trick. De shtaircase ish a flue: de ashes of dot rope are blowed away, and nobody knows how it vas done."

"What's the use of telling me that?" she rejoined. "I want to know how I can keep my child."

For the space of half a minute the Jew watched her without speaking.

"I tells you," he said at length. "A frent of mine will give five pounds to anybody dot vill burn down his shop agsidentally. Five pounds ish a lot of money. Mit five pounds you could furnish a room for de liddle von and keep her mit you till you gets anoder job."

Mrs. Batti did not hesitate a moment. "I'll do it!" she cried. "Tell me where——"

"Not so fast," interrupted Levi. "Dis business must nodt be done in dot hurry. I must talk to mine frent."

He gave her another shilling, and she went away with Lucia. Two nights afterwards there was a great fire in the neighbourhood of Houndsditch. No suspicion attached to anyone, and the insurance was paid. But an epidemic of fires set in with characteristics so similar that the insurance companies were convinced of foul play. Consultations took place, and in the end Tonio Batti's widow was caught again. Journals announced the fact in the biggest and blackest type: "Capture of an incendiary." But this time Mrs. Batti had a companion in the dock—the proprietor of the premises she had burnt down. Eighteen months' hard labour was the sentence passed on both.

The incendiary, however, was not now penniless. Her solicitor advertised for a respectable woman to take charge of Lucia. A Mrs. Cuthbert replied, and had an interview with the child's mother before the latter was sentenced, with the result that Lucia went to reside with her at Camberwell.

III.

The eighteen months passed, and a desperate woman—a human tigress, destitute of pity, except for her own offspring—was let loose upon society. She hastened, almost flew, to Camberwell. The house Mrs. Cuthbert had occupied was vacant—to be let. The neighbours knew the little "furrin kiddy" well enough, but no one was able to tell the mother whither Mrs. Cuthbert had removed.

"I reckon her got fond o' the child," one woman said, "and her was afeared you'd take her away when you come out. Her said as much, missus, and that's all as I knows."

Mrs. Batti raged, threatening awful things. When she grew calmer she inserted advertisements in various newspapers. No success attended this course, she consulted a private detective, who speedily drained her of the little money she had left. Continue the search she could not without means, so once more she visited Moses Levi, and this time for employment.

The Jew shook his head. "Too risky," he said. "De bolice know you are out. If dere's a fire you'll be arrested on suspicion. Bedder lie low a few monts."

"I should go mad," rejoined the desperate woman. "Besides, the risk is my affair. You don't run any."

"Dot's true. Vell, I vill see two or t'ree clients and find out how t'ings are mit them."

In his business capacity, Levi had a large number of acquaintances, all more or less permanent residents in Queen Street, many of them in terrible straits.

Mrs. Batti went away and returned the following morning.

"Well?" she said.

"Dere ish some business," replied the Jew, in a wary whisper, "but idt's dangerous. Idt's a lock-up shop mit two families living ofer. If anybody was burnt and you vas caught, idt vould be a hanging matter."

"That's my look out," was the curt rejoinder.

"But idt's my frent's ash vell. I tells you vot," the Jew went on after a pause, "you can do idt and rouse de peoples oop ven de fire ish vell on. If you vas to discover de fire de bolice vould nefer sospect dot you had a hand in idt."

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Mrs. Batti nodded. "Where is the place?" she asked briefly.

"No. 6, Ellaby Street—a tobaconnist's shop. Mishder Green ish de proprietor."

"Where can I see him?"

"Here. At eight o'clock."

At the hour named, Levi introduced the woman to a pale-faced, haggard man of forty, or thereabouts, who seemed in a de perately nervous state. It was clear that he did not like the business at all, but his financial difficulties drove him on. All arrangements were made at Levi's. He explained that it was Mr. Green's custom to shut up his shop at eleven o'clock every night and go home to Bloomsbury; he suggested that Mrs. Batti should call at a quarter to that hour and make her preparations, which would only occupy a few minutes. As soon as the fuse had been ignited, she would leave, and the tobacconist would follow almost immediately. When sufficient time had elapsed for the shop to get well alight it was arranged that the incendiary should return and raise an alarm. Having arrived at this understanding the conspirators separated.

IV.

The plot was carried out. Mrs. Batti lit the make-shift fuse and hastened away. Twenty minutes afterwards she returned. The inflammable stock was blazing. The shop was a fiery furnace. But passers-by were few at that hour, and no one had observed the flames.

"Fire! Fire!" she shouted, at the top of her shrill voice. A boy took up the cry. The policeman on point duty at the street corner blew his whistle and ran up, while the officer hammered at the side entrance with his baton, a man threw stones at the bedroom windows. A boisterous, excited crowd collected as by magic. Over all the uproar rang the piercing cry: "Fire! Fire!"

At last a window was opened. A man looked out.

"What's up?" he shouted.

"Your place is on fire!" roared the constable. "Rouse all the inmates and get out as quickly as you can!"

The man disappeared. As the flames burst through the shutters and the first floor casements, the officer ran off to summon the fire brigade. A moment afterwards the street door opened, and a man rushed out, carrying a child, followed by a woman in her nightdress, similarly burdened. Presently another woman, sobbing hysterically, came out, and then an old man, half clad, with garments smoking. A bystander took off his coat and extinguished the smouldering flames.

"Are you all out?" shouted the constable, who had returned.

The hysterical woman looked about her.

"Yes, yes; I think so," she answered, and fell in a faint at the incendiary's feet. Mrs. Batti was about to slink away. She paused and bent over the fainting woman. A wild cry of terror and dismay burst from her lips. Then she cried:

"It's Mrs. Cuthbert."

"That's her name," said the old man, who was on his knees. "Help me to lift her."

For answer she seized him by the hair and shook him frantically.

"Lucia. Where is Lucia Batti?" she screamed.

The old fellow did not answer immediately. He gazed about him in a bewildering manner, without rising.

"Good Heavens. She's forgot," he cried at last. "She's asleep in the second floor back, and the stairs are afire."

With another scream such as a tigress fighting for her whelps might utter, the incendiary burst through the crowd and dashed into the burning building, just as an engine drove up and the men sprang to the ground.

"After that woman. Fetch her back!" yelled the chief, and two brave fellows plunged through the smoke into the passage that led to the staircase. But the flames drove them out, scorched and half-blinded.

"The stairs are alight from top to bottom, but she has gone up!" shouted one. "Where's the escape?"

There was no witness to that wretched criminal's desperate battle with the fiend she had aroused, and it cannot be described. But her feelings may be imagined. If Lucia died, then she, her mother, would be her murderess—she who, to provide means to recover the only creature she loved, had not only endangered the lives of others, but would have doomed that loved one to the most awful of all deaths.

Before the escape arrived she was seen at a window on the second floor.

A cry of warning had scarcely been uttered when the glass crashed out and fell to the pavement. Smoke and flames burst after it—a fiery cloud, surrounding and enveloping the figure of a woman, who held in her blackened, scorched arms, something wrapped in a blanket.

"Catch!" she screamed hoarsely.

A hundred hands were uplifted. The bundle dropped and was caught safely, its contents, little Lucia, wholly unharmed. Then the straining watchers saw the woman reel back and disappear. The next instant the roof of the old building fell in, and a shower of sparks shot up towards the sky.

"God have mercy on her soul!" said a fireman reverently. "She was a good plucky 'un, and deserved a better fate."

There is little to add. The remains, when discovered, were charred beyond identification. Neither Mrs. Cuthbert nor her husband doubted that the woman who had given her life for little Lucia's was the child's mother, but fearing to lose their charge they said nothing at the time. Of course, Moses Levi took care not to come forward as a witness at the inquest. So what remained of the incendiary was consigned to an unnamed grave.

Helen Mannsch.

A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.

On page 379 several sketches are given in their proper order. £2 is offered to the reader who sends us the most appropriate wording to go under each sketch, the whole to form a story descriptive of the illustrations, and a bottle of Home Notes Bouquet will be given to each of the senders of the next best five attempts.

It is not necessary for competitors to have any literary ability. If you have a good idea, surely there should be no difficulty in putting it down in words. The whole of the story is limited to one hundred words, which may be distributed under the sketches according to the judgment of the competitor.

All that you have to do is to write in the order of the sketches the wording that you think most appropriate, enclose your attempt in an envelope (which should be marked "Picture Story"), and forward it to this office before Monday, March 22nd.

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THE MOUNTAIN KING.

Far away in Lapland, at a place called Aïmïo, near the river Jana, there lived in a little hut a Laplander and his wife, with their small son, Sampo.

Sampo Lappelill was now between seven and eight years of age. He had black hair, brown eyes, a snub nose, and a wide mouth, which last is considered a mark of beauty in curious Lapland. Sampo was a strong child for his age; he delighted to dance down the hills in his little snowshoes, and to drive his own reindeer in his own little sledge. The snow whirled about him as he passed through the deep drifts, until nothing of him could be seen except the tuft of his black forelock.

"I shall never feel comfortable while he is from home," said the mother. "He may meet Hisü's reindeer with the golden antlers."

Sampo overheard these words, and wondered what reindeer it could be that had golden antlers. "It must be a splendid animal," said he. "How much I should like to drive to Rastekaïs with it!" Rastekaïs is a high, dreary mountain, and can be seen from Aïmïo, from which it is five or six miles distant.

"You audacious boy!" exclaimed the mother. "How dare you talk so? Rastekaïs is the home of the trolls, and Hisü dwells there also."

"Who is Hisü?" enquired Sampo.

"What ears that boy has!" thought the Lapp-wife. "But I ought not to have spoken of such things in his presence. The best thing I can do now is to frighten him well." Then she said aloud: "Take care, Lappelill, that you never go near Rastekaïs, for there lives Hisü, the Mountain-King, who can eat a whole reindeer at one mouthful, and who swallows little boys like flies."

Upon hearing these words, Sampo could not help thinking what good fun it would be to have a peep at such a wonderful being—from a safe distance, of course!

Three or four weeks had elapsed since Christmas, and darkness brooded still over Lapland. There was no morning, noon, or evening—it was always night. Sampo was feeling dull. It was so long since he had seen the sun that he had nearly forgotten what it was like. Yet he did not desire the return of summer, for the only thing he remembered about that season was that it was a time when the gnats stung very severely. His one wish was that it might soon become light enough for him to use his snowshoes.

One day at noon (although it was dark) Sampo's father said: "Come here; I have something to show you."

Sampo came out of the hut. His father pointed towards the south.

"Do you know what that is?" asked he.

"A southern light," replied the boy.

"No," said his father, "it is the herald of the sun. To-morrow, maybe, or the day after that, we shall see the sun himself. Look, Sampo, how weirdly the red light glows on the top of Rastekaïs!"

Sampo perceived that the snow upon the gloomy summit, which had been so long shrouded in darkness, was coloured red. Again the idea flashed into his mind what a grand sight the terrible Mountain-King would be—from a distance. The boy brooded on this for the remainder of the day, and throughout half the night, when he should have been asleep.

He thought, and thought, until at length he crept silently out of the reindeer skins which formed his bed, and then through the door-hole. The cold was intense. Far above him the stars were shining, the snow scrunched beneath his feet. Sampo Lappelill was a brave boy, who did not fear the cold. He was, moreover, well wrapped up in fur. He stood gazing at the stars, considering what to do next.

Then he heard a suggestive sound. His little reindeer pawed the ground with its feet. "Why should I not take a drive?" thought Sampo, and proceeded straightway to put his thought into action. He harnessed the reindeer to the sledge, and drove forth into the wilderness of snow.

"I will drive only a little way towards Rastekaïs," said Sampo to himself, and off he went, crossing the frozen river Jana to the opposite shore, which—although the child was unaware of the fact—belonged to the kingdom of Norway.

As Sampo drove he sang a bright little song. The wolves were running round his sledge like grey dogs, but he did not mind them. He knew well that no wolf could keep pace with his dear, swift little reindeer. Up hill and down dale he drove, with the wind whistling in his ears. The moon seemed to be racing with him, and the rocks to be running backwards. It was thoroughly delightful!

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Alas! at a sudden turning upon the downward slope of a hill the sledge overturned, and Sampo was pitched into a snowdrift. The reindeer did not observe this, and, in the belief that its master was still sitting behind it, it ran on. Sampo could not cry "Stop!" for his mouth was stuffed with snow.

He lay there in the darkness, in the midst of the vast, snowy wilderness, in which was no human habitation for miles round!

At first he naturally felt somewhat bewildered. He scrambled unhurt out of the big snowdrift. Then, by the wan moonlight, he saw that he was surrounded on all sides by snowdrifts and huge mountains. One mountain towered above the others, and this he knew must be Rastekaïs, the home of the fierce Mountain-King, who swallowed little boys like flies!

Sampo Lappelill was frightened now, and heartily wished himself safe at home. But how was he to get there?

There sat the poor child, alone in the darkness, amongst the desolate, snow-covered rocks, with the big, black shadow of Rastekaïs frowning down upon him. As he wept his tears froze immediately, and rolled down over his jacket in little round lumps like peas, so Sampo thought that he had better leave off crying and run about in order to keep himself warm.

"Rather than freeze to death here," he said to himself, "I would go straight to the Mountain-King. If he has a mind to swallow me, he must do so, I suppose; but I shall advise him to eat instead some of the wolves in this neighbourhood. They are much fatter than I, and their fur would not be so very difficult to swallow."

Sampo began to ascend the mountain. Before he had gone far, he heard the trotting of some creature behind him, and a moment after a large wolf overtook him. Although inwardly trembling, Sampo would not betray his fears. He shouted:

"Keep out of my way! I am the bearer of a message to the King, and you hinder me at your peril!"

"Dear me!" said the Wolf (on Rastekaïs all the animals can speak). "And, pray, what little shrimp are you, wriggling through the snow?"

"My name is Sampo Lappelilli" replied the boy. "Who are you?"

"I," answered the Wolf, "am first gentleman usher to the Mountain-King. I have just been all over the kingdom to call together his subjects for the great sun festival. As you are going my way, you may, if you please, get upon my back, and so ride up the mountain."

Sampo instantly accepted the invitation. He climbed upon the shaggy back of the Wolf, and they went off at a gallop.

"What do you mean by the sun festival?" enquired Sampo.

"Don't you know that?" said the Wolf. "We celebrate the sun's feast the day he first appears on the horizon after the long night of winter. All trolls, goblins, and animals in the north then assemble on Rastekaïs, and on that day they are not permitted to hurt each other. Lucky it was for you, my boy, that you came here to-day. On any other day I should have devoured you long ago!"

"Is the King bound by the same law?" asked Sampo anxiously.

"Of course he is," answered the Wolf. "From one hour before sunrise until one hour after sunset, he will not dare to harm you. If, however, you are on the mountain when the time expires you will be in great danger. For the king will then seize whoever comes first, and a thousand bears and a hundred thousand wolves will also be ready to rush upon you. There will soon be an end of Sampo Lappelill!"

"But perhaps, sir," said Sampo timidly, "you would be so kind as to help me back again before the danger begins?"

The Wolf laughed. "Don't count on any such thing, my dear Sampo; on the contrary, I mean to seize you first myself. You are such a very nice, plump little boy! I see that you have been fattened on reindeer milk and cheese. You will be splendid for 'breakfast to-morrow morning!"

Sampo began to think that his best course might be to jump off the Wolf's back at once. But it was too late. They had now arrived at the top of Rastekaïs. Many curious and marvellous things were there to be seen. There sat the terrible Mountain-King on his throne of cloudy rocks, gazing out over the snowfields. He wore on his head a cap of white snowclouds; his eyes were like full moons; his nose resembled a mountain ridge; his mouth was an abyss; his beard was like tufts of immense icicles; his arms were as thick and strong as fir-trees; his coat was like an enormous snow mountain. Sampo Lappelill had a good view of the King and his subjects, for a bow of dazzling northern lights shone in the sky and illuminated the scene.

All round the King stood millions of goblins, trolls, and brownies; tiny, grey creatures, who had come from the remotest parts of the world to worship the sun. They did it from fear, not from love; for trolls and goblins hate the sun, and always hope that he will never return when they see him disappear at the end of summer.

Farther off stood all the animals of Lapland, thousands and thousands of them of all sizes; from the bear, the wolf, and the glutton, to the little mountain rat, and the brisk, tiny reindeer flea. No gnats appeared, however; *they* had all been frozen.

Sampo was greatly astonished at what he saw. Unobserved, he slipped from the Wolf's back, and hid behind a ponderous stone to watch the proceedings.

The Mountain-King shook his head, and the snow whirled about him. The northern lights shone round his head like a crown of glory, sending along red streamers across the deep blue sky; they whizzed and sparkled, expanded and drew together, fading sometimes, then again darting out like lightning over the snow-clad mountains. This performance amused the King. He clapped with his icy hands until the sound echoed like thunder, causing the trolls to scream with joy and the animals to howl with fear. At this the King was still more delighted, and he shouted across the desert:

"This is to my mind! Eternal darkness—eternal night! May they never end!"

"May they never end!" repeated all the trolls at the top of their voices. Then arose a dispute amongst the animals. All the beasts of prey agreed with the trolls, but the reindeer and other gentle creatures felt that they should like to have summer back again, although they disliked the gnats that would certainly return with it. One creature alone was ready to welcome summer quite unreservedly. This was the reindeer-flea. She piped out as loudly as she could:

"If you please, your Majesty, have we not come here to worship the sun, and to watch for his coming?"

"Nonsense!" growled the Polar bear. "Our meeting here springs from a stupid old custom; the sooner it

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ends the better. In my opinion, the sun has set for ever; he is dead!"

At these words the animals shuddered, but the trolls and goblins were much pleased with them, and reiterated them gaily, shaking with laughter to such an extent that their tiny caps fell off their heads. Then the King roared in a voice of thunder:

"Yes! Dead is the sun! Now must the whole world worship me, the King of Eternal Night and Eternal Winter!"

Sampo, sitting behind the stone, was so greatly enraged by this speech, that he came forth from his hiding-place, exclaiming:

"That, O King, is a lie as big as yourself! The sun is *not* dead, for only yesterday I saw his forerunner. He will be here very shortly, bringing sweet summer with him, and thawing the icicles in your funny, frozen beard!"

The King's brow grew black as a thundercloud. Forgetful of the law, he lifted his tremendous arm to strike Sampo; but at that moment the northern light faded. A red streak shot suddenly across the sky, shining with such brilliancy into the King's face that it entirely dazzled him. His arm fell useless at his side. Then the golden sun rose in slow stateliness on the horizon, and that flood of glorious light caused even those who had rejoiced in his supposed death to welcome his reappearance.

But the goblins were considerably astonished. From under their red caps they stared at the sun with their little grey eyes, and grew so excited that they stood on their heads in the snow. The beard of the Mountain-King began to melt and drip, until it was flowing down his jacket like a running stream.

By-and-bye, Sampo heard a reindeer say to her little one:

"Come, my child, we must be going, or we shall be eaten by the wolves."

"Such will be *my* fate also if I linger longer," thought Sampo. So he sprang upon the back of a beautiful reindeer with golden antlers, which started off with him at once, darting down the rocks with lightning speed.

"What is that rushing sound that I hear behind us?" asked the boy presently.

"It is made by the thousand bears; they are pursuing us in order to eat us up," replied the reindeer. "You need not fear, however, for I am the King's own enchanted reindeer, and no bear has ever been able as yet to nibble my heels."

They went on in silence for a time, then Sampo put another question.

"What," asked he, "is that strange panting I hear behind us?"

"That," returned the reindeer, "is made by the hundred thousand wolves; they are at full gallop behind us, and wish to tear us in pieces. But fear nothing from them. No wolf has ever beaten me in a race yet."

Again Sampo spoke:

"Is it not thundering over there among the rocky mountains?"

"No," answered the now trembling reindeer; "that noise is made by the King, who is chasing us. Now, indeed, all hope has fled, for no one can escape *him!*"

"Can we do nothing?" asked Sampo.

"There is no safety to be found here," said the reindeer, "but there is just one chance for us. We must try to reach the priest's house over yonder by Lake Enare. Once there, we shall be safe, for the King has no power over Christians."

"Oh, make haste, make haste, dear reindeer!" cried Sampo, "and you shall feed on golden oats, and out of a silver manger."

On sped the reindeer. As they entered the priest's house, the Mountain-King crossed the courtyard, and knocked at the door with such violence that it is a wonder he did not knock the house down.

The King is chasing us.

"Who is there?" called the priest from within.

"It is I!" answered a thundering voice; "it is the mighty Mountain-King. Open the door! You have there a child, whom I claim as my prey."

"Wait a moment!" cried the priest. "Permit me to robe myself, in order that I may give your Majesty a worthier reception."

"All right!" roared the King; "but be quick about it, or I may break down your walls!" A moment later he raised his enormous foot for a kick, yelling: "Are you not ready yet?"

Then the priest opened the door, and said solemnly "Begone, King of Night and Winter! Sampo Lappelill is under my protection, and he shall never be yours!"

Upon this, the King flew into such a violent passion that he exploded in a great storm of snow and wind. The flakes fell and fell, until the snow reached the roof of the priest's house, so that everyone inside it expected to be buried alive But as soon as the sun rose, the snow began to melt, and all was well. The Mountain-King had completely vanished, and no one knows exactly what became of him, although some think that he is still reigning on Rastekaïs.

Sampo thanked the priest heartily for his kindness, and begged, as an additional favour, the loan of a sledge. To this sledge the boy harnessed the golden-antlered reindeer, and drove home to his parents, who were exceedingly glad to see him.

How Sampo became a great man, who fed his reindeer with golden oats out of a silver manger, is too lengthy a tale now.

From the Swedish of Z. Topelius.

Next week will appear the opening chapters of a new Serial, entitled: "AN EPISODE OF LIFE."

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A STORY WITHOUT WORDS.—No. 6. (See page 375.)

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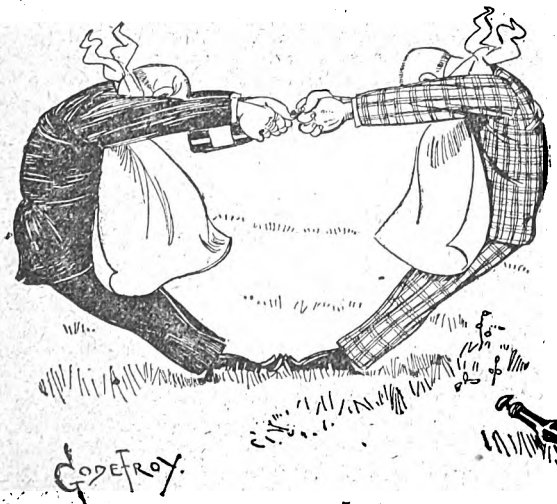

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THE PURLOINING OF RUTH ALLEN.

Tigerford is the name of a little village in the West of England, snuggled at the bottom of a deep valley, as if hiding from curious eyes. The road leading to it comes down a steep hill, winds in and out among the houses, and, finding nothing of importance to warrant its staying, scampers up the hill on the opposite side and is lost to sight over the top. Viewed from either hill, the road might easily be regarded as a mammoth string which drew the houses together and held them in a tight bunch.

Half way up the hill, south of the village, stood a small cottage. This tiny house, with its acre of ground, was known as the "old Barber's place," and was the home of two maiden sisters, Ruth Allen and Sarah Barber.

The two women had a small income, to which each added according to her strength and talent. Sarah was a large-framed woman, strong and masterful, and took the entire management of the place upon herself. She diligently cultivated the acre of ground and from it supplied the villagers with cabbage and tomato plants in the spring, vegetables and fruit in the summer, and seed cucumbers, cauliflowers, and onions for their autumn pickling.

Ruth Allen was the elder, but as she was a small, delicate woman, and slightly lame from an accident in her babyhood, she was regarded by her more robust sister as little more than a child, and looked after and admonished accordingly. Ruth Allen—she was always called Ruth Allen—being a most unassuming body, never questioned Sarah's ways, but meekly submitted to her discipline even in the matter of the dresses she wore and the food she ate. Ruth Allen did the tailoring for the village mothers, cutting down the garments of the elder male members of the family for the younger, cleaning, piecing, and pressing till they "looked as good as new."

"Now, Ruth Allen," said Sarah, as they rose from the breakfast table one wet June morning, "you sit down and finish them trousers of Johnny Gaskill's, for I told his mother on Sunday she would have them to-night, and you'll have to work 'ard to get 'em done. I've got enough to keep me goin' this mornin', with hangin' out the clothes an' killin' caterpillars on the bushes."

"I did think I'd take a little walk round the garden 'fore I begun sewin'," said Ruth Allen. "It would freshen me up a bit. I didn't sleep very well last night."

"Nonsense!" cried Sarah. "You slep' all night as good as I did, an' you ain't no business traipsin' 'round the garden this wet mornin', either. Like's not you'd step on something an' spile it. 'Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do,' and feet, too, for that matter."

Ruth Allen took her work and sat down by the kitchen window, but she could not suppress a sigh as she looked out on the dewy freshness of the garden. Sarah bustled about, washing the breakfast dishes, then, drawing a tub of clothes from under the table, began to wring them out. The window by which Ruth Allen was sitting overlooked the village, and she glanced out now and then.

"You'll get your clothes out before anyone in the village," she said, as Sarah took up her basket. "There ain't anybody got theirs out, not even the Widow Filkins."

"You better be tendin' to your work 'stead of watchin' the neighbours," was all the reply that Sarah vouchsafed.

Thus rebuked, Ruth Allen plied her needle so industriously that Johnny Gaskill was in a fair way to get his trousers before the time promised. Sarah's washing was soon swinging on the line.

"It's a purty hot mornin'," she said, as she came back into the kitchen. "You ought to be thankful you can sit here where it's cool, instead of breakin' your back over caterpillars in the hot sun."

"Yes, I know it, but I ain't thankful."

Sarah tied on her sun-bonnet preparatory to her raid on the ill-fated caterpillars.

"I wish you'd look down in the village," said Ruth Allen. "There isn't a livin' soul got any clothes out, and there's lots of folks in the street. I wonder what's happened."

Sarah came to the window, but it was to examine the progress Ruth Allen was making on the nether garments of Johnny Gaskill.

"Now, if you don't 'tend to your work you'll go and sit in the outhouse," she said. "You ain't done two dozen stitches this morning."

This was a situation not at all desirable, so Ruth Allen sewed swiftly, but her thoughts were busy with the possible happenings in the village. What could be the matter? Something startling, or the Widow Filkins would never have neglected her washing. By-and-bye her curiosity got the better of her discretion. Seeing Sarah down on her knees among the gooseberry bushes, apparently oblivious to everything except the wholesale slaughter of her garden enemies, she laid down her work and stole softly into the sitting-room, where from the wall she took an old spyglass that had been her father's. She hurried back. Sarah was still bending over the bushes. She had not been missed. In her fear of being discovered by Sarah, it was some time before she could adjust the glass to her vision.

"Good gracious!" she said, as soon as she could see clearly. "Somethin' has happened. The Widow Filkins's yard is full of folks. Looks as if everybody in the village was there. There's someone stoppin' at the gate. It's the constable, sure's I'm alive. He's gettin' out and goin' in. My, how I wish I could hear what they're talkin' about. Goodness, here comes another person—a stranger. I wonder——"

So engrossed had she become with the exciting scene, she quite forgot to watch for Sarah. She was suddenly reminded of her by having the glass taken away and hearing a stern voice say:

"Ruth Allen Barber, I am ashamed of you. What do you mean by spyin' on the neighbours with a glass? I have to watch you more than I would a child. You take your work and go and sit in the outhouse."

Ruth Allen said not a word, but humbly obeyed. Sarah hung the glass on the wall and went back to her gardening.

"I've got the trousers most done," said Ruth Allen, when Sarah came in to get the dinner. "Is Mrs. Gaskill comin' after 'em, or have you got to take 'em down there?"

"She's comin' after 'em," replied Sarah. "I'll set on an iron so I can press 'em after dinner."

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The simple meal was soon prepared, and the two women sat down to their dinner. They did not linger over it, but ate as a matter of duty. Sarah finished first and rose without ceremony, brought out the press board, and began pressing the trousers. Her back was towards Ruth Allen. Suddenly she turned round and looked at her.

"You was tellin' fortunes, Ruth Allen. Don't deny it; there's the tea grounds in the saucer. A body would think you were fifteen instead of nigh fifty."

"I ain't but forty-one, come August," said poor Ruth Allen. "I wasn't tellin' fortunes, either. I was seein' if I'd get my wish."

"If wishes were fishes we'd have some fried, 'stead of eatin' salt ham half the year. Now soon's I clear off the table I'll bring down that old lilac muslin of yours, an' you can rip it up. I want to make a new 'tack,' and that'll do for the cover."

"Oh, dear!" cried Ruth Allen, "you ain't goin' to cut that up. I want to keep it."

"What for, I'd like to know. You're too old to wear such a dress, and it might be doin' some good if 'twas made into a 'tack.'"

"I wanted to keep it 'cause 'twas the last dress mother bought me."

Now if Sarah had a soft spot in her heart it was for the memory of her mother, and with a short "keep it, then," she turned to her work. After the dishes were washed they exchanged their dark cotton gowns for stiffly starched print dresses, and sat down to sew in their tidy kitchen. They would have thought it immodest to sit out in the cool shade of the mammoth elm that spread its green umbrella over their front garden.

The long June afternoon wore away. They sewed diligently, and talked little. Sarah's thoughts were on her work, but Ruth Allen's were straying back into her girlhood days, lured there by the sight of the stranger who had been the last she saw enter Widow Filkin's gate.

He had somehow reminded her of her one lover, Harry Chadwick; indeed, in every gathering of men she was sure to see someone who reminded her of him, and she was living over again the delightful days which had ended so suddenly. When Harry Chadwick had won her promise to be his wife, she had added to her softly spoken "yes," "if Providence is willing." If Providence was willing, Sarah was not; and while Ruth wavered between her love for Harry and her fear of disobeying Sarah, Harry grew angry and left Tigerford.

He had never returned, and Sarah was sure that the fire of love that had burned so fiercely in Ruth Allen's heart had long ago turned to ashes. She was mistaken. The coals were there, and the slightest breath from the olden days was sufficient to kindle them into flame, but Sarah never saw their glow.

When Sarah was watering her spinach after supper, Mrs. Gaskill came through the gate.

"It's very warm," she said, sitting down in the doorway and fanning herself with her sun-bonnet. "I'm tired out climbin' that hill, but it's nice and cool up here. Have you heard of the trouble down in the village?"

"No," said Ruth Allen, coming to the door; "is anybody dead?"

"Worse than that," said Mrs. Gaskill. "Folks has got to die, but they ain't got to be robbed. Somebody broke into Widow Filkins's house last night and stole her silver spoons and her mother's old silver candlesticks and four pounds in money."

"Goodness me!" cried Sarah, setting down her watering-pot. "You don't mean to say that robbers have been in Tigerford. There won't be no safety sleepin' nights after this. How'd they get in?"

"Took a ladder and clim' up the back bedroom winder. The money was under a hollow chiny dog on the front mantel. Her spoons was sewed up in her best feather bed, and the bed was cut open, and the room's just full of feathers flyin' about everywhere. I don't b'lieve she'll get them feathers cleaned up all summer."

"Have they ketched the robbers?"

"No; they got away, fer they never found the things had been stole till this mornin'. I tell you we ain't none of us safe now. You'll have to keep locked up pretty tight livin' up here alone as you do. An' what do you think? Harry Chadwick's come back, an' ——"

"Ruth Allen," said Sarah quickly, "you go down into the cellar and fetch up a bottle of that ginger pop fer Mis' Gaskill. She's so warm 'twill cool her."

"Don't say anythin' 'bout him before Ruth Allen," said Sarah as soon as her sister was out of hearing.

"You don't mean she's hankerin' after him yet?"

"I don't mean anything," said Sarah with dignity, "but I don't want Ruth Allen to go thinkin' of those old times. I didn't mean she should know he was here, and—— Yes," she said as Ruth Allen came in with the beverage, "I'm free to confess if there's one thing I'm 'fraid of more than fire, it's burglars. When I've read of folks robbed and murdered in their beds in Lunnon, I've always been thankful that I lived where there was nothin' to molest or make me afraid, but now I shan't take a mite of comfort till that robber's ketched and shut up."

"I ain't a bit afraid of their comin' here," said Ruth Allen; "we have nothin' they'd want to steal."

"Humph, Ruth Allen, they're just as likely to come here as anywhere, and more, too, seein' we're alone. If they didn't find anything to steal, they'd murder us in our beds, and then how'd you feel, I'd like to know?"

Not having had any experience in that line, Ruth Allen was not able to describe her possible sensations.

"Seems to me, if I was goin' to steal anything from you," said Mrs. Gaskill, "it 'ud be your ginger pop. It's very good; the best I ever drank."

As soon as Mrs. Gaskill went away Sarah closed the windows and drew the curtains.

"What makes you shut up so early?" said Ruth Allen. "And I never knew you to draw the curtains till we went to bed."

"Well, I ain't goin' to have any bloodthirsty villains peepin' in the windows at us, and I'm goin' to lock the doors now, too."

"I'd just as soon sleep with the doors and windows both open."

"Them that know nothin' fear nothin', I've always heard say," returned Sarah, pushing the bolt of the kitchen door into its socket.

The kitchen was hot and close, and Ruth Allen was glad when the clock struck nine. Sarah took the candle and went upstairs.

"I declare, Ruth Allen," she cried, stopping short at the top, "if I didn't forget all about shuttin' these bedroom windows. There may be forty thieves in here for all we know," and she peered timidly into the dark rooms, where the flickering candle cast strange shadows.

"Let me come," said Ruth Allen. "I ain't afraid. Nobody'd carry off an old women like me."

"I ain't worryin' 'bout your gettin' carried off," said

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Sarah; "but there's pa's silver watch, and ma's cameo brooch; they'd take them in a minute."

A diligent search failed to unearth any intruder, and Sarah turned to shut the windows.

"We'll smother if you shut the windows," said Ruth Allen.

"I'd rather smother than be murdered," said Sarah, as she pushed the nails into the holes over the lower sash.

It was a very warm night, and Ruth Allen, never a good sleeper, tossed and turned on her bed. If she fell into a light slumber, it was only to be aroused by Sarah's whisper, "What's that, Ruth Allen? I'm sure I heard somethin'."

A few nights of this wakefulness began to tell upon Ruth Allen, and robust Sarah confessed that she felt out of sorts herself.

"I tell you what it is," said she. "We'll both be ill if we don't get our sleep."

"I know it," replied Ruth Allen. "I don't rest hardly any nights, but I could if you'd have the windows open and not keep waking me up."

"Well, I can't sleep," said Sarah, "just as long as that robber is roamin' about; but I've thought of a way so we can both get our sleep. One of us can sleep daytimes, and sit up nights. It can't be me, for I've got the garden to tend to, so it'll have to be you. When it comes nine o'clock you can go to bed and sleep all day, and get up 'bout supper time. I'll have supper ready, and that'll be your breakfast. Then I'll go to bed at night, and you can sit up, and sew, and keep watch. If burglars see a light burnin', they won't come near the house."

"Why not leave a light burnin', and both go to bed?"

"Yes, and waste candles, and set the house on fire. Ruth Allen, there's no knowin' what you'd do if I didn't look after you. I can't sleep till that robber's caught, and till they do catch him you've got to sit up nights."

Ruth Allen, with a meekness born of long submission to a stronger will, gave in, as she always did. That morning at nine o'clock she went upstairs to bed.

She slept till after five o'clock. When she went downstairs Sarah was pouring hot water in the teapot. A plate of toast and a dish of baked potatoes stood on the hearth.

"I'm just puttin' the tea to draw," she said. "As soon as it's done your breakfast'll be ready."

When they sat down to breakfast, Sarah drank a cup of tea, and ate a piece of bread.

At nine o'clock she went to bed, and left Ruth Allen to her watch. Sarah had another reason for keeping Ruth Allen in bed daytimes. Harry Chadwick had been to the house, and asked to see her; but though Sarah told him that her sister would have nothing to say to him, she had caught a glimpse of him two or three times strolling in the field below the house.

Ruth Allen really enjoyed her nightly vigils. For the first time in her life she had a taste of freedom. Sarah slept soundly, as was attested by her cheerful snore; and as soon as Ruth Allen heard it she opened the doors and let in the sweet night air. She hurried through the task which Sarah always set her, and spent the rest of the time in whatever way pleased her fancy.

The moon was at its full, and she wandered through the garden, stooping now and then to caress the blossoms or to pass her hands softly over the dewy leaves. Sarah always reproved her for touching the plants. "She'd spile 'em, handlin' 'em," she said. Sometimes she pulled down her hair and waved it a little on her forehead and coiled it in a loose knot, the way she had worn it when a girl.

"Harry used to call my hair his Golden Fleece. It will soon be a silver fleece," she said to herself.

July had come, and the weather was unusually warm. The nights were not much cooler than the days. One afternoon Ruth Allen came downstairs, dressed in her lilac muslin.

"What have you got that on for?" said Sarah.

"Because it's so hot," said Ruth Allen. "There won't anybody see me. I don't have many callers."

The night was very warm. Just as the sky began to grow light in the east, Ruth Allen blew out her candle and went down the walk to the gate.

"I've a good mind to go up to the oak spring and get a drink. Sarah won't be up for an hour yet."

She opened the gate and went up the hill. As she went she pulled two or three late wild roses and stuck them in her dress. The oak spring—so called because a great clump of oaks grew close by it—was near the top of the hill. There was a trough where horses might drink, but in order to reach it one must make a slight *détour* from the main road. Ruth Allen made a cup of her hands, and filled it at the stream that ran into the trough. She dabbled the cool water on her face. She had not been to the spring for a long time.

All at once she heard the faint sound of hoof-beats.

"It's probably old Mr. Purdy on his way to town," she thought.

She shrank back among the bushes. The horseman drew rein at the spring, and the horse plunged his nose into the water.

"He can't see me unless he turns right round," thought Ruth Allen.

She was leaning on a little clump of bushes that grew on the side of the hill. All at once she felt it giving way. She made a frantic effort to save herself, but the branch to which she clung cracked with her weight. She slipped from her hiding-place. The horseman looked round. It was not Mr. Purdy—it was the stranger whom she had seen at Widow Filkins's gate on the day of the robbery.

"Ruth Allen! Ruth Allen!" cried a familiar voice.

She gazed bewildered. Who was this bearded stranger?

"Ruth Allen, don't you know me?"

"Oh—it's Harry."

"Yes, it's Harry, Ruth Allen. I've stayed here over a month tryin' to get a glimpse of you. I've been back twice since I left you, and both times Sarah has told me you wouldn't so much as look at me. Ruth Allen, I've come back once more to you. Can you forgive?"

"Ruth Allen! Ruth Allen! Come here to me this minute!" Ruth Allen stopped with her hand half extended towards her lover. Sarah was coming swiftly up the hill.

"Is it to be me or Sarah?" demanded Harry, reaching down and clasping her hand. Ruth Allen gave one frightened glance over her shoulder, but her nights of freedom had had their effect.

"You, Harry," she said faintly.

Harry leant from his saddle and lifted the light form of Ruth Allen and set her before him on the horse. Then he turned back into the road from whence he came.

"I'd rather 'twould 'a' been pa's silver watch," said Sarah, as she saw them disappear over the top of the hill.

Flint Wade.

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Books will be sent on receipt of order. **Prize** money will be dispatched on Tuesday, April 20th, 1897. A letter will be sent with book, stating if missing word is correct. To those who find the correct missing word a Prize is guaranteed.

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Answers to Correspondents.

Skipper.—I should think that the largest amount spent in yachting by one individual is the £32,000 a year got through by Mr. Vanderbilt.

Enquirer wishes to know what is the highest rank in the British peerage. ————The Archbishop of Canterbury takes rank immediately after the members of the Royal Family in preference to every other peer.

H. L. T.—A swallow can fly about 600 miles a day, and can swallow 6,000 flies in the same time.

R. N.—Seathwaite, in Cumberland, is generally considered to be the wettest place in the British Isles, its annual rainfall being about 154 inches.

H. P.—There are thousands of people in our large cities who never saw a mushroom growing in their lives, and their ignorance is taken advantage of by unscrupulous hawkers, who cut turnips into imitation mushrooms and sell them at a big profit. The ones you speak of were doubtless made in this way.

J. P.—Birmingham is the greatest brass-making town in the world. Paris comes in a good second. The watch competition will probably continue for some time yet.

Housekeeper.—The best way to ascertain if coffee is adulterated or not is to pour cold water on it. If pure, it will colour the water very slightly; if there is any chicory present the water will become brown.

G. L.—I should think that Japan has developed in the journalistic line more rapidly than any other country. Twenty-five years ago it had only one newspaper. Now it has two thousand.

W. K.—The Bible you speak of is in the Vatican Library. It weighs 520lb.

Subscriber wishes to know the comparative extent of the land and water on the globe.————If the whole of the land above water-level were shovelled into the Pacific Ocean, it would only fill one-seventh of it.

Ernest.—The story of which you speak was sent to us by a contributor as original. You may rest assured that his name will not again appear in *S.S.*

R. D. B.—The title of "mayor" comes from the French, and originally signified "one who keeps guard."

H. T. wishes to know if black is the universal mourning colour.———— Not by any means. On the occasion of a death, the Chinese don white apparel, the Egyptians yellow, and the Turks blue or violet. Even in Europe, in every country except England, violet is the sign of mourning employed by the Court.

I should like to ask my readers to tell their friends about the Watch Competitions now running through *S.S.* Judging from the number of attempts which have come to hand in the first competition at the moment of going to press, they are likely to prove immensely popular.

Walter asks which of Scott's works are considered the finest.————This is rather a difficult matter to decide. Sir Walter himself believed "Waverley" to be his best novel, and "The Lady of the Lake" his best poem, and I fancy most people are of the same opinion.

Guard.—Excursion trains make the greatest profits. Some of these on the Midland Railway nett nearly £200 in one journey.

H. S. T. wishes to know whether I consider soldiers desirable husbands.———— It depends entirely upon the soldier himself. You might as well ask: "Do men make desirable husbands?"

L. J.—A man should have attained his maximum height at the age of twenty-five years.

Farmer wants to know the average number of eggs laid annually by a hen.————I should think from ninety to ninety-five would be a good average.

F. L. D. has heard that the English are the best correspondents in the world, and writes to ask if such is the case. ————It would appear so, when we consider the fact that nearly two-thirds of the letters carried by the postal service of the world are written, sent to, and read by English-speaking people.

B. B.—The world's coal output in 1895 was 288,805,229 tons.

N. W.—Thanks for the letter. In none of our papers, however, do we publish such misprints as that which it contains.

A. M. G.—The flesh of the seal is not at all palatable. An effort was made some years ago to popularise this dish, but it failed. It tastes something like a mixture of pork and kippered herrings. Thanks for the book.

E. M.—It is estimated that in England one woman in every six earns her own living.

L. P. S.—It is practically impossible to give you the exact number of fog-signals used throughout the country during the year. Perhaps you will be able to gather some idea for yourself when I say during one fog alone, of thirty hours' duration, no fewer than 40,000 signals were exploded by one company.

Stoker.—A good railway engine will travel about 1,000,000 miles before it wears out. It depends a good deal, however, upon the kind of treatment it receives. With ordinary service an engine should last twelve years.

Antiquarian.—Denmark owns the oldest national flag in the world. It has been in use since the year 1219.

E. B.—"No Man's Heath" is the name given to nine acres of land situated in four counties—Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, and Derbyshire. It was formerly the favourite resort of prize-fighters, because the police of one county were unable to make an arrest in another.

Sally.—There are 325,000 servant girls in London alone.

Incredulous.—Your friend is quite right. There was, and may still be, in Milan, a clock made of bread. It was made by a very poor Italian, who, being unable to purchase the necessary materials for its construction, set apart a portion of his bread each day, eating the crust and saving the soft part. To solidify this he employed a certain salt, and when the various parts were dry they became perfectly hard. This marvellous timepiece is said to have kept good time.

RESULT OF POST-CARD COMPETITION No. 6.

Two guineas has been awarded to Mr. Francis Paul, c/o B. Brucesmith, Esq., Ealing Grammar School, Byron House, The Park, Ealing, whose four line verse is appended.

The Grand Old Man most plainly meant
To terrify the Tories,
But when on pleasure he was bent,
Maybe he read *Short Stories.*

Notice to Competitors.

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BLACKHEADS or "Maggots," Pimples, Blotches, etc., immediately and permanently removed by my Skin Cleansing Lotion, "CUTISOLINE." Never fails. Hundreds of testimonials. Post free with directions, 1/6, 3/- and 5/-. AUSTIN LENNOX, Skin Specialist, 1, Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, LONDON.

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Permanently cured. A Pamphlet giving sound practical advice and particulars of a successful treatment for a rapid, simple, and inexpensive home cure, forwarded free to all upon receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—Prof. B. L. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

HAIR DESTROYED.

A lady will, on receipt of stamped envelope, send free particulars of a new French Remedy, which permanently removes all Superfluous Hairs, destroying the roots *without injuring the skin*. Simple and inexpensive. Address, Madame "F. B.," c/o Fontaine et Cie., 1, Piccadilly Circus, London.

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A lady who has permanently destroyed Superfluous Hairs on herself, will be happy to forward free, to all similarly afflicted, full particulars of a simple, inexpensive and harmless self-treatment. Send stamped addressed envelope in confidence to Mrs. "T. D." 87, Strand, London.

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CURED. A Lady having cured her husband secretly of intemperate habits, will gladly send particulars of the remedy on receipt of stamped envelope.—Mrs. S. S. BARRINGTON, 4, Featherstone Bldgs., LONDON, W.C.

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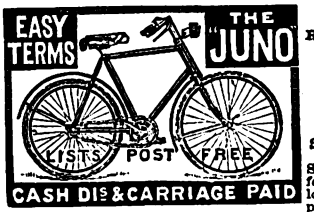

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It is an old, and to some extent true saying that "every man has his price." Most of us

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that we are above being bribed, but when sufficient inducement is put forward we have a propensity for seeing a tempting proposal in a favourable or flattering light. It is not always for monetary considerations that we bend our principles—desire

FOR

fame, glory, and popularity; eagerness for revenge; jealousy and dislike may get the better of our higher prudence and cause us to ignore the scruples of conscience and take the opportunity offered. But greed of wealth is the greatest factor in blinding our

MORAL

sense; not only, sometimes, closing our eyes to duty and self-respect, but too frequently causing us to neglect our vital and physical well-being. For after all, what is wealth without health? While we join in the rush and bustle of this busy world, over-taxing our energies

AND

racking our systems, many of us are morally culpable of reckless disregard of bodily strength and fitness. Then, perhaps, the health breaks down and we seem doomed to long periods of pain and depression. Our very moral and

INTELLECTUAL

natures are under a cloud. Our whole life is darkened. Yet there is a remedy at hand. Hundreds of thousands of ailing men and women have found that **Beecham's Pills** verily "make life worth living." They purify the blood, set right the disordered stomach, arouse the sluggish liver, dispel sick headaches, build up the nervous system, and repair the

DAMAGE

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6,000,000.

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 430. FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 27TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

THE "COMMEMORATION SOUVENIR" 1837] REDUCTION SALE. [1897.

Now that Queen Victoria has reigned longer than any other British Monarch, every loyal subject will agree that a most suitable epoch has arrived for manifesting our loyalty. This event we have distinguished by a "Commemoration Souvenir" Reduction Sale of our "Queen's Royal" Household Carpets and Hearthrugs, &c., at about ONE-HALF their original prices. The "QUEEN'S ROYAL" Carpets have doubled their sales during the past year. They are impervious to dust; the dirt cannot penetrate them.

Sole Proprietors, Messrs. F. HODGSON & SON, City of Leeds.

The "Queen's Royal" Household Carpets and Hearthrugs are extolled by all the Nations of the Earth.

Gigantic Sale of the "QUEEN'S ROYAL" HOUSEHOLD

Sale Price, **2/-** **HEARTHRUGS** (Reg.) Sale Price, **2/-**

In REVERSIBLE RICH TURKEY PATTERNS, measuring 6ft. long and 3ft. wide These HEARTHRUGS have gained a world-wide reputation for MAGNIFICENCE, CHEAPNESS, and UTILITY, having no equal Registered new designs, and considered works of art. Thousands of Repeat Orders and Testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction.

SPECIAL OFFER.—THREE FOR 5/9, SIX FOR 11/3, TWELVE FOR 22/-.

Gigantic Sale of the "Queen's Royal" Household Reversible Rich Turkey Pattern

CARPETS (Reg.)

Trade Mark on all Goods. Beware of Imitations.

Admittedly the Cheapest in the World, Woven without seam. Altogether superior quality, with handsome border to correspond. A marvel for excellence and beauty. Thousands of repeat orders and testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

		s. d.			s. d.			s. d.
6ft. by 9ft.	Reduced Sale Price	7 6	9ft. by 10½ft.	Reduced Sale Price	13 6	9ft. by 15ft.	Reduced Sale Price	19 6
8ft. „ 9ft.		9 0	9ft. „ 12ft.		15 0	12ft. „ 13½ft.		22 0
6ft. „ 12ft.		10 6	9ft. „ 13½ft.		16 6	12ft. „ 15ft.		25 6
9ft. „ 9ft.		11 0	10½ft. „ 12ft.		18 0	12ft. „ 18ft.		30 0
			12ft. „ 12ft.		21 0	12ft. „ 21ft.		35 6

REMARKS.—A lady customer writes complaining that we send out too large a Carpet for the money. Be it so or not, we send out no Carpet measuring less than 6ft. by 9ft.—even for 2s. 11d. **TEST THEM. THEY WILL SURPRISE YOU.**

EXTRAORDINARY REDUCTIONS.

100,000 "ALARM" CARPETS

(*Registered*). **GUARANTEED GENUINE BARGAINS.**

Sale Price **2/11** EACH.

This Gigantic Offer is a Special Contract, made with readers of *Short Stories* only. WE WILL FORWARD DIRECT FROM THE LOOMS TO ANY ADDRESS ON RECEIPT OF AMOUNT, A GENUINE WOVEN, SEAMLESS, REVERSIBLE CARPET, THE LARGEST EVER SOLD AT THIS PRICE.

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Value unequalled in the Annals of Advertising. As a favour, kindly Examine and Compare these Carpets.

"SHORT STORIES" CARPET COUPON. 27/3/97.

On receipt of this Coupon and P.O.O. or Stamps for amount, we guarantee to send goods as above to your address in any part of the United Kingdom.

Cash returned in full if not satisfied. (Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.

All orders despatched same day in rotation as they arrive by post.

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Can be obtained for 6d., plus a pound or two of Sugar and a little Yeast.

THE FINEST BEVERAGE IN THE WORLD.

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Newball & Mason,

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If unable to obtain it in your neighbourhood, send 9 stamps for sample bottle; or samples of both Wine Essence and Extract of Herbs, post free for 15 stamps.

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BALD PATCHES ERADICATED BY USING ESAULINE.

TESTIMONIALS DAILY.

POST FREE (secretly packed) in British Isles,

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10/6

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HALF-GUINEA

COSTUMES.

WORN BY LADIES OF EVERY DEGREE.

PERFECT in Fit, Style, and Quality.

THREE GOLD MEDALS.

Ladies should write for latest Sketch-book of Fashions for Ladies and Children, sent FREE.

SPECIAL CALENDARS FREE.

MODEL 647.

All purchasers during the next few weeks will receive an Ornate Souvenir designed by Raphael Tuck.

NEW DRESS GOODS

A Box of 1,000 Patterns, including 250 Varieties of SERGES, sent free on approval.

TWO NEW DESIGNS.

MODEL 648.—Pretty up-to-date Maid's Costume, well-cut Bodice, Fashionable Sleeves, Tailor-made Skirt.

Size 35 38 42 in.
Price 6/11 7/11 8/11 ea.
Size 46 50 in.
Price 9/11 11/- ea.
Carriage 6d. extra.

A very smart, well-cut, full-fronted Bodice, shaped to the back. The sleeves are of the very latest shape. The skirt is full and wide, and made in a recent tailor design. Price complete 10/6. Safely packed and carriage paid for 9d. extra. Skirt *only*, as sketched, 5/6. Carriage 6d. extra.

10/6

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Sizes in Stock fit figures 34, 36, 38 in. round bust (under arms), skirts being 38, 40, 42 in. long in front. Larger or special sizes made to measure for 1/6 extra.

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SUCH AS

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ANNUAL SALE SIX MILLION BOXES.

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No Home should be without a "Domestic"

MILK & CREAM SEPARATOR

Pure thick cream can be obtained without the trouble and waste of skimming the milk with a spoon. 3/- carr. free.

"I would not be without one for anything."—*Testimonial.*

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Permanently cured in a few days by a simple, inexpensive self-treatment. Particulars free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to Dr. A. M. CURTIS, York Chambers, Adelphi, London, W.C.

TOO THIN IN THE BUST.

Ladies desiring any improvement in this direction should send me stamp for free particulars of a simple, inexpensive, harmless self-treatment, whereby a *full natural bust* can be obtained. Address, in confidence, Mrs. B. K. NORRIS, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London, S.E.

BEFORE.

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ARSENICAL COMPLEXION WAFERS

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BLACKHEADS

or "Maggots," Pimples, Blotches, etc., immediately and permanently removed by my Skin Cleansing Lotion, "CUTISOLINE." Never fails. Hundreds of testimonials. Post free with directions, 1/6, 3/- and 5/-. AUSTIN LENNOX, Skin Specialist, 1, Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, LONDON.

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CURED. A Lady having cured her husband secretly of intemperate habits, will gladly send particulars of the remedy on receipt of stamped envelope.—Mrs. S. S. BARRINGTON, 4, Featherstone Bldgs., LONDON, W.C.

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TOO STOUT

If you require a reliable remedy for the relief of superfluous fat, send for a box of my "H.D." Pills. No starvation required; you may eat and drink what you like, yet I guarantee to either sex a permanent reduction of 5lb. to 7lb. weekly. They are a harmless vegetable preparation; successful in the most stubborn cases, and improve health and figure. Their action is rapid, certain, safe, tasteless, and highly recommended. Prices, 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 11s., post free, plain wrapper. PROFESSOR F. T. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

A LOVELY FIGURE

with *full, perfect, natural Bust*, obtained by a simple, inexpensive self-treatment. Success guaranteed. Highly approved and recommended by the Medical Profession. For testimonials, press opinions, and free particulars, send stamped envelope in confidence to Madame "B. J." Oriental Toilet Co., 87, Strand, London.

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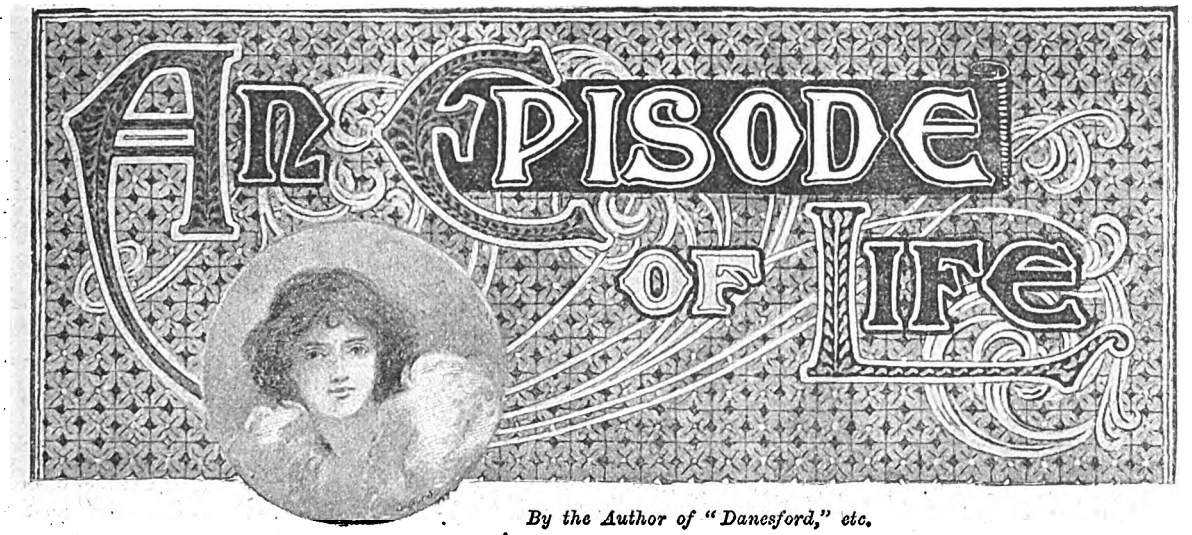
SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 430.] For the Week ending March 27th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

New Serial Story.] **[Starts To-day.**



By the Author of "Dancsford," etc.

CHAPTER I.

DESPITE THE WORLD.

A cosy villa stood in one of those old-fashioned winding roads to the north of Regent's Park, where town and country dispute supremacy. Here the buzz of the mighty city sounds but dimly, and yet a whistle blown shrilly will bring a hansom to the garden gate almost before the echoes have died away. It lay back some distance from the road, shadowed by spreading trees, encased in shrubs.

The tiny garden in front was gay with bright geraniums and calceolarias planted in prim rows. The patch of grass by the trimly-kept gravel path was still green and bright, and overhead the pale, full moon shed silver gleams upon leaf and stem, upon flower and weed alike. No town garden looks so well as by moonlight, and on a fair June evening this made-up townly plot vied with its wilder country cousins in beauty.

Within the villa, in a comfortable if small room on the ground floor, a man and woman were seated at the dinner table, from which Thomas, most discreet of men, had just removed the plates and dishes of a more than usually elaborate meal.

It was to be the last these two would enjoy there. The remembrance of many a pleasant meal came to him as absently he sipped his coffee, and, staring straight before him, doubted the possibility of carrying out his resolve.

She was very beautiful, masses of auburn hair graced a well-poised head, large dreamy brown eyes, which upon occasion would flash darkly, but which could, as he well knew, kindle with the warm glow of love, a graceful figure, a good presence—yes, he knew it all; he delighted to call it all to mind, though he dare not meet her eyes. Another charm was hers, that of a sweet, deep, musical voice—a voice as limpid as falling water, a voice once heard never forgotten. Involuntarily a sigh escaped him.

"Why, Roy!" she laughed, "why that sigh? It was quite tragic. Do you meditate some dark deed? What murder is afoot? Ha, ha!"

"You know, Nelly, how I loathe this parting. You know how you have grown into my life, but you do not care as I do. If I sighed it was because I wish this thing had not to be—wish it, aye, with all my heart! But you mock me, chaff about tragedy, and cry: 'Ha, ha!'"

"You are to be married," she interrupted, stealing a glance at him sideways.

"Exactly. I am to be married. I must, I am told, or be ruined."

"And this lady, this Miss Arbuthnot—your cousin, is she not?—has lots of money, and they say is simply lovely."

He laughed vexedly. It was bad enough to marry to order, but to be jeered at, and by her of all people, made it worse.

"You know she is plain in my eyes," he said bitterly. "I have no voice in the matter. The governor says—oh, you know what he would say, and there is an end of it!"

"Yes, I suppose so," Nelly answered wearily; "and an end of our friendship."

"Our what, Nelly?" he asked in wonder.

"Best call things by their true names. Friendship in these days means something to exist so long as is convenient. I had a friend once, Roy, a school chum; we vowed eternal love; by-the-way, you and I did that! She and I never speak now. When I came here, she—well—you know—her people. Of course, they could do nothing else."

"And I have taken you from friends, ruined your life."

"Now, my dear Roy, how many times have I told you not to talk to me in that strain. Ruin! nonsense! Where was I when we met? You remember, left dependent upon the charity of distant relatives who grudged the daughter of a spendthrift the slight assistance they gave. My life—I shudder when I think of it. No encouragement, no help,

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no love, but poorly-veiled sneers, covert sarcasms; possibly well meant, but none the less cold lectures on the necessity of strict economy. And each time ending with: 'My dear, thank God we can help you, even if we stint ourselves to do it. It is our duty.' It was that last, that pharisaical patting on the back, that made my blood boil—stint themselves! Not they; there was no need. It was what Charley Duff calls 'kid.' And then the family prayers, the daily church, parish visiting, intruding upon those who did not want us, but did want blankets and soup for nothing, and who laughed behind our backs. It was too humdrum, too irksome, oh! it was hideous. And then, Roy, I met you. I was taken from it all. I saw life free from conventional trammels. And here I am. Free! think of that—the hideous past is past. Do not go back to it at our last meeting. This remember: that whatever happens, I will never say, or think, you ruined me."

"And you do love me, Nelly?"

"You know I do, but what is the use of that? We part to-night."

"Unless when I am married——"

"No, no, for your sake, Roy—we must be strangers. You and I strangers, Roy!" and she laughed lightly. What it cost her to do so he never knew.

"You don't seem to care much," he muttered as he had done before.

"We must look the inevitable in the face. You must marry, we must part."

"The force of that remark is evident, if unpleasant," he answered shortly.

"Now do not embitter our parting; let us remain friends, Roy."

Absently to appearance, but, perhaps, with design, she took a rose from a magnificent cluster before them, and fixed it in her dress, where its deep red colour burned in glowing contrast with the delicate white of her shoulders.

"Who gave you those roses, Nelly?"

"Charley Duff."

"You see him often, it seems. It is always Charley Duff. Do you like him?"

"Yes," she answered simply, as she drew the epergne towards her and pressed her face against the flowers.

There was a pause, he hesitated to ask the question which trembled on his lips. He glanced across the table, but she busied herself in deftly rearranging the roses and would not look up.

What delicate taper fingers she had, he mused, what well rounded arms, what a goddess upon earth, as she sat toying with the flowers. It pained him, for she was going out of his life. Impatiently he asked: "And when I am gone?"

"Perhaps! He is going round the world in his yacht. He has money and is a gentleman. What can I do?"

"You make your arrangements quickly," he said bitterly.

"You leave me, Roy. I do not blame you. Why should you be angry with me?" she answered in dead, dull tones.

He drummed the table angrily with his fingers, but did not answer. Perhaps he did not hear the question, the tone of voice struck him, the words were unheeded. There was a heavy despair in her face, her arms rested listlessly on the table, that joyous ring in her voice, which he knew so well, was absent. The thought of what she was about to do hurt his vanity, cut him to the quick; it was a stab indeed.

Never had she been so dear as now, and he had lost her. The coming separation was his doing, to advance his interests. He cursed the necessity, but recognised the force of circumstances. He could not blame her and would not. He knew she did not wish to leave him, the sad yearning in her eyes told him that, but it must be.

The end must come, and he thought bitterly, the sooner the better. Pride came to his rescue, an ungovernable cruelty for the moment mastered his better instincts. He ignored the hopeless tone, the unshed tears, and caught at the cold words.

"And you learn to forget quickly, too," he said with a harsh, bitter laugh.

"Roy!"

It was all she said, but the anguish it conveyed made him shiver. It made him feel, as no passionate outburst could have done, what a cad he had been. He sprang from his chair and wound his arms round her, pressing her head against him as he kissed her passionately.

"Nelly, I am mad—I did not know what I said. Forgive me, darling. The thought of losing you makes me a brute. Heavens! what am I to do?"

Nelly quivered in his embrace, and, as he released her and walked up and down the room with quick, impetuous steps, sank her head upon her arms and burst into tears. The high tension at which her nerves were strung gave way; she had played a part, assumed an indifference, at what mental agony he did not guess even now. But she could keep it up no longer. His taunt had broken down her self-control. She had passed from one extreme to the other, and was now but a sobbing, broken-hearted woman.

And fixed it in her dress.

Roy Arbuthnot paused in his tramping, and looked across at her grievedly. He had brought on this scene, he had made this parting, for parting it must be, so bitter. It was his folly, his stupid vanity. He saw now, when it was too late, how true she was to him, and how she would have saved him pain. And now she had given way, she was crying as if her heart had broken, as indeed it had. She would never love another man. He could bear it no longer. Few men can bear to see a woman cry. He crossed to her side, and again drew her to him.

"Nelly, my darling, look at me. Say you forgive. I was not sane when I said that."

She smiled through her tears; she could not resist.

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"Roy, you know I love you. I cannot let you go. If you leave me now I shall die. You stabbed me when you said that. But you do love me, Roy. Must we part? It will

She smiled through her tears.

kill me. Stay with me. I will be your slave. I will work. I will earn money. You know I have talent. I will do anything to keep you by my side. In other lands, Roy, away from old associations, I will prove what a woman's love can do. You and I will go together through life. I love you. Ah! Roy, I can say no more than that. I love you. You must not leave me. My heart is breaking."

He was carried away. "No," he said, "whatever happens, no!"

The colour mounted to her cheeks once more, she stood on tiptoe, and as the old saucy smile came back to her lips, she drew his head down and kissed him again and again.

Then she plucked Charlie Duff's rose from her bosom and threw it in the fire grate with a gesture of disdain.

"And the others also," laughed Roy, suiting the action to the word and flinging them, stand and all, into the hearth, where the glass shivered into fragments.

CHAPTER II.

Love and Interest.

Seated upon the balcony at White's, behind the gay lines of Marguerite daisies and glowing red geraniums, Roy Arbuthnot absently sucked the stump of a cigar which had been out some minutes.

His thoughts were far away, the passing traffic had no interest for him. He saw a tear-stained but radiant face looking up to him, he felt soft arms round his neck, he heard a tender voice cooing love, but he was miserably, utterly wretched.

A letter lay open in his hand. His father had written to say that failing to catch him at his chambers he would look in at White's at one o'clock, and requesting that Roy would lunch with him, as there were several things he wished to discuss.

Roy knew what that meant—he must marry. The bride-to-be was ready, and he was expected to fall in with an arrangement already cut and dried. The world would say it was a good match. He, the heir to large estates—if encumbered—and to the baronetcy; she, possessed of great wealth, an amiable woman, well born, of equal rank; he had no excuse. But how unattractive she was!

How unlike Nelly! There was the rub. Nelly with beauty and ruin, Mary with—well—money; and money he must have. But a few hours ago and he had sworn, come what might, he and Nelly should go hand in hand through life, and now his father's note brought him up with a run. So, round and round, his thoughts sped. Passion, love on the one hand, prudence, self-interest on the other. He was in a mood to be swayed. He felt he was weak, vacillating.

Had Nelly been by his side, her voice, her presence would have been decisive. Little pleading on her part would have been necessary. He would then and there have cast the future to the wind, and she and he would have started for the other side of the world. But she was not, and he unwillingly weighed possibilities.

It all came back to one point, Nelly and ruin, Mary and respectability. And he must choose to-day. He must think, and he hated thought. It made him feel old. He could get no further, the position was hopeless. In extremity he turned with pleasure as an old friend stepped out on the balcony.

"Ah! Jack, the very man of all others I would like to talk to. Sit down, old man, and give one the benefit of your varied experience. I am in a hole."

"What is it, Roy? You are demonstrative this morning."

"Simply this," Roy answered quickly. "You know Nelly, yes, of course you do. The governor knows nothing of that—eh? why do you laugh?"

"Does he not? Why, he chuckled about your friendship—as he was pleased to call it—only yesterday—laughed, and said of course such a friendship was part of the being of every young man. A natural result of having nothing much to do in the world."

"The old rip!' But here is the trouble. The dad now insists that I must marry. I tell you, Jack, I love her and cannot marry."

Jack Sinclair laughed a low, amused chuckle as he blew a cloud of cigarette smoke from his lips.

"The old, old tale, Roy. The lady must go out of

A letter lay open in his hand.

your life. She won't break her heart, my boy. Your heart, doctored with seven thousand a year—that is about the figure, is it not?—will not cease its beating."

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"I did not expect this cheap cynicism from you, Jack. I asked you as a friend, what am I to do? And you answer me with aphorisms replete with the wit of the halfpenny evening journal."

Jack Sinclair laughed delightedly.

"Really, Roy, you are amusing this morning. I wish Bathurst were here; your tragic air would afford him a story at many a table. He would find himself possessed of a really humourous idea, which, to do him full justice, is not often his lot, and he would make the most of it. I can see him now spreading the news broadcast. Scene: Roy, despondent; enter irate parent; the fair Nelly—clever actress—in tears, the *ingénue* in the background, who advances to the footlights; they—that is, you and she—embrace; exit Nelly, melodramatically; curtain. My dear Roy, it would bring down the house. He would introduce that sentence about the halfpenny evening journal with great effect."

"Ridicule then, and nothing but ridicule," Roy said vexedly.

"From me, now, nothing else. It won't do, Roy. You have in this to fall into line. You are on the coach, but your father drives. You've got to submit. For the lady, well, she must shift for herself. Don't you worry about that. She will do it."

Blew a cloud of cigarette-smoke from his lips.

"That is all very well, but I tell you again, I love Nelly, and have no wish to marry. Life as it has been, has satisfied me. Why should I marry?"

"Necessity, my boy. You've got to the end of your tether. You know that. Creditors are, to those in our position, most accommodating, foolishly so perhaps, but when the dun fails to get the bit on account for which his soul longs, he, like the proverbial worm, turns at last. You know, Roy, several have turned already, have in fact become sea-serpents in voracity. And really the lady is very charming."

"That is the worst of it, Jack. Mary is such a charming girl that when I think of her sacrifice I know I am a brute. I can never feel to her as to Nelly, it is no use trying to persuade myself, and the worst of it is, her glorious voice reminds me so of Nelly. Never did two women speak so alike. I shall always hear Nelly and see Mary. And then Nelly will break her heart. For Heaven's sake tell me what I am to do. I revile myself and everybody when I try to think."

"You know what I think—marriage. I mean no disrespect to Nelly when I say she will find consolation. Many another has been similarly placed. Not one has broken her heart. They cry, may be act the heroic, but acquire a new possession, and in conquest find recompense. Why, she may have someone in view already. Eh! you start—tell me!"

Roy started vexedly, and then as the other pressed for an explanation, told how Nelly had mentioned Charley Duff and his proposed trip, and how it had piqued him.

"A lesson for you, Roy; take it to heart," sneered Jack Sinclair. "Charley knows his book, and she would, I am sure, be a charming companion for a trip of that sort. She played her cards well and she held the fifth honour."

"Don't tell me she was not in earnest," Roy answered hotly. "I will not believe it."

Jack laughed. "All right, as you will. But here comes your father. He won't want me. He wants to talk to his dutiful son. If I can help, let me know; I mean it. I am at your call, but *I* say do not thwart the old man."

"A bit brutal, I fear," muttered Sinclair to himself, "but I had to hit hard."

As he disappeared through one of the windows which opened on to the balcony, Sir Richard Arbuthnot advanced with sprightly steps to where his son was sitting.

The baronet was a well-groomed man of fifty, who looked from his glossy silk hat, set jauntily on the side of his head, to his shiny boots, what he was—a *blasé*, cynical man of the world. Roy got from him his good looks, for Sir Richard, or Dick, as his intimates called him always, had been in his younger days a distinctly handsome man. Even now his iron grey hair was abundant, his eyes still retained their fire, and if his face was lined and tired-looking, he aged well. Slim in figure, holding himself erect, he stepped through life briskly, and cast off easily the worries which came his way.

"Well, Roy, I have run you to earth at last," he said smilingly, showing a set of white, even teeth, of which many a younger man might well have been proud. "And I am hungry; let us have some lunch. Breakfast with me this morning consisted of one piece of dry toast and a B. and S. We were late last night."

"And the usual luck?" asked Roy, with some little disdain, for, like many a son, he thought his father should long ago have ceased to sow those oats which bear no crop.

"Yes, luck has been with me lately what you neatly describe as usual. It will change, no doubt, but last night it was—well, the English language is singularly deficient—let it pass."

"And this has prompted you to tell me once more that I must marry Mary," Roy put in hotly. "You have lost, and I am to square accounts."

"Do not state things so bluntly, Roy. It is vulgar. Nothing is so misleading as a fact, and generally a fact unnecessarily irritates; it requires to be handled with some skill. Now put it in a different setting. You are heir to large estates, an old name. You may say that the property is mortgaged to the hilt. You may even say that I am responsible for that. You seem in a mood to do so. By-the-bye, you should not sup so late, it warps one's judgment in the morning. I speak from experience, and for once you might admit I may be right. But to return, when your grandfather died he left the estates as—as in fact they are now. I married, married well, and in consequence have had a good time. Your good mother occupied the eminently useful position of being a woman with money. And she had more to recommend her than that. She was a woman of the world, she did not expect me to remain tied to her side like a lap dog by a string. As a consequence, you know that we have sailed through life pleasantly, not expecting too much and so not disappointed. I only ask you to profit by my experience. As I have been happy, why should not you? Mary is a charming girl."

"But I do not wish to marry."

"Neither did I, Roy. I thought as I dare say you do, that I was well content. Debts would be paid—some time. Things would right themselves—somehow. Why worry about it immediately? 'Enough to the day is the evil thereof,' and so on. The old, old complaint, my boy. My

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father put the position to me frankly as I do to you. His views were not my views. The idea of a hum-drum married

Sir Richard waited.

life had no attraction for me. Still, he was right, as I soon found out. I married for money and have never regretted the step. Your mother is a woman in a thousand and——"

"But I tell you I love Nelly."

"Now, Roy! ask yourself what do you mean by love? Do you know any case, outside a novel, where man, for years, finds one woman perfect? In my reading days the hero and heroine were always left in the happiness of anticipation upon the altar steps. No account was given of the trials of every-day married life. The author dare not. The romance would be lost in the inability to pay expenses, or in the thousand and one events which make love, as the idealist writes of it, a dream of the past. Now if you marry without this so-called love, which after all only blinds you to the imperfections of one woman in particular, you do not start from so high a platform, and the descent to every-day common-sense is gradual and easy—love is imaginative and seldom outlasts many years of cold reality. Sincere affection and honest admiration will; and your cousin is a most charming girl."

"I know that, and there is the trouble. She is in every way too good for me."

"Tell her so, Roy. She will like that. Women can always appreciate praise, flattery. They may protest, but they like it all the same. And, seriously, something must be done. Creditors are pressing on all hands. If it were known that you were about to contract a wealthy marriage, the cormorants would cease to be voracious. Now, they would try to digest even the stone and mortar of our old home; all our difficulties would be at an end. I have not stinted you in the past, Roy, and you must admit you have drawn upon me freely. Now I appeal to you. It is not as if I asked you to marry an impossible woman; Mary is fond of you, she is charming, has all the good qualities, and so on. There is no reason why you should not be happy. Ruin, Roy, ruin; think of it for your mother's sake—even for mine."

"And Nelly, what of her?" Roy asked helplessly.

"I think we may leave that lady out of the account," his father answered drily, as if that side of the question were not worthy of discussion.

Roy rose hurriedly from the table, and paced quickly up and down the balcony outside. He felt stifled indoors. His father's mixture of cynicism and worldly common-sense disgusted while it convinced him. He would have liked to have hurled reproaches at his head, to have laid bare the selfish indifference to his feelings, the better instincts which he possessed; but he knew his father had acted a part, prompted by necessity which must be faced. It could only end in a row, what was the use? He knew his father well enough to realise that he would throw off with an easy indifference any reproaches levelled at him. His answer would be: "Go and do as I did." Again, what was the use? Poor Nelly! He had already in his mind called her poor Nelly, and it broke from him involuntarily. Must she be put aside that he might live in ease and comfort? But then, his mother! that gentle woman whose life, as he knew, had been not entirely free from trouble, who had, for the name of the family into which she had married, submitted to many slights, who loved him with a mother's love for an only son—her future, her happiness, depended upon his decision. It was maddening.

He strode up and down angrily. He had forgotten his father, who still sat at the luncheon table and watched keenly the figure of his son as he passed the window time and again with bowed head and contracted brows.

Sir Richard waited, but still Roy walked the balcony with quick, impatient strides.

At last he left the room silently, but he mused: "It is a facer for the lad. I went through it, so must he. Curious how events repeat. We Arbuthnots have lived for generations by marriage."

(To be continued.)

RESULT OF ASTERISK LETTER COMPETITION.

No. 2.

Several competitors correctly filled in the letters omitted in this competition, and the prize has consequently been forwarded to the sender of the first to hand, who is Miss E. Corbett, The Cottage, Little Park, Enfield. The sentence is appended:

Anon, however, when of a sudden they all came upon Damaris herself, seated with her woollen work in a grassy hollow, with rocks between her and the sun, the Layton youth had to change his mind abruptly. The light of recognition in the girl's fair face made him think the king's commissioner might even be his rival.

Result of Watch Competition.

No. 1.

The correct time in the Watch Competition, No. 1, was 1hr. 27min. Mr. W. Mottershead, 17, Norfolk Street, Hyde, Cheshire, alone correctly named this time, and the Five Guinea Watch has consequently been forwarded to him.

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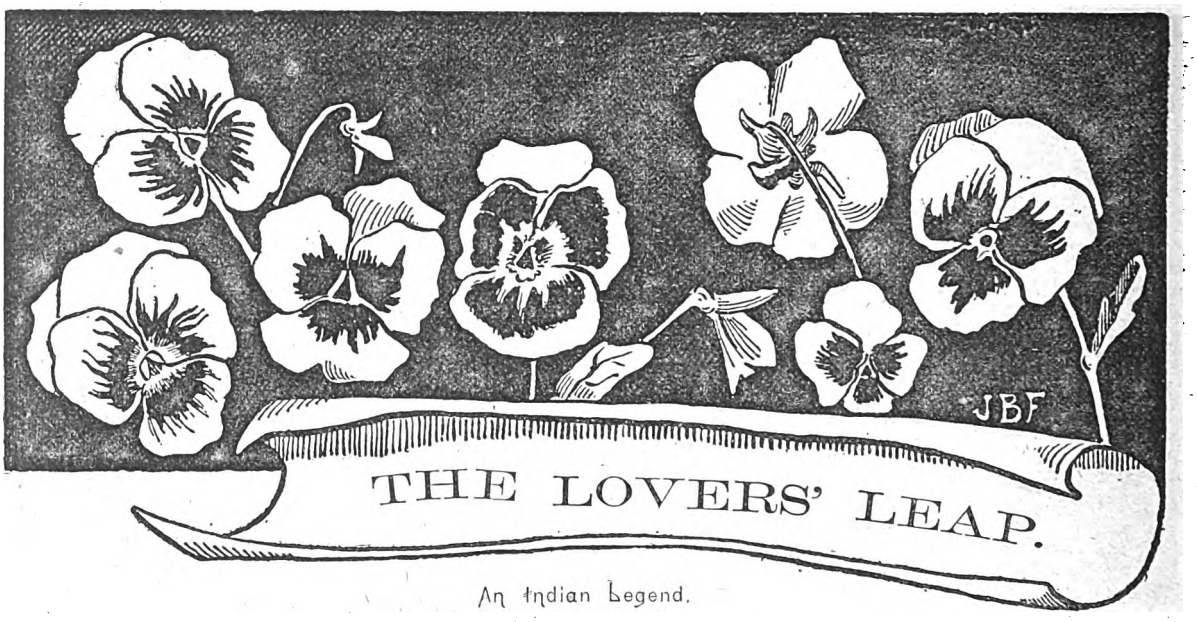

On the mountain of the prairie;
By the great pipestone quarry.

Longfellow could not have expressed the truth in fewer words than he did in his poem "Hiawatha," in describing this great plateau or coleau in the southern part of Minnesota. This rocky ridge extends from a north-easterly to a south-westerly direction and forms a great watershed, the Big Sioux river draining it from the west and small tributaries of the Mississippi from the east. The sacred pipestone found only at this point made it the Mecca of all the Indian tribes once inhabiting that vast region of the West and North-West Territory.

During the warm months of June, July, and August of each year scenes of great festivities were held on and about this sacred spot by the various tribes which assembled there to obtain supplies of this wonderful and precious stone; at which time all nations, from the crafty and treacherous Blackfeet, who then inhabited the vast plains of Kansas and Nebraska, to the more phlegmatic Sioux, Dakotas, and Flandreaus, whose home was in Minnesota and Dakota, were gathered here on terms of friendship.

On these occasions all feuds and animosities were laid aside, and with the "calumet," or "pipe of peace," fashioned from the stone to be found only at that point, they pledged a temporary peace to be broken only when they again separated and returned to their distant hunting grounds.

Stretching up and down the gently sloping valley, round the beautiful little lakes, were orderly-arranged villages; each tribe occupying a separate location, but all being so arranged in a circle as to leave an unobstructed tract of ground in the centre, on which festivities, games, and sports of all kinds were held, as well as the graver councils of the great chiefs.

Among the many tribes gathered on this occasion was a branch of the Dakotas, under the chieftainship of Bison Head, an Indian noted throughout that territory as a man of great bravery, and who had received his appellation from the fact that he constantly wore the skin of a buffalo with the horns intact, as a trophy of a hand-to-hand encounter he once had with the owner, a huge bull, and in which he came out victorious.

But the fame of Bison Head was second only to that of his daughter, Wahoe, whose beauty and accomplishments had set the hearts of many young braves of his own people, as well as those of surrounding tribes, in a flutter. Up to the present time, however, no dusky warrior had succeeded in winning more than a smile from the maiden.

As the days went by and the younger portion of the inhabitants of that little temporary village spent their time in sports, while the older heads sat round the camp fires and told of deeds of valour done by them in days gone by, it became evident that there would be trouble among some of the more ardent admirers of the fair Wahoe, who as yet received all the attention lavished upon her by the different youths, but had shown no preference, unless it was for the society and attentions of Fleetfoot, a young chief of the Blackfeet tribe, and Big Wolf, chief of the Sioux.

As was to be expected, a fierce rivalry soon sprang up between the two impetuous chiefs, which, but for the interference of more sober heads, would have led to open hostilities between them on many occasions.

It is not to be supposed that Bison Head was ignorant of what was going on, but up to this time he had only been an interested observer, knowing full well that his daughter was capable of choosing for herself, and would tell him of her decision when it was made. But as the open hostility of the two chiefs became more evident each day, and knowing full well what dire results would follow any conflict between the two, he at last addressed Wahoe:

"Does the daughter of the great Bison Head desire to make trouble between the two young chiefs, by giving neither an answer to his suit?"

"No, great chief, my father; but Wahoe does not know to which she will give her heart. Both chiefs are brave, and Wahoe does not wish to wound the heart of one by leaving the lodge of my father and going to that

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of the other. Will my father tell Wahoe how to decide?"

"My daughter must do that for herself, Bison Head will not command his daughter. Both Fleetfoot and Big Wolf are brave young chiefs, and worthy to enter the lodge of Bison Head and bear away his child to their own people. The Blackfeet are no more our friends than are the Sioux, and both are powerful tribes. If any daughter wants to depart to the distant lodge of Fleetfoot, 'tis well; but if she would prefer to remain nearer to her own people, and enter the lodge of the Sioux chief, Bison Head would be pleased. Your father has now spoken; his daughter must decide."

After her father's departure, Wahoe sat for a long time without any visible signs of life, except an occasional sigh which escaped her. Finally an idea seemed to have gained possession of her; for she suddenly rose, passed quickly from her lodge to that of her father. On entering the tent of Bison Head she immediately said:

"My father, I have decided. Do you see the high rock which stands near to where the water falls over the ledge, and which looks so much like the face of a great chief?"

"Yes, my daughter; but what does my child expect to do; throw herself from its top into the water below, and in that way end the strife between the two young chiefs?"

"No, my father; Wahoe loves life too well to hurry herself to the land of the Great Spirit by doing anything so rash. But Fleetwood and Big Wolf are both brave and daring, and have told me they would do anything to show how much they love me, and as your daughter's heart cannot decide which chief she will go with, I have come to tell my father that I will test the love of both. You can tell them that Wahoe will go to the lodge of the brave who will leap from the big rocks to that lone rock and return my moccasin, which I will have my brother place there. Does my father like the plan of his daughter?"

"'Tis well," replied the chief, "I will tell Fleetwood and Big Wolf how my daughter has decided."

It took but a few hours for the news of the test given by Wahoe to be carried throughout the numerous tribes on the plain, after Bison Head had called the two chiefs before him, and given them his daughter's ultimatum.

Both gallant braves acquiesced in the plan of the maiden, although they knew it might mean death or terrible injuries to them to attempt the feat, should they fail to accomplish it, as the leap had never yet been made by man.

The rock in question was a tall piece of granite standing like a lone sentinel about fifteen feet from the main ledge, overlooking the falls, and was about thirty or forty in height, having evidently been detached from the main ledge by some volcanic convulsion of past ages. As the space on top of this boulder was only about a foot square, it will be readily seen that a man must be sure-footed if he landed on its top and retained his footing. This fact, more than the distance, made the jump so dangerous.

It was decided by the Bison Head that the contest should take place at the going down of the sun on the following day.

As the attentions of the two young chiefs to Wahoe were well known to all the Indians assembled, the announcement of the dangerous contest between the two was the one exciting theme talked of that night and next day in the tents of the red men.

The Spring Double Number of *Home Notes* appears on Saturday, March 27th. In it will be found an article on "The Queen's Religion and Sunday Observances"; and particulars of a Grand Competition, in which a bicycle is given away. A Paper Pattern will be presented with each number.

As a possible safeguard to the future of the untutored savage, both young chiefs spent the entire night alone in their tents, chanting their death song, that they might be prepared to enter the happy hunting grounds should they meet their death in attempting their love test.

On the following day, as the sun began to sink towards the home of Fleetfoot, the plain below the falls and the space on the rocks above were lined with the various Indians, all excited and interested in the result of the contest.

As the hour for the trial drew near the excitement increased; but when the two chiefs came up from their tents, followed by Bison Head and Wahoe, a silence as of death pervaded that vast multitude.

When they arrived at the scene of the contest, Bison Head thus addressed the young chiefs:

"Fleetfoot, chief of the daring and swift-footed Blackfeet, and Big Wolf, chief of the great and powerful Sioux, you both desire that the daughter of Bison Head shall leave the lodge of her father, and enter yours to cook your food, and care for you when you return from the chase. The daughter of Bison Head is greatly honoured that she should win the love of the two such brave and powerful chiefs; but she is young, and does not know her heart. Knowing of your bravery and great abilities, she decided to give you this test. He who shall succeed shall take Wahoe to his lodge. Bison Head has spoken. Let each chief prepare to take the trial."

An arrow was shot into the air by one of the other young chiefs assembled, it being agreed that should it fall point downwards, Fleetfoot should be the first to attempt the feat; if otherwise, Big Wolf should be the first. The arrow fell at a short distance, and struck the ground, penetrating it several inches, where it stood, quivering in the earth, with the feather pointing upwards.

No sooner was its position announced, when Fleetfoot

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prepared to make the leap to either a bride, dishonour, or death. He walked to the brink of the precipice, and measured with his keen eye the distance from where he stood to the small space on top of the rock, on which lay the object of his leap, the beautifully embroidered moccasin of Wahoe.

Then, with one glance into the depths below, as if to see where he would strike should he fail to secure a foothold, he gradually stepped backward a few feet in order to give his body a little impetus before attempting the leap.

Not a sound could be heard from that vast multitude gathered on the rocks above or the plain below; the occasion seemed too solemn, all present knowing full well the result of the young chief's leap should he not calculate correctly the distance, and jump either too far or fail to jump far enough.

The suspense was of but a moment's duration, however, as the body of the young chief was seen to shoot out into space, after a short run, as he made the leap.

He had judged the distance correctly, and landed fairly and squarely on the small space on the rock. A mighty shout went up from those assembled, which was immediately followed by a cry of horror, as the form of the young chief was seen to sway backwards and forwards, and suddenly plunge headlong down among the sharp and jagged rocks forty feet below, where he lay a mass of broken bones and quivering flesh.

Before assistance could reach the unfortunate chief, a cry went up from those on the rocks above, caused by the form of Big Wolf, which shot down to the brink of the precipice and out towards the fatal rock. He had failed to gauge the distance as accurately as his rival; and this fact, together with the fearful and as yet unknown results of Fleetfoot's leap, caused him to just strike the edge of the rock, but not sufficient to gain a foothold. His body swayed backwards!

He endeavoured to grasp the edges of the projecting rock with his hands, but his efforts were in vain, and with an agonising cry he fell through the air and struck on the rocks below, only a few feet from where his rival lay quivering in the agonies of death.

The cry that now went up was heartrending, and a rush was made by those on the plain below, who were near where the two chiefs had fallen, to assist them if possible.

But the awful tragedy was not yet ended. When Fleetfoot had made his fearful jump and his body was seen to plunge into the depths below, Wahoe had uttered an agonising cry and hidden her face in her hands, to shut out the sight of anything so fearful. She only uncovered her face when the second awful shout went up at Big Wolf's unsuccessful attempt, only in time to see him vainly endeavouring to gain a foothold, and then with his despairing glance disappear from sight.

In an instant her shrieks could be heard by everybody, and before those near her divined what her intentions were, she had rushed to the edge of the precipice and, after gazing for an instant into the depths below, she plunged headlong from the rocks.

Those near rushed to where she had stood but a moment before, only in time to see her body strike on the cruel rocks below, directly between the bodies of the two chiefs.

The uproar among those wild savages was something terrible and appalling. Bison Head would have leaped after his daughter had he not been restrained by some of his band.

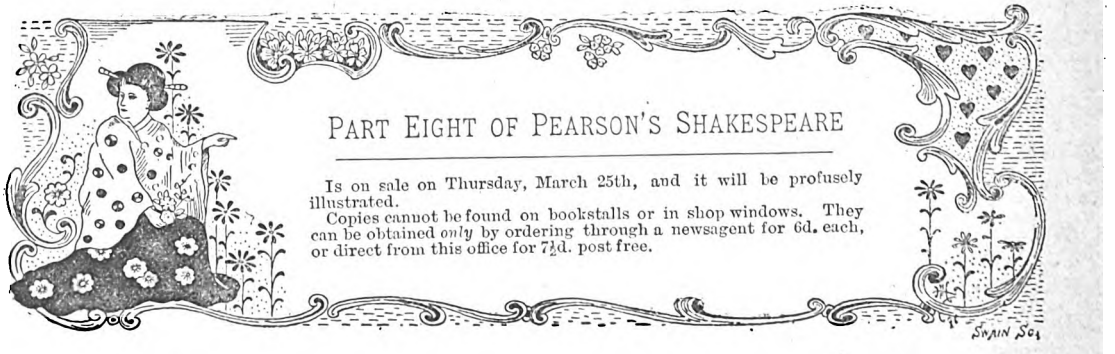
It was but a few moments before a surging mass was surrounding the fatal spot where lay the two chiefs and the maiden. Wahoe and Big Wolf were both dead, the latter having struck on the back of his head, crushing the skull, while the former fell with such force on the sharp rocks that the life was literally knocked out of her body.

Fleetfoot was still found breathing, but his body was such a shapeless mass of bruised flesh and broken bones that he died before they could remove him to his own lodge.

To the rocks upon which the fatal leaps were made was given the name of "Lovers' Leap," a name which it still retains, although a thriving young city has now grown up only a short distance from the spot, while a great railway system carries hundreds of people daily along the brink of the precipice from which those three each made their fatal leap.

The three boulders that marked their graves have correctly been termed the "Maiden and Her Lovers" by the many curious visitors who have since visited the spot, and wondered how they came there at that distance from all surrounding rocks.

C. Edwin Welles.



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The Outlaw's Daughter.

'Cencion Lopez, daughter of Cenaga, the outlaw, paused on the brink of the stream, casting a quick glance down its scarred bed; then she threw back her head and scanned the hill above her. She laughed out merrily at the dancing flutter of scarlet, as a gay breeze caught the curtain in her cabin window, and, steadying her deftly-poised olla with one brown hand, darted, lithe and swift as a young panther, across the plank and up the well-trod trail.

She placed her burden on the table, and, setting plates and cups for two, turned hastily to the stove again to spread tortillas on the hissing lids.

Just as the last cake found its place, a fugitive step rattled the pebbles before the door.

The flush on the girl's face deepened, and her full eyes widened expectantly; she sprang to meet the newcomer's warm caress, took his rifle and sombrero from him, and hurried to serve the meal, while he unwound the folds of his dun *serape*.

"I saw thy signal, *querida*," he said, in musical bass, flinging down the wrap and moving to the cradle side. "How fares my son? Is all well with ye since I last came?"

The baby slept; 'Cencion laid her eager face on the man's shoulder, smiling down at the wee, dark profile.

"All is well," she answered.

"And Juan?"

"Comes not till Monday; you have four days of safety, *mi muy caro*." A little frown drew between her brows, but her lips still smiled. "Come, señor, the supper cools."

* * * * *

Smarting under his ill-fortune and fiercely angry at his false comrade, Juan Lopez gathered together the wreckage from his outfit and set his face towards home. It had been a disastrous trip from the very start; he might have known, when Atar refused to budge from the corral and only passed the gate protestingly under the quirt, that the expedition was destined to failure.

"*Madre de Dios*," he muttered stormily, "much good may his burros do him! May they stumble in the stream and drown; may they stampede and lose him in the desert! As for me, my load floats down the cañon, and I go home. Again I shall know not to travel with one under an evil star!"

All day Atar and Selin plodded with drooping heads under the glaring sun! The chalky powder rose like smoke under their steady hoof-falls; the fever of his hurt grew in his blood, and resentment consumed him.

Superstitious foreboding haunted his tortured senses as he brooded over his loss and desertion. Misfortune had followed him from the cabin. Had he cast off the incubus with his ill-starred friendship, or was some fell spirit still tracing his movements? Insensibly, as the return road shortened, and no further evil marred his journeying, the evanescent dread took the shape of a nameless fear for 'Cencion and the child.

His head throbbed, the breath of evening floating down the cañon could not ease his sick discomfort; the weary pace nettled him! When at last the frowning walls around him lowered, and, turning from the main trail, the heavy cart lumbered over the baked earth along his own stream, Juan urged his horses into a trot, in spite of the pain in his left arm, and, with a final malediction on the recreant Manuel, rattled quickly over the last bare hillock, and sprang down by the corral gate. In a few minutes he was following his wife's footsteps up the steep ascent to the cabin door.

It struck him with a creepy chill that no 'Cencion stood on the threshold, calling down her welcome; then he laughed aloud at his foolish fear. His eyes twinkled in a momentary revulsion of feeling. How fine a surprise would he be to his *prima querida*! He stole upward silently. The fever flush caught him with his hand on the latch, the sound of a voice fell upon his ear—a musical, mellow tone—then madness surged into his brain.

This, then, was the meaning of his disasters, this the crowning trick of his evil genius! His pulse scorched.

He had never doubted her, never for one instant dreamed that her isolation was not complete on his long monthly trips to Vallecita—he had forgotten, fool that he was, that strain of lawless blood—secure in his infatuation, but now—now—he did not feel the wrenching of his hurt as he swung the rifle into position and moved noiseless, cat-like, under the opened window.

Crouching under the casement like a puma, lips snarled apart over glistening, cruel teeth, Juan Lopez waited; his eyes blurred, he brushed an impatient hand to clear them, listening.

The baby's gurgling laughter quivered through him. 'Cencion's light step sounded on the earthen floor, and she seemed to start up before him in all her palpitating womanhood. He choked a groan.

Then the voice! "Bring here the boy, *carina*."

Juan struggled with the sound's vague familiarity. "Carina," he groaned, and ground his teeth impotently. Soft swishings and rustlings and 'Cencion's quick, gay treble: "Here, then. Take your boy. He grows more like you daily, *caro mio*." Through this deadly pain, the bowed listener felt one keener pang for his son—his beloved. He must see! Could the fellow be José or Stefan? Did the boy look like Stefan?—that elusive familiarity of tone——

Dragging himself up cautiously, he peered into the dim room, trusting to the swift-drawing night's protection. 'Cencion—his heart yearned to her, even in her falsity—stood by the couch, bending over the dark form of the intruder with the child in her arms; her dusky hair fell round her like a veil, intercepting the coveted view of his rival.

This was his time; one bullet now and vengeance!

Juan reeled faintly, and then grew rigid. With deliberate, silent care, he placed his weapon, and drew his bead; just here the woman's sash-line, and here, beyond, the head of her paramour—but the child?

The homely house furnishings seem to leap out of the darkness; the stove, the littered table, and the couch, the iron crucifix, and the carved cradle in the corner—all his life long Juan will see them so—and 'Cencion turned; the dusky veil was blown and rent like the sea-mist, revealing—Holy Mother of Heaven! her father, Cenaga, the outlaw!

Juan Lopez fell on his knees below the window, the smoking rifle clattered from his broken grasp, and the missile sped, aimless and harmless, high into the adobe wall.

Gertrude B. Millard.

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Hand to hand, and foot to foot:
Nothing there, save death, was mute:
Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry
For quarter or for victory,
Mingle there with the volleying thunder,
Which makes the distant cities wonder
How the sounding battle goes,
If with them or for their foes;
If they must mourn or must rejoice
In that annihilating voice,
Which pierces the deep hills through and through
With an echo dread and new.

* * * * *

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,
Sabres and swords with blood were gilt;
But the rampart is won and the spoil begun,
And all but the after carnage done.

Byron.

It would be difficult to find in the whole history of wars a more thrilling and heroic chapter than that which tells the story of the six great campaigns of the Peninsular War.

This was, perhaps, the least selfish war of which history tells. It was not a war of aggrandisement or of conquest; it was waged to deliver not merely Spain, but the whole of Europe from that military despotism with which the genius and ambition of Napoleon threatened to overwhelm the civilised world. And on what a scale Great Britain, when aroused, can fight, let the Peninsular War tell.

At its close the fleets of Great Britain rode triumphant on every sea; and in the Peninsular between 1808-14 her land forces fought and won nineteen pitched battles, made or sustained ten fierce sieges, took four great fortresses, twice expelled the French from Portugal and once from Spain. Great Britain expended in these campaigns more than £100,000,000 sterling on her own troops, besides subsidising the forces of Spain and Portugal.

This "nation of shopkeepers" proved that, when kindled to action, it could wage war on a scale and in a fashion that might have moved the wonder of Alexander or of Cæsar, and from motives, it may be added, too lofty for either Cæsar or Alexander so much as to comprehend. It is worth while to tell afresh the story of some of the more picturesque incidents of that great strife.

On April 6th, 1812, Badajos was stormed by Wellington; and the story forms one of the most tragical and splendid incidents in the military history of the world. Of "the night of the horrors of Badajos," Napier says, "posterity can scarcely be expected to credit the tale." No tale, however, is better authenticated, or, as an example of what disciplined human valour is capable of achieving, better deserves to be told.

Wellington was preparing for his great forward movement into Spain, the campaign which led to Vittoria, the battle in which "40,000 Frenchmen were beaten in forty minutes." As a preliminary he had to capture, under the vigilant eyes of Soult and Marmont, the two great border fortresses—Cuidad Rodrigo and Badajos. He had, to use Napier's phrase, "jumped with both feet" on the first named fortress, and captured it in twelve days with a loss of 1,200 men and 90 officers.

But Badajos was a still harder task. The city stands on a rocky ridge, which forms the last spur of the Toledo range, and is of extraordinary strength. The river Rivillas falls almost at right angles into the Guadiana, and in the angle formed by their junction stands Badajos, oval in shape, girdled with elaborate defences, with the Guadiana, 500 yards wide, as its defence to the north, the Rivillas serving as a wet ditch to the west, and no fewer than five great fortified outposts—Saint Roque, Christoval, Picurina, Pardaleras, and a fortified bridge-head across the Guadiana—as the outer zone of its defences.

Twice the English had already assailed Badajos, but assailed it in vain. It was now held by a garrison 5,000 strong, under a soldier, General Phillipson, with a real genius for defence, and the utmost art had been employed in adding to its defences.

On the other hand Wellington had no means of transport, and no battery train, and had to make all his preparations under the keen-eyed vigilance of the French. Perhaps the strangest collection of artillery ever employed in a great siege was that which Wellington secured from every available quarter, and used at Badajos. Of the fifty-two pieces, some dated from the days of Phillip II. and the Spanish Armada, some were cast in the reign of Phillip III., others in that of John IV. of Portugal, who reigned in 1640; there were 24-pounders of George II.'s day, and Russian naval guns, the bulk of the extraordinary medley being obsolete brass engines which required from seven to ten minutes to cool between each discharge.

Wellington, however, was strong in his own warlike genius and in the quality of the troops he commanded. He employed 18,000 men in the siege, and it may well be doubted whether—if we put the question of equipment aside—a more perfect fighting instrument than the force under his orders ever existed. The men were veterans, but the officers on the whole were young, so there was steadiness in the ranks and fire in the leading.

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Hill and Graham covered the siege, Picton and Barnard, Kempt and Colville led the assaults. The trenches were held by the third, fourth, and fifth divisions, and by the famous light division. It has been said that the Macedonian phalanx of Alexander the Great, the Tenth legion of Cæsar, the famous Spanish infantry of Alva, or the iron soldiers who followed Cortes to Mexico, did not exceed the latter in warlike quality.

Wellington's troops, too, had a personal grudge against Badajos, and had two defeats to avenge.

Perhaps no siege in history, as a matter of fact, ever witnessed either more furious valour in the assault, or more of cool and skilled courage in the defence. The siege lasted exactly twenty days, and cost the besiegers 5,000 men, or an average loss of 250 per day. It was waged throughout in stormy weather, with the rivers steadily rising, and the tempests perpetually blowing. Yet the thunder of the attack never paused for an instant.

Wellington's engineers attacked the city at the eastern end of the oval, where the Rivillas served it as a gigantic wet ditch; and the Picurina, a fortified hill fringed by a ditch fourteen feet deep, a rampart sixteen feet high, and a zone of mines, acted as an outwork.

Wellington, curiously enough, believed in night attacks, a sure proof of his faith in the quality of the men he commanded; and on the eighth night of the siege, at nine o'clock, 500 men of the third division were suddenly flung on the Picurina.

The fort broke into a ring of flame, by the light of which the dark figures of the stormers were seen leaping with fierce hardihood into the ditch and struggling madly up the ramparts, or tearing furiously at the pallisades. But the defences were strong, and the assailants fell literally in scores. Napier tells how "the axemen of the light division, compassing the fort like prowling wolves," discovered the gate at the rear, and so broke into the fort.

The engineer officer who led the attack declares that the place would never have been taken had it not been for the coolness of these men in absolutely walking round the fort to its rear, discovering the gate, and hewing it down under a storm of bullets.

The assault lasted an hour, and, in that period, out of the 500 men who attacked, no fewer than 300, with nineteen officers, were killed or wounded. Three men out of every five in the attacking force, that is, were disabled—and yet they won!

There followed twelve days of furious industry, of trenches pushed tirelessly forward though mud and wet, and of cannonading that only ceased when the guns grew too hot to be used.

Captain MacCarthy of the 50th Regiment has left a curious little monograph on the siege, full of incidents, half tragic and half amusing, but which show the temper of Wellington's troops.

Thus he tells how an engineer, when marking out the ground for a breaching-battery very near the wall, which was always lined with French soldiers in eager search of human targets, "used to challenge them to prove the perfection of their shooting by lifting up the skirts of his coat in defiance several times in the course of his survey; driving in his stakes and measuring his distances with great deliberation, and concluding by an extra shake of his coat-tails and an ironical bow, before he stepped under shelter!"

On the night of April 6th, Wellington determined to assault. No fewer than seven attacks were to be delivered. Two of them—on the bridge-head across the Guadiana; and on the Pardaleras—were mere feints. But on the extreme right Picton, with the third division, was to cross the Rivillas and escalade the castle, whose walls rose, time-stained and grim, from eighteen to twenty-four feet high.

Leigh, with the fifth division, was to attack the opposite, or western extremity of the town, the bastion of Saint Vincente, where the glacis was mined, the ditch deep, and the scarp thirty feet high. Against the actual breaches Colville and Andrew Barnard were to lead the light division and the fourth division, the former attacking the bastion of Santa Maria, and the latter the Trinidad.

The hour was fixed for ten o'clock, and the story of that night attack, as told in Napier's immortal prose, is one of the great battle-pictures of literature; and anyone who tries to tell the tale will find himself slipping insensibly into Napier's cadences.

The night was black, a strange silence lay on rampart and trench, broken from time to time by the deep voices of the sentinels, that proclaimed all was well in Badajos. "*Sentinelle garde à vous*," the cry of the sentinels, was translated by a British private as "All's well in Badahoo!"

A lighted carcass thrown from the castle discovered Picton's men standing in ordered array, and compelled them to attack at once. MacCarthy, who acted as guide across the tangle of wet trenches and the narrow bridge that spanned the Rivillas, has left an amusing account of the scene.

At one time Picton declared MacCarthy was leading them wrong, and drawing his sword, swore he would cut him down! The column reached the trench, however, at the foot of the castle walls, and was instantly overwhelmed with the fire of the besieged. MacCarthy says we can only picture the scene by "supposing that all the stars, planets, and meteors of the firmament, with innumerable moons emitting smaller ones in their course, were descending on the heads of the besiegers!"

MacCarthy himself, a typical and gallant Irishman, addressed his general with the exultant remark: "'Tis a glorious night, sir, a glorious night!" and rushing forward to the head of the stormers shouted: "Up with the ladders!"

The five ladders were raised, the troops swarmed up, an officer leading, but the first files were at once crushed by cannon fire and the ladders slipped into the angle of the abutments.

"Dreadful their fall," records MacCarthy of the slaughtered stormers, "and appalling their appearance at daylight." One ladder remained, and, a private soldier leading, the eager, red-coated crowd swarmed up it.

The brave fellow leading was shot as soon as his head appeared above the parapet, but the next man to him—again a private—leaped over the parapet, and was followed quickly by others, and this thin stream of desperate men climbed singly and, in the teeth of the flashing musketry, up that solitary ladder, carried the castle.

In the meanwhile, the fourth and light divisions had flung themselves with cool and silent speed on the breaches. The storming party of each division leaped into the ditch. It was mined, the fuse was kindled, and the ditch, crowded with eager soldiery, became in a moment a sort of flaming crater, and the storming parties, 500 strong, were in one fierce explosion dashed to pieces.

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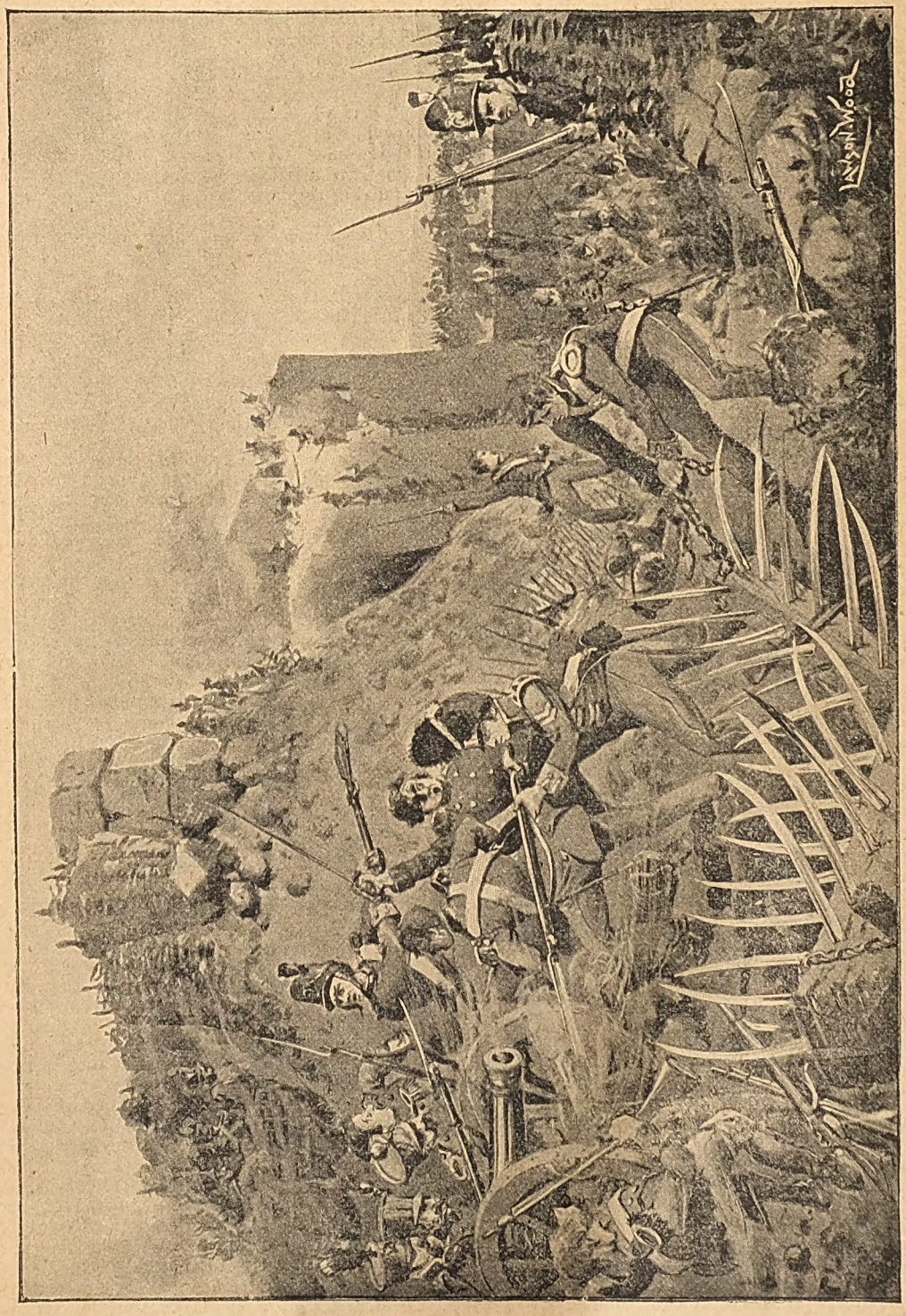

The Night Attack on Badajos.

The stubborn soldiers, however, discovered a low spot in the rampart, placed three ladders against it, and climbed with reckless valour. The first man was pushed up by his comrades; he in turn dragged others up, and the unconquerable British at length broke through and swept the bastion.

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In the light of that dreadful flame the whole scene became visible—the black ramparts, crowded with dark figures and glittering arms, on the one side; on the other the red columns of the British, broad and deep, moving steadily forward like a stream of human lava. The light division stood at the brink of the smoking ditch for an instant, amazed at the sight.

"Then," says Napier, "with a shout that matched even the sound of the explosion, they leaped into it and swarmed up to the breach." The fourth division came running up and descended with equal fury, but the ditch opposite the Trinidad was filled with water; the head of the division leaped into it, and, as Napier puts it, "above 100 of the Fusiliers, the men of Albuera, perished there."

The breaches were impassable.

Across the top of the great slope of broken wall glittered a fringe of sword-blades, sharp-pointed, keen-edged on both sides, fixed in ponderous beams chained together and set deep in the ruins. For ten feet in front the ascent was covered with loose planks, studded with sharp iron points. Behind the glittering hedge of sword-blades stood the solid ranks of the French, each man supplied with three muskets, and their fire scourged the British ranks like a tempest.

Hundreds had fallen, hundreds were still falling; but the British clung doggedly to the lower slopes, and every few minutes an officer would leap forward with a shout, a swarm of men would instantly follow him, and like leaves blown by a whirlwind they swept up the ascent.

But, under the incessant fire of the French, the assailants melted away. One private reached the sword-blades, and actually thrust his head beneath them, till his brains were beaten out, so desperate was his resolve to get into Badajos.

The breach, as Napier describes it, "yawning and glittering with steel, resembled the mouth of a huge dragon, belching forth smoke and flame."

But for two hours, and until 3,000 men had fallen, the stubborn British persisted in their attack. Currie, of the 52nd, a cool and most daring soldier, found a narrow ramp beyond the Santa Maria breach only half ruined; he forced his way back through the tumult and carnage to where Wellington stood watching the scene, obtained an unbroken battalion from the reserve, and led it towards the broken ramp. But his men were caught in the whirling madness of the ditch and swallowed up in the tumult.

Nicholas, of the Engineers, and Shaw, of the 43rd, with some fifty soldiers actually climbed into the Santa Maria bastion, and from thence tried to force their way into the breach. Every man was shot down, except Shaw, who stood alone on the bastion.

With inexpressible coolness he looked at his watch, said it was too late to carry the breaches, and then leaped down.

The British could not penetrate the breach; but they would not retreat. They could only die where they stood. The buglers of the reserve were sent to the crest of the glacis to sound the retreat; the troops in the ditch would not believe the signal to be genuine, and struck their own buglers who attempted to repeat it.

"Gathering in dark groups, and leaning on their muskets," says Napier, "they looked up in sullen desperation at Trinidad, while the enemy, stepping out on the ramparts, and aiming their shots by the light of fire-balls, which they threw over, asked as their victims fell: 'Why did they not come into Badajos?'"

All this while, curiously enough, Picton was actually in Badajos, and held the castle securely, but made no attempt to clear the breach. On the extreme west of the town, however, at the bastion of San Vincente, the fifth division made an attack as desperate as that which was falling at the breaches. When the stormers actually reached the bastion the Portuguese battalions, who formed part of the attack, dismayed by the tremendous fire which broke out on then, flung down their ladders and fled.

The British, however, snatched the ladders up, forced the barrier, jumped into the ditch, and tried to climb the walls, these were 30ft. high, and the ladders were too short. A mine was sprung in the ditch under the soldiers' feet; beams of wood, stones, broken waggons, and live shells were poured upon their heads from above. Showers of grape from the flank swept the ditch.

The stubborn soldiers, however, discovered a low spot in the rampart, placed three ladders against it, and climbed with reckless valour. The first man was pushed up by his comrades; he in turn dragged others up, and the unconquerable British at length broke through and swept the bastion.

The tumult still stormed and raged at the eastern breaches where the men of the light and fourth division were dying sullenly, and the men of the fourth division marched at speed across the town to take the great eastern breach in the rear.

The streets were empty, but the silent houses were bright with lamps. The men of the fourth pressed on; they captured mules carrying ammunition to the breaches, and the French, startled by the tramp of the fast approaching column, and finding themselves taken in the rear, fled. The light and fourth division broke through the gap hitherto barred by flame and steel, and Badajos was won!

In that dreadful night assault the English lost 3,500 men. "Let it be considered," says Napier, "that this frightful carnage took place in the space of less than a hundred yards square—that the slain died not all suddenly, nor by one manner of death—that some perished by steel, some by shot, some by water; that some were crushed and mangled by heavy weights, some trampled upon, some dashed to atoms by the fiery explosions—that for hours this destruction was endured without shrinking, and the town was won at last."

Let these things be considered, and it must be admitted a British army bears with it an awful power.

And false would it be to say the French were feeble men. The garrison stood and fought manfully and with good discipline, behaving worthily; shame there was none on any side.

Yet who shall do justice to the bravery of the British soldiers or the noble emulation of the officers?

No age, no nation, ever sent forth braver troops to battle than those who stormed Badajos.

("*The fire-ships in the Basque Roads*" *next week.*)

JUMBLED PICTURE COMPETITION.

No. 3.

Cut out the figures portrayed in the sketches contained in this number, and paste them up to form one picture. £2 2s. will go to the reader whose attempt is considered cleverest, and a copy of "Valdar the Oft-born" to each of the five next. Date of closing: Monday, March 29th, 1897.

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The Mystery of the Mines.

Far in the Lamb's Flat mining region, where the town of Warra now stands, was a hill, beneath whose crust of earth a vast treasure of ore lay buried, that was being mined by a community that numbered about sixty men, under the supervision of two overseers and an experienced and practical chemist and engineer.

It was on a dark night in July, when it happened that one of the overseers and a miner, having been engaged for some time in repairing a drill, seated themselves near a wall of rock in the quarry. The two men were on intimate terms of friendship. The overseer, Charles Bancroft, by name, said to his friend, George Reynolds:

"George, let's stay out here a while. It's terribly hot in the shanty, and I don't want to turn in yet. There isn't a breath of air stirring, but I think there'll be a storm pretty soon. Light your pipe."

"'Tis cooler out here," said Reynolds, as both men lighted their pipes and settled themselves against the wall of a rock, "and, besides, I have something curious to tell you. Why, what's that? Look, Charlie!"

He started to his feet and pointed into the darkness at the opening of the quarry. Bancroft sprang up and strained his eyes in the direction indicated.

"I don't see anything," he said.

"I saw a woman, or a girl, run like a deer under the trees yonder, and am going to see what it means."

He sprang into the darkness, leaving Bancroft seated on the rock smoking and laughing at him.

Five minutes passed, and Reynolds returned.

"I couldn't find anything; but there is a mystery about this quarry that I shall solve some time," said Reynolds seriously. "Do you remember, about three weeks ago, when I came to camp and sounded the alarm, and we all turned out, near midnight, and heard the sound of galloping horses rushing through the forest?"

"Yes, that was a genuine fright. But what has that to do with to-night's ghost?"

"Nothing, perhaps, but I will tell you what led to the discovery of that band of riders. That night, before I gave the alarm, I was sitting, just as I am now, smoking my pipe. I was amusing myself by picking up small pieces of ore and throwing them against the opposite wall. I reached over and picked from the ground a little piece, and then began beating the sharp points on the rock just here behind me. I struck the rock perhaps a dozen times, when I heard against the rock a noise as of someone hammering it from the other side, and as if proceeding from within the rock a loud, though muffled, 'Hello! Hello!'

"Could I be dreaming? I remained quiet for half a minute, when the pounding was repeated and the voice came again: 'Hello! hello! Don't you hear me?' I can hardly describe my feelings. The voice was that of a woman, and I thought of all the stories I had heard of haunted woods, and spirit-caves and ghosts and fairies, as I answered in a loud tone:

"'Yes, I hear. Where and who are you?'

"Clear and distinct came the answer:

"'I have come to warn you. The Night Riders are out, and will attack and rob your camp unless it is aroused. Go and give the alarm at once.'

"'Who are the Night Riders?' I asked.

"'A band of robbers and cut-throats, whose hiding-place is in these hills. Come here every night, and I will warn you of intended raids.'

"I asked another question but received no reply, neither could I recall my mysterious visitor by hammering on the rock. I yet had a notion that someone was playing me a trick, and that if I should arouse the camp I should be heartily laughed at. So I waited to see what would happen. I had not long to wait, for when I slowly walked through the woods just outside there, the moon being full up, I saw down in the defile a band of twenty horsemen riding cautiously towards me. You know the rest. How the camp was aroused and armed, and how, when the riders came within shooting distance, they suddenly turned back over their own trail, and when we followed they had disappeared."

"Yes, their seeing the camp aroused, and knowing our strength, probably were afraid to venture at attack. But why did you not tell me of this before?"

"Because I wanted to verify the occurrence, and I have come to this spot every night. Nothing has happened since then. Now, I don't believe in ghosts, but if my mysterious visitant is one, I believe in her, and I shall make mighty endeavours to—There! Do you not hear it?"

While George Reynolds was talking, a mysterious knocking was heard at the rock behind them. Both men sprang to their feet. Reynolds picked up a heavy piece of ore and struck half-a-dozen blows against the wall.

Instantly came a woman's voice, seemingly from within the rock:

"Hello! hello!"

"You see, it is as I told you," said Reynolds.

"Yes, I see. Answer the voice."

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Both men pressed their ears to the wall, and Reynolds called:

"Hello! I hear you."

"The captain has learned that the miners were paid off to-day, and there will be another raid as soon as the storm breaks. Go back to your camp immediately."

"But tell me what and where you are."

"That is of no consequence. Enough that I know your camp well, and if you will come here every night I will always give you warning in time to prepare for an attack. I am going now."

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Reynolds.

"That's no ghost! or, if it is, it's a very sensible sort of spirit, and evidently bent on doing the right thing by us. Guess we'd better follow its suggestions and alarm the camp. We'll get all the men into Redfield's shanty, and leave the others just as they are, making it appear that the men have all turned in; then, when the horses are within gunshot, we'll send in a volley and begin business. The wonder to me is how they find out about pay-day. They must have spies posted, or we have a traitor in camp. If the latter is true, and we find him out, we'll make short work of him, I warrant. Are you armed?"

"Yes; I always carry my revolvers at night."

"Then let us start."

The two friends started cautiously through the opening of the quarry. A vivid flash of lightning leaped athwart the sky, and a heavy volley of thunder echoed through the hills. Then followed flash on flash. The storm would soon be on them, sending down a torrent of rain. The darkness was intense, save when the lightning flashed. The two men followed a road cut through the forest for the use of the men and working horses and mules to and fro from the iron mine.

The distance from the mine to the shanty village was about three-quarters of a mile. The little cluster of houses stood in a piece of cleared ground, nearly circular in form, containing, perhaps, forty acres. The shop and log-house of James Redfield, the chemist, engineer and superintendent of the mine, stood in the centre. The house was strongly built, and was intended as a place of protection and defence of the little community. The men reached the camp in a violent storm.

The miners, already awakened from their sleep after the day's work by the terrible storm, needed no rousing. There were even lights in several cabins as the two men entered the clearing. The alarm signal that all understood was the easily-imitated cry of the mocking-bird. As our friends entered the circle of shanties they stopped, and in a loud voice sounded the signal.

Lights were quickly extinguished as the call went through the camp, and through the dark night and heavy rain, men, armed to the teeth, went hurrying to the log-house. All within the little fortress was darkness. James Redfield, who had been working at his books when the alarm was sounded, had closed the heavy wooden shutters to the four windows, and opened the slides of the loop-holes. In ten minutes from the first alarm all the miners, with their valuables on their persons and their weapons ready for action, were in the log-house, the men ranged round the walls, peering through the loop-holes.

The lightning flashed almost incessantly, revealing all outside clearly to the gaze of the watchers. Suddenly an exclamation broke simultaneously from the lips of the men stationed at the front wall of the building:

"There they are!"

James Redfield rushed to a loop-hole. A vivid and prolonged flash of lightning revealed to his gaze fully thirty horsemen scattered about the clearing among the shanties.

Another vivid flash of lightning showed the band of horsemen riding slowly and cautiously towards the log-house.

"Did you see them, boys, and could you see to shoot at another flash?"

"Yes!" came from twenty voices.

"Then do it."

A prolonged flash of lightning, and before the thunder was heard, twenty rifles had sent their deadly missiles into the approaching band of horsemen. A wild shout of dismay went up from the Night Riders.

"Once more, boys!" shouted Redfield. "Shoot just as you did before. Don't wait for the flash. Shoot anywhere."

At that moment a volley from the riders rattled harmlessly against the log wall of the house.

"Now!" cried Redfield, as he threw open the door of the log-house. "Their rifles are empty. Quick! with your revolvers at 'em. Every man follow me, and shoot where you saw their guns flash. Shoot anywhere in that direction. We'll dress them out in a few minutes. After me, boys!"

He sprang through the doorway into the rain and darkness, firing his heavy pistols as he went. Sixty men followed him, spreading themselves in a semi-circle and shooting in the direction of the robber horde. Each man was armed with two heavy revolvers, and as a flash of lightning revealed the confused band of Night Riders, the miners opened a fusilade that scattered them in all directions.

"Follow them up," cried Redfield, as he dashed with his blazing pistols into the gloom. With a wild shout the men followed him, keeping up their terrible fusilade. The rout was complete and the miners were victorious.

The storm was subsiding and the lightning had passed far to the west. Only faint gleams now and then lighted up the scene for an instant. But the darkness was intense, and it would have been folly for the miners to attempt following the riders on foot.

A body of the miners remained on the field, while the rest ran for torches. In a few minutes the clearing was ablaze with a light from fifty pine knot torches, and the ground was thoroughly searched. Eight lifeless bodies were found, and, strangely enough, only one wounded man. He was nearly dead, but as the light was flashed into his face he made a feeble effort to conceal his features with his hands. A cry of astonishment broke from the men as they recognised the face of a miner.

"Tom Murphy!"

"Yes," said the wounded man with a sickly attempt at a laugh, "Tom Murphy."

"But how do you come out here wounded among the dead robbers?" asked Redfield.

"I will tell you," said Charles Bancroft, stepping forward. "I made up my mind to-night that we had a traitor in camp who was giving information to the band of Night Riders. You all remember that last pay-day they appeared, and here they are again at pay-day. In order to avoid the possibility of loss by robbery, I requested the firm in Sydney to forward the funds so that they will reach here only on pay-day morning. These Night Riders, as they call themselves, are fools to suppose they could go through the camp and rob the men separately; and I think their course of action was

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advised by the arch-fool, Tom Murphy, who lies before us. He is the traitor."

"Murphy, is this true?" asked Redfield.

"Well," said the dying man, weakly, "they say that silence gives consent, so if I keep still you'll believe it of me. I'm a-dyin', an' I don't want to die with a lie on my lips. I'll say that it is true. I want to die alone."

The bodies of the robbers were carried into a tool shanty, where they were left until the morning, when they were buried in one grave half-a-mile away in the thickest part of the bush. Pickets were stationed about the camp, and the miners again returned to their shanties, but few eyes were closed in slumber that night.

The morning dawned brightly clear, and the men, after burying the dead, among which was the body of the traitor, Tom Murphy, went to the mine.

George Reynolds, having received leave of absence from the quarry, began his investigations, but the night fell, and he had learned nothing. When the darkness settled down, he, with Charles Bancroft and James Redfield, came to the spot from which the warning voice had been heard. The superintendent had been made acquainted with the facts.

"Now, boys," he said, "the mystery is simply this: There is a cavern in this hill, and we have quarried near to it. This morning, after I had heard your story, I examined the wall behind us, and I found a small rift in the rock. Reach up with me, and I will show you. It is wide enough to put your finger in."

The three men stood up, and Redfield guided their hands to a narrow crack in the rocky wall.

"That crack goes into a cave, and the person who gave the warning spoke through it. Ah, what is that?"

A violent knocking was heard on the rock behind them, followed by a muffled "Hello! hello!"

"Hello!" cried Redfield. "Where are you?"

"In the cave," cried a woman's voice. They have left me here to die."

"Who have?"

"The Night Riders. I was in the woods last night, just before the storm, and when the band returned after their defeat, they accused me of having warned the camp, and kept me in the cave at the point of their pistols, while a few of them gathered up all that was valuable, and carried it outside, leaving me not a morsel of food, nor a weapon. Then they closed the opening with a pile of rock that I cannot break down, and left me here to die as a punishment for betraying their plans."

"Where is the opening to the cave?"

"On the other side of the hill—more than a mile from here. There is a deep defile, almost impassable, and the filled-up opening is in the hill."

"Well, we don't go round there. They may be lying in ambush for us, and have used you as a means of sending us to our death. If you want to get out we'll blast the rock here and release you. Can this be blasted without hurting you?"

"I can go to the far end of the cavern, behind a point of rock, and your blast cannot harm me."

"Reynolds, go and get ten men and a couple of drills and powder and torches. We'll blast the rock."

The men whom Reynolds brought went to work with a will by the light of a big wood fire, and in less than three hours the prisoner was freed. She was a young, handsome woman; she clambered over the sharp, rough rock through the newly-made opening. Then she stood in a half-shy manner for a moment, and essayed to speak, but could only utter:

"You are good to me, and I thank you for the pains you have taken. I—I——"

"Now, boys," said Redfield, "our unknown friend, who has saved us from a certain danger and loss needs food and rest after the ordeal through which she has so bravely passed. So then we will start for camp at once."

Handsome, indeed she was, under the glare of the torches, and as James Redfield brought up a horse, she sprang into the saddle with the grace of a trained horsewoman. All returned to camp. She told her story in Redfield's shanty.

From her narrative it appeared that this was the remnant of a once powerful band of bushrangers, that had operated with much success in a region further south. The band had rescued her when she was twelve years old from a marauding party of aborigines that had destroyed her home and murdered all belonging to her. So she had been in the band for six years, loved by all as a good and true friend.

The band to a man would lay down their lives in her defence, and it had been understood that none should seek to win her regard other than the mere feeling of friendship that she gave to all. The men were on the point of disbanding, and would have done so, had it not been for the influence of Tom Murphy, who had been with them before.

She had warned the camp, because she was tired of the lawless life with which she had never been in sympathy.

Rudolph Minns.

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RESULT OF

"PICTURE STORY" COMPETITION

No. 5.

The attempts in this competition were distinctly brilliant, and we regret that space will not permit the publication of those sent in by all the prize-winners.

The £2 prize has gone to Mr. Duncan Shepperd, 13, St. George's Square, Forest Gate, E.

The five bottles of *Home Notes Bouquet* have been sent to the following persons, whose efforts were considered the next best: James Matthews, "The Elms," Newbury, Berks; Mr. W. E. Bradley, 67, Cambridge Street, Todmorden, Yorks; Mr. D. B. Browning, c.o. Browning, Wood Merchant, Paisley; Mr. J. F. Gray, 35, Glenparke Road, Upton Lane, Forest Gate; and Mr. T. W. Rose, Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth.

Winning Attempt.

1.—Nice old lady,
Been to town,

2.—Bought two sausages,
Fried them brown.

3.—"One for the cat,
And one for me,
Puss! Puss! Puss!
Where can he be?"

4.—She took the candle,
Looked under the bed,

5.—Into the cupboard
She popped her head,

6.—Out on the roof
She called its name,

7.—Down in the cellar
She did the same.

8.—At length in despair
The search she gave up,
And returned to her room
Alone, to sup.

9.—But judge the surprise
The old lady got,
When she found the cat
Had eaten the lot.

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So many of my readers are already familiar with the objects and manner of working of the Fresh Air Fund, that it is only necessary here to mention the fact that the subscription list is now open, for them to at once send in their contributions.

There are, however, on the other hand, an enormous number of present subscribers to *S.S.* who last year took no interest in the paper or the F.A.F. It is for their benefit that I give a short *résumé* of the work in connection with the F.A.F. which has been carried out during the last five years.

In 1892 the first list opened in *Pearson's Weekly*, and at the end of the summer 20,500 of the very poorest and most destitute children of the slums of our great cities were given the opportunity of taking a day's journey into the country and of enjoying a sufficiency of wholesome and substantial food.

In the second year 40,230 children were dealt with, while the liberal support afforded by readers to the movement enabled me to extend the work to the provinces, with the result that in 1894 the number of children sprang up to over 74,000.

In 1895 a small army of 96,000 children had cause to bless the generosity of our readers, while last year were added the heartfelt thanks of another 5,000, making the total of 101,000.

The amount collected in 1896 was £4,100, every penny of which was expended on the little ones themselves, *S.S.*, *P.W.* and the Ragged School Union sharing between them all the expenses connected with the management and organisation of the Fresh Air Fund.

Poverty is the only qualification necessary to make a child eligible to enjoy one of these outings. The selections are made irrespective of creed or denomination, and the little Protestant joins hands with the baby Roman Catholic in a merry-go-round or a scramble for sweetmeats.

I should like to take you personally through some of the slums that exist in London, and to show you just exactly the style of heart-breaking poverty and suffering you are asked to alleviate. As this is impossible, I can only ask you, through these columns, to at least contribute nine pennies to the Fund. These nine pennies will cover the entire expenses of a day's outing for one child, and will give this one child a taste of the sweets of life which will hover in its memory for weeks and weeks.

So you see that the greatest amount of enjoyment possible is got out of this modest sum, a fact which makes the Fresh Air Fund the most practical of charities. Let it be understood that the smallest contribution will be accepted with the same gratitude as a big one. It is not everybody who can give away a ten-pound note in charity, but everybody in ordinary circumstances can afford a shilling.

Moreover, those whose hearts are thoroughly in accord with this scheme are given an opportunity of showing their practical appreciation by collecting sums on forms to be obtained from this office.

As to what an enormous aggregation of people like the readers of *P.W.* may do if they worked together may be judged from the fact that if each of those who every week see a copy of the paper is worth on an average £100, the total capital of this colossal body would be £500,000,000.

All that we ask is but a little over 1-100,000th part of this stupendous amount. While, if each person sent one penny stamp, the amount required would be subscribed more than four times over, and make it possible to bring happiness into the lives of no fewer than 500,000 children, and it would be no difficult task to find them either.

As regards the programme, however, as at present arranged, every town in the United Kingdom with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants will have its own committee for the purpose of arranging these outings, particulars of which will be found in *P.W.* There are altogether twenty-two of these cities, and I do not for one moment doubt that those readers residing in every other part of the country will respond as heartily to this appeal as those who are enabled to see with their own eyes the excellent work carried out as a result of their thoughtful generosity.

As it has been necessary to guarantee £2,025 before entering into arrangements with those who have been kind enough to offer their services of superintending in the provinces, I hope that my readers will get to work at once and do as they have done in the past.

I am going to worry you with articles and notices and subscription lists and things of that sort all through the summer; but I have no fear of appearing aggressive to the right-minded individual. It is only the person who does not fork out his mite that looks upon the F.A.F. as a bore.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Cécile Knits her Brows.

Edith was gone!

The day after, Cécile, summoned by telegram by Lady Hilton, arrived from Shropshire. With a very pale face she read the note left for her by Edith. She laid it down with lips pressed tightly together.

"It is all right," she said, and threw herself into an arm-chair, sitting with far-away, dreaming eyes.

Jack Heathcote was standing in his stables.

Soon she sprang up, all vigour, and wit, and action. She took a pencil and some telegraph forms, and filled up two of the forms. The first was as follows:

To Jack Heathcote,
Westmore Manor, near Seaboro'.
"I am in trouble.
Cécile Délisle."

The second telegram read:

To Inspector Wheeler,
Scotland Yard, Whitehall.
"Pray come to me at once.
Cécile Délisle."

These she sent off immediately. "I wonder which of the two will come to me first," she said, with a sad, pale smile. "The Inspector is a mile away, Jack is three hundred; but I think I can bet on Jack."

"I am in trouble." Jack Heathcote was standing in his stables, discussing with some grooms a swelling on a hunter's fetlock, when the words were handed to him: "I am in trouble!" The next moment he was dashing at full speed towards the manor, and the next was bawling orders through the house like a madman to his scurrying servants. In half-an-hour he was hastening up to London.

But the Inspector beat him by a good many hours. Love cannot drive a train, and, as a motor, is considered inferior to petroleum. If space yielded to the yearning heart, we should all dwell in the stars.

"How of the case, Mr. Inspector?" said Cécile, sitting before Wheeler.

"Ah, miss, don't ask," said Mr. Wheeler; "it's a tangled business. But I think I've hit on the right man at last. I shall soon clap him on the back, if I'm not mistaken."

"That is good. Who is it?"

"Oh, an old hand. He's done three terms of penal servitude already. His appearance exactly corresponds with your description of the man you saw in the train at the journey's end, though, of course, he has disguised himself a bit since, I suppose. However, I found that he *was* prowling about that part of Yorkshire just then. His name is Duncan, *alias* Hawke, *alias* Lewis—no end of *aliases*."

"What was he convicted for before?" asked Cécile.

"Theft, burglary—that kind of thing."

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"Then he is not the man who did the murder," said Cécile. "The man who did the murder did not rob the body; you remember we settled that before. He was not a burglar."

"It was Hawke, miss, with all due respects to you. Something must have prevented him from taking the jewellery from the body, that's all. It was Hawke right enough; it couldn't have been anyone else."

Cécile said nothing, but her lips curved a little with disdain.

"By-the-way," she said, "you never found out who did steal the lady's jewellery? You have not recovered the jewellery, I think?"

"No, miss, no," said Mr. Wheeler; "all that part of the matter is still wrapped in mystery. I did go back again to Wilson's farm, you know, in Thorgill Beck, to make sure that he didn't have the things. But it's quite certain that he didn't. I don't know what to make of it."

Cécile smiled. The jewellery, about which Inspector Wheeler was so much at a loss, was in her trunk upstairs. She said nothing about this fact, however. The locket contained a likeness of a member of the Wentworth family; the murder was, in reality, a Hilton scandal. In the hopeless confusion of Mr. Wheeler's mind as to the whole mystery of the murder, she saw no advantage in revealing what she had discovered. But she said:

"I have reason, Mr. Wheeler, for believing that the murderer was the *husband* of the lady. Such a man as the Hawke you describe would hardly be that, I think?"

"Well, no, miss — he would not. But, with due respect to you, I stick to my view. Hawke was the man right enough. I shall soon have my hand on his shoulder."

"You have not recovered the jewellery, I think?"

"Very well, Mr. Wheeler. But now I have a far more important matter to lay before you. Look at this note. It was left for me by my friend, Miss Edith Wentworth, Lady Hilton's niece. She has run away from home."

Mr. Wheeler read the note, and pondered.

"This is queer," he said. "I suppose there's some love affair at the bottom of it—some secret passion?"

"But, no!" said Cécile. "You reason well when you have a clear clue; but you do not *guess* well, Inspector. You do not see well *in the dark*. You lack divination—the instinct of the unknown. You note that my friend says here: 'I am not what I seem.' What do you think she means by that?"

"Clearly, she has done something wrong—something which her conscience cannot endure to think of among her friends," said Mr. Wheeler.

"Good!" said Cécile. "She—or her father. She—or her mother! You know, Inspector, in the aristocrat classes in this country the children in very truth bear all the social sins of their parents in full measure, is it not?"

"But are her father and mother alive?"

"No—they are dead. Her father died long ago. Her mother only a few weeks ago. But it is not necessary that they should be alive for her to be ashamed of them. An old sin is not less shameful than a new. It is an old sin which has banished her now. Of this old sin she has only just heard; and it was on hearing it that she decided that she was unfit for the society of pure and gentle people."

"How do you know that she has only just heard it?" asked the Inspector.

"Because I saw her a week ago. Her heart was perfectly light and careless; she did not know it then."

Cécile was looking upward, with her far-away gaze, the left eye half closed.

"And do you know, miss, by what means she could have suddenly learnt this secret?" asked the Inspector.

"Yes. I will tell you. On the day of her flight she was visited by two men, here. They came together. One of them was a gentleman—a Dr. Danton. The other was well dressed, but not, the servants say, a gentleman. Dr. Danton is in love with Miss Wentworth; is very like her in face, and has a peculiar influence over her mind. I cannot explain it—but it is so. She, however, is in love with someone else—an officer, the nephew of Lady Hilton. Now, my belief is, that in order to induce her to fly with him, Dr. Danton, during that visit, revealed to her some disreputable fact connected with her parents, or one of her parents; and that the other man acted in some way as a proof of the assertions he made."

"I follow you, miss. Which one of the parents do you think—father or mother?"

"Her father was a man of honour—a Wentworth. If he had ever done anything dishonourable he would have committed the suicide; but he died a natural death. Edith's mother, on the other hand, was, it is supposed, a person of doubtful character. The disclosure of Dr. Danton therefore, had reference to her."

"Dr. Danton must have *known* her then during her life?" observed Mr. Wheeler.

"Yes—that is the one grand fact which fills my mind, Inspector. Dr. Danton *must have known her*, if the facts which he disclosed to Edith were not pure invention; or, if he did not know her, he knows one or more persons who knew her. Dr. Danton is therefore the clue to Julie Wentworth and her life—and, Inspector, her death."

"Did she die mysteriously?"

"Yes."

"Well, but it ought not to be so difficult to find him. What sort of man is he?"

"A very tall and big man; sallow, with a moustache and large imperial; with a high, slanting, shining forehead, bald at the temples."

"If he hasn't left the country, we should soon find him," said Wheeler, "and Miss Wentworth with him."

"I am not sure," answered Cécile; "he was seen alone in the streets by Captain Musgrave just after his interview with her; she was not then with him; but she may have arranged to meet him somewhere afterwards. I am not sure. We may be sure, however, that they will not be found in the same house until there has been time for a

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marriage to take place between them. I can tell you that from my knowledge of Miss Wentworth's character."

"And what kind of looking man was the other fellow?" asked the Inspector.

"He was a short, massive man, with bronzed shaven face."

The Inspector started.

"Your description puts me in mind of my friend Hawke, the man you noticed standing in the railway compartment. He had a long beard when I last saw him. But that's nothing at all."

"And I you!" she whispered into his ear.

"I have had the same thought," said Cécile, with closed eyes. "We shall see. At any rate, Inspector, you will do your best to find Miss Wentworth for us, is it not? Many hearts are breaking for want of her. Oh, use your wits and find her for me! Meanwhile, mine will not be idle, my faith!"

"Oh, you can rely upon me, miss, as far as that goes," said Mr. Wheeler. "My opinion is that the man we've got to find is — Hawke. Hawke's at the bottom of a good deal of the mischief that's done in this world, I assure you!"

Hawke was rather a fixed idea with the Inspector. Cécile's lips again took on their slight curve of disdain; but she held out her hand to the Inspector, who took it, and then creaked with respectful step towards the door.

Dr. Danton had known Julie Wentworth! That was the thought that haunted Cécile; and yet not Julie Wentworth, but Julie L! "J. L." were the initials on the handkerchief of the murdered woman. The photograph in the locket told her that the "J." meant "Julie." Her next care would be to find out what "L." meant; to discover the man whose name began with "L."; to discover whatever relation subsisted between this man and Dr. Danton, and so, in all probability, to discover the secret of Edith's flight. The secret of her flight might give some clue to her whereabouts. She spent a night of sleepless agony waiting for Jack Heathcote.

By eleven the next morning he was with her. She was alone in the breakfast-room when he was ushered in to her. Lady Hilton was ill in bed.

"Ah, you have come!" she said.

She rose to meet him with frankly happy face, and held out her hand.

Jack was all redness and dismay and downcast eyes.

"I—I was rather sorry that you were in trouble, you know," he stammered.

"Only '*rather*'?"

"Well—very—intensely—I mean."

"Ah! That was good. And you took all this long journey on my account, is it not?"

"Oh, no, not at all. I had some little trifling business in London of—of very great importance, to see to. Horses, you know; that kind of thing."

"But what am I to do?" said Cécile to herself. "The man can't expect *me* to 'propose' to him, and *he* will never do it." She added aloud:

"But—you are not complimentary. I was sure when you entered the room that it was my telegram which had brought you. And that would have made me feel so pleased. Is it nothing to you that I should be pleased, then?"

"It is everything to me—that is, you know, I am rather pleased to see you pleased."

"And when I am in trouble, don't you care at all?"

"Oh, then I'm in trouble, too. No one likes to see another one in trouble, does he?"

"No. But you are very provoking and hard-hearted."

"Who?"

"You, sir."

"I hard-hearted? Quite a mistake, I assure you. My heart's made of wax."

"*Bee's*-wax?"

"Well—ha! ha! you know what I mean. People think I'm hard-hearted—got no feeling—made of stone—that kind of thing. But it isn't so. Sometimes I have a little feeling."

"You should show it, then."

"Well, one doesn't like to, does one?—before everybody."

"Am I 'everybody'?"

"Well, no—I don't exactly mean that."

"An Englishman should be frank and bold, and say out what he means."

"Do you like an Englishman?" asked Jack with quick interest.

"Very much," confessed Cécile.

"A Yorkshireman, now—what is your opinion of a Yorkshireman?"

"I like him." Her eyes looked downward. She was smiling with a sweet, cunning meaningfulness.

"You like a Yorkshireman better than a Frenchman?"

"A *lot* better," she said.

A bitter-sweet pain like honey and peppermint began to work and wankle in his secret heart.

"Well! That is wonderfully decent of you!" The words heaved forth from his labouring breast. "*I* am a Yorkshireman, you know."

"Yes, I know. I like them immensely. There is nobody in the whole world that I like half so well as them."

"Well, now! and I like you for saying it. I think it most awfully sweet of you."

"Do you? But *you* don't like *me* half as much as *I* love *them*."

"You think not?" cried Jack Heathcote with wild eyes. "Oh, that is perfect nonsense, you know! Why, I love the very house you live in—I love you so madly and awfully!"

In a moment she was on his breast.

"And I you!" she whispered into his ear, biting it. "I love—I love—oh, Jack! I can't tell you how much—always from the first, you silly—better than anybody—better than Edith!"

Jack kissed her rapturously. She pushed him away, laughing.

CHAPTER XV.

Cécile on the Track.

"But you understand," she said, "that I shall never marry until she is found. *Never*, remember. And the reason I sent for you was to tell you that, and to get you to help me to find her. Have you got a lot of money?"

"Oh, rather," said Jack.

"I have sent to the Paris bank for an amount for myself,"

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proceeded Cécile. "I have won £3,000, but have it not yet. Meanwhile I want some, which you must give me. And you have to come a railway journey with me into Dorsetshire this very day. If I take you about with me, will you promise to be good, and not kiss me?"

"Quite so. I promise anything you like," said Jack.

He and Cécile accordingly left Waterloo at about two o'clock, though Lady Hilton looked with wonderment on this quixotic travelling about the world of a young unmarried lady and her lover together. She knew Cécile's wayward will too well, however, to make any audible protest; and Cécile, for her part, knew her man in Jack Heathcote. Jack was not so much her lover as her slave.

By midnight of that day the two had taken three rooms at a rustic inn in a Dorsetshire village, called Crossley. It was the village nearest Chisholme Park, the small estate where, twenty years before, Ernest Wentworth, the husband of Julie, and the father of Edith, had breathed his last.

"Are we going to be here for long?" asked Jack Heathcote, just before they parted for the night.

"I hope not, dear," she said. "It may be a week, or more. Oh, I am very sleepy!"

"What is it we are come after?"

"Something connected with Edith. It is no good telling you. You will not understand. Good-night."

"We are not supposed to kiss at all, are we?"

"Yes, dear. Once at night, when we are going to bed. Once in the morning. Good-night."

She held up her lips, sleepily, and Jack put his on them; a chaste and brotherly kiss. Their two bedrooms were on each side of a large, low-ceilinged sitting-room, provided with two ivy-clad oriel windows.

She spied an old man raking a garden bed.

In the morning, early as Jack was up, Cécile had gone out before-hand—on foot, the landlord told him. The hedges were just beginning to mantle with a flush of green, and the rooks in the trees were cawing the advent of spring. The bees were out in foraging parties, and all the land looked alive, getting ready for the big dinner and lord-mayor gluttony of the long summer. On and on, for four miles through the hedges, along the meadow-paths, walked Cécile with brisk, light step, drinking in the fresh balm of the morning air.

She came at last to the outskirts of the estate of Chisholme, and passed through the open lodge gates. On the previous night she had heard from her landlord that the house was now occupied by a retired merchant from Taunton. The blinds were still drawn, and the family in bed.

But she spied an old man raking a garden-bed on the lawn, and approached him with her most conciliating smile.

"I want to see a servant who was employed at this house about twenty years ago," she said. "You may, no doubt, be able to put me on my track."

The old man wore an early-morning face, and kept on sourly raking his flower-bed, as he replied:

"'Taint likely as I can. Times be hard enough as they are, without troubling yer head——"

She interrupted him with the cold touch of half-a-sovereign on his hand.

"I think you can tell me," she said. "I see you are a native of these parts."

"How the bloomin' do *you* know that?" said the old man sourly; but his tough old face wore the semblance of a smile.

"That blue worsted cap on your head tells me all about you, you see. The women of these parts make them, I think? My landlord at the inn wears one and his son another. But the colour of yours is so faded that it must be twenty—forty—years old. You are certainly native here, my friend."

"Well, I'm darned if you ben't right!" said the old fellow with a knowing head-shake. "Who's it you say you want?"

"A servant. She worked here twenty years ago. I do not know her name."

"Then I'm blowed if *I* know it for you."

"But, yes, I understand that. What I want you to tell me is whether you know *anybody* who was a servant here when the Hon. Ernest Wentworth, who once owned this property, lived here."

"Now, *he* wur a fine free-handed man, if you like," mused the old boy; "they were better days nor these, mum!"

"But about the servants? See if you cannot remember. Do try!"

"There wur Em'ly Bowden. *Her* lived with them a year or two."

"Very good. Where can one find Emily Bowden?"

"Her's under the ground safe enough."

He digged in a downward direction with his gnarled forefinger.

"Then she won't help me at all," said Cécile with a woe-begone vacancy of expression. "Anyone else?"

"There wur Nancy Hawley, if I rightly remember."

"And she?"

"Oh, her! Don't talk of *her*. *Her* run away to Lunnon with Jim Richards many a year a-gone. A report went that Richards wur drownded."

"But no. I do not desire to hear the history of Richards. I have not so much time, you see. Any other *servant?*"

"I forgot Annie Hall. *Her* should be alive somewhere abouts. Is her the one you're after?"

"But yes—the very one. You must help me to find her."

"That's just what I can't do. I've lost track of her this many a year."

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"Was she married?"

"Aye—twice."

"Was Hall the name of the second husband?"

"No—the first. That's the name I always knew her by. I don't recollect the name of the second."

"Is she in the neighbourhood at all?"

"Don't think so. She went away somewhere. I did know, but I misremember where. It wurn't fur, though."

That day Jack Heathcote spent in making enquiries on horseback far and near for Annie Hall. He returned late at night dispirited, with no further information than that the second husband's name was West.

The next day Cécile and Jack parted on two horses at the inn, and went out in different ways, seeking for information; at eleven in the night Cécile returned to find Jack just come back. He had no news. But she had discovered that Annie Hall had married West at a village twenty miles away called Wixford.

On the third day she took Jack with her to Wixford, seeing how he pined and moped when separated even for a few hours from her. With intense interest, in the gloomy little vestry of the parish church, they pored together over the register of marriages.

They learned that West was by trade a carpenter, and was born in the Cornish town of Quiltering.

In the hope of finding out his life's history, all trace of him having been obliterated in that part of Devonshire, they set out the next day, by train, for the neighbourhood of Quiltering.

Meanwhile, into nearly every newspaper in the three kingdoms, an advertising agency in London had inserted, at the bidding of Cécile, an announcement to Annie West, that, if she would but write, she would hear of something to her advantage.

CHAPTER XVI.

Tracked.

The Rue Morcello is situated in one of the meanest and most squalid parts of Paris in the environs of the Marais. It is a bye-street leading out of the Rue de Retour, and is in the centre of quite a hive of manufacturing industries, toy-factories, feather-factories, book-binding establishments, depôts and large-fronted warehouses, all mingled with big dwelling-houses of the congregating working-class, in a network of narrow streets.

In her little top room.

Paris, which was the city of her childhood, was more like home to Edith Wentworth than any other city out of England. Her very first instinct, therefore, as soon as she had determined on flight, was to make for Paris. At first she lived in a very good sort of environment in lodgings in St. Germain; but finally she gravitated downward to the depth of the Rue Morcelle.

She felt herself an outcast. The child of impossible parents, and she fully realised that their debasement, their vulgarity, their sin, was hers. She had no hope, no wish to disassociate herself from them; her candid nature felt it to be impossible. For such as her, with her stained birth, her unspeakable father, to marry an aristocrat, to live with aristocrats, was out of the question. For the totally hopeless, for the infinitely separated and unrelated, Paris, even more than London, is the place for a living burial.

She resolved to make sufficient struggle in order to continue to breath, and lived in a languid pain, waiting for death.

She had never dreamed, really, what it is for a human being to suffer the want of plenty; that had been far from her; and in resolving "to struggle to continue to breathe," she thought as a child. The struggle to do even so much was very much harder than she supposed.

The value of the few things she had brought with her was soon exhausted. One by one they disappeared into the Mont de Piété; and the cruel day came nearer.

She knew the French language with perfect fluent accuracy, and had a certain cleverness and acquaintance with the literary trick. In her St. Germain weeks, she wrote hard, day and night, for the weekly journals. But everything she wrote was returned to her unused. Then in despair, feeling the pinch of want, she descended as low as the Rue Morcelle.

No. 13, where she found a room, was a vast five-floored pile, boasting a courtyard, and a *concierge*. It was sordid, but hardly squalid. The crowds of humanity which thronged in every corner of it were all of them persons in the lower depths of shabby-gentility, faded and wretched, but not desperately debased. Edith had obtained a tiny room, high at the top and back, a garret with bare sloping roof for ceiling, for which she paid three francs a week.

For ten days she wandered in search of manual work of some kind, and, during that time, sharply realised the great vacuum on the edge of which she stood. She had no knowledge or suspicion of the agencies which exist for the procuring of work for the "seekers." It did not enter her mind to be a *bonne*, or a clerk. She saw the *grisettes* of Paris tripping to and from the factories or shops, and their contented, limited life grew to be her ideal of attainment.

She remembered with horror that she had not cultivated any of the clever knacks in which even some high-born ladies excel. Could she sew, embroider? Hardly sufficiently well to earn a living. But she had been rather skilful in drawing as a girl, and could trace out a decent curve with tolerable steadiness of hand. She was, moreover, not without a certain amount of invention, and thus she came to obtain a footing at a *modiste's*, as a designer of ladies patterns.

The work she did at home in her little top room. There were two wooden chairs, a deal table, and deal wash-hand-stand. In the corner was the narrow bed, which she daily made with her own hands. This was all the furniture she had been able to procure. The only window was very small, and was brightened by the presence of a single flower-pot.

By working all the day, designing and cutting out, inventing, and going to and fro between her lodging and the *modiste's*, she was able to earn about sixteen francs a week, sometimes a little more, sometimes less.

Her brilliant colour faded, and purplish semi-circles formed beneath her eyes.

To her other self—to Cécile—she was sometimes tempted to write for money. Cécile was an heiress, with unlimited supplies. But she feared. A letter would reveal the fact that she was in Paris. With a desperate cringing sensitiveness, she clung to her unknown retreat and seclusion; it was her little warmth in the bitter cold of the world.

One night a man looked in at the window of the *concierge's* lodge at No. 13, and asked in very bad French:

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"Is there among your tenants an English lady?"

"No, m'sieur, I think not," said the man.

No one knew Edith as an Englishwoman, for she spoke the perfect French of a cultured Parisienne.

The man—he had the burly figure of Mr. Hawke—went

Saw Edith walk out of the modiste's.

out, and walked down the street; round a corner, he stopped where another man was waiting for him.

"She ain't there," said Mr. Hawke wearily. "My belief is she ain't in Paris at all. I'm sick of this jolly job, mate."

"You can be as sick as you like, Hawke," said Dr. Lemaitre, "but you do not touch the funds until you find her. She is in Paris."

"You don't know that."

"I *feel* that she is here——"

"Ah, that's all very well, mate, but——"

"Be silent. She is here. It is the place she would naturally come to. If you cannot find her, *I* shall."

They walked away together.

The truth is not always in a well. We seek her deeply, and cannot find her, and presently, of her own accord, she reveals to us her smiling face.

But her taste is sometimes questionable. Mr. Hawke, for instance, was one of her favourites.

Lounging listlessly about at a street corner a few days after, thinking that it was time to go and have something to eat, he saw Edith walk out of the *modiste's*, a bundle of tissue paper peeping from under her cloak.

He coolly walked behind her to No. 13, Rue Morcelle, and saw her disappear within the house.

He heard from the *concierge* that she occupied room No. 165, at the top of the building.

Dr. Lemaitre, living in princely style on the fatness of Musgrave's thousands, occupied at this time a mansion in the fashionable Rue de Rome. That night as he walked with Hawke towards the Marais, he was as gay as a schoolboy.

He kept clapping Hawke on the back.

"Mr. Hawke," he said, "I congratulate you. You are formed for Fortune. You were born to Empire. To-morrow, at this time, you will have £10,000 in your pockets. But beware of the gaming-table, Mr. Hawke——"

"Oh, shut it, mate," interposed Hawke.

"The gaming-table and the drink. Paris is full of far keener wits than yours, Mr. Hawke. And when this is gone you will get no more sums like it, I promise you. I am going to be married, Mr. Hawke."

Presently they stood together in the dimly-lit street watching the dark exterior of No. 13.

"I think," said Lemaitre, "that it would be better for you to present yourself before her first. Then I will appear in the character of deliverer and liberator. Your daughter, I fear, does not regard you with the filial feelings due to your merits, Mr. Hawke."

"Why can't you shut it?" said Hawke. "I don't suppose she thinks much more of *you*."

"Yes!" cried Lemaitre, his eyes flashing with sudden passion and desire, "she does! Edith! Edith! You are mine—at last—my love."

(*To be continued.*)

Slips of Paper that are Worth Money.

A lot can be done with £100, but, of course, if you are sufficiently wealthy to ignore this offer, pass along to something more exciting.

One of the coupons on the front page of ***PEARSON'S WEEKLY*** will be collected by ordinary people, the other, marked "Newsagent," by tradesmen of that ilk. Similar coupons appear in ***SHORT STORIES*** and ***HOME NOTES.*** Procure as many of these coupons as you possibly can, and paste them either in exercise books or on slips of paper.

£100 will be given to the reader who collects the greatest number from ***P.W.*** and ***SHORT STORIES;*** another £100 to the reader who collects from ***HOME NOTES;*** another £100 to the newsagent who collects from ***P.W.*** and ***S.S.;*** and another £100 to the newsagent who collects from ***HOME NOTES.*** In addition to this there will also be

ONE PRIZE OF £25. FIVE EACH OF £5.
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NO COUPONS TO BE SENT IN BEFORE JANUARY, 1898.

THE MOST COMFORTABLE CHURCH IN THE WORLD.

A most interesting article upon the most comfortable church in the world appears in *The Sunday Reader* for March 27th. The church is a truly up-to-date sanctuary. There are dining-rooms, reception-rooms and drawing-rooms in the building, and a hydraulic lift, made with all the latest improvements, carries the worshippers from the ground floor up to their sanctuary. *The Sunday Reader* article is well illustrated, and if you get a copy you will certainly agree that the church described is, without doubt, a truly remarkable place of worship.

The Sunday Reader for March 27th also contains an interesting interview with Dr. Mandel Creighton, Bishop of London, and portraits of the oldest married couple in Great Britain.

The paper is full of interesting articles, anecdotes, and stories, and

A NEW PUZZLE PICTURE COMPETITION,

in which a sum of over £40 is offered in prizes, commences in the issue of March 27th.

THE SUNDAY READER.

Ready March 27th.] [One Penny.

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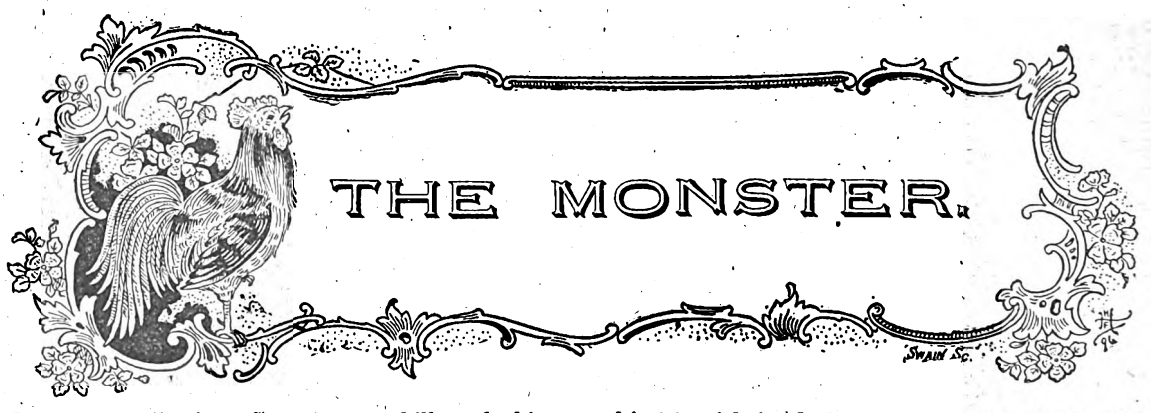

THE MONSTER.

One or two miles from Coventry, on a hill overlooking the pretty River Sherborne, stands the residence of Thomas Corbins, a very honest man, who has accumulated his money in manufacturing revolvers—or perhaps it was bicycles.

Thomas Corbins has one misfortune and one quality—the misfortune of being a widower and the quality of living quite simply. One would be far from guessing the truth to measure his fortune by the size of his house or the luxury of his retinue.

He has only one child, a daughter of twenty, and a beauty, but he has two younger sisters, each blessed with two children. During holiday time these kinsfolk spend two weeks with him, so the small house, at the time that this story opens, was as full as a Swiss hotel.

It was a frightfully hot morning last July when Miss Corbins at an early hour descended to the kitchen to give her orders. She was rather shocked to notice that the Irish cook did not rise from her chair as she entered. We all know, however, that we must be indulgent, even to the point of cowardice, to a cook, especially at a time when the house is full of company. Dorothy Corbins contracted her pretty eyebrows at this impertinence, but pretended to find the attitude natural, and said meekly:

"It is warm, isn't it, Bridget?"

"Warum?" replied the Irish girl. "Sure and it's only warum ye find it, miss? Well, be jabers, it's hot I call it, infernally hot. I shall be afther laving."

"But, Bridget, your month is not up for eight days."

"And ye think I make that a difficulty? An' faix, ye can kape a week's wages. My hilth is more than money. It wad be betther to lose twinty shillings than ye should be makin' ov me an ould woman at thirty."

An hour later Erin's daughter had disappeared, and Dorothy Corbins, not without baking herself, had cooked the breakfast for ten people, or rather for nine, as her father always breakfasted in town a few paces from his office. While serving the dishes she notified the "family boarding house" of the catastrophe which had overtaken her.

"As for the cooking, that I shall do until I can replace Bridget, but if at the same time I must play lady, preside at table, and entertain in the parlour, I shall go crazy. So please don't expect to see much of me until someone is found; and that won't be an easy matter considering the season."

Dorothy proved herself up to the mark. Besides Bridget, who had just deserted, the housework was done by a single maid. After considerable coaxing, she consented to do extra work provided she was not asked to approach the range. According to her story she was subject to sick headaches; the fact was she feared to spoil her complexion, which her "young man" declared was incomparable.

A few days later a foreign friend arrived. His moustache was blonde and his eyes were blue, but of a blonde and a blue with which the Anglo-Saxon race had nothing to do. Although carefully dressed, his clothes had not that stiff, impersonal style of the English swell for whom to be well dressed apparently means to be christening a new suit. Moreover, the cut of his linen, and still more, the form of his cravat, bespoke the Parisian. In fact Max de Résal had but recently arrived in England.

After opening the wicket gate, the stranger studied the house as he walked up the path, which took a sharp angle, picturesquely softened by thick growth of ivy.

A retriever dog, asleep on one of the porch chairs, woke up and began to bark furiously at Résal's approach, and in the death-like silence which reigned the barking served as a signal of alarm. A servant maid with flaxen hair appeared on the balcony of one of the Queen Anne windows on the second floor, and evidently awaited some questions from the visitor.

"Mrs. Corbins?" asked and repeated the young man, with a desperate effort towards the right pronunciation.

He tried Corbins, Courbins, then Keurbins, and finally Corbince, without success. Proper names are the stumbling-blocks to a new-comer in a country—and in a language.

"The devil," he cried in good French, "this must be Mr. Corbins' house, the cabman told me so."

The flaxen-haired girl made a circular movement with her thumb, and called out something of which Résal caught but one word, "kitchen," after which she disappeared.

While skirting the side of the house, Max glanced into the parlour through a large bow-window. The room seemed deserted. The chandelier, dreadful in its form, was enough to make a man of taste faint. But some canvases from the brush of well-known painters decorated the walls. It was quite evident that Thomas Corbins had a fine fortune and spent it intelligently.

He approached a large awning beneath which he saw a door open, and without further ceremony he entered.

A feminine form was moving in the room, the blinds of which were half closed to keep out the sun and the flies. The cook turned round, but he could only distinguish the outlines of a slender and elegant figure in the shadow.

"Is that you, Willie?" she asked in her mother tongue.

"I regret to say that I am not Mr. Willie," replied Max in

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his best English, which was not good. "I am a stranger who wishes to see Mr. Corbins, and, by Jupiter, it is not easy to find someone to speak to in this house."

Dorothy was breaking her eggs, carefully separating the yolks from the whites, and took no notice of this complaint.

"The family have gone off for the day. As to Mr. Corbins, naturally he is at his factory. You must go there to find him, or rather you ought to have stopped there, as you passed by it."

"How did I know that? Besides, I did not come to see Mr. Corbins on business."

"Maybe you have a letter of introduction to him then?"

"Yes, I have; here it is."

Miss Corbins took the unsealed envelope and drew out the card which it contained, and read it to the immense stupefaction of Résal, who never imagined that the free and easy manners of English servants could go so far.

The letter was short—only three lines. The Marquis de Saint-Cybars begged to recall himself to the memory of Mr. Thomas Corbins, and present to him his best friend, the Vicomte Max de Résal, who would travel in Great Britain for some months. It is necessary to explain that Saint-Cybars had crossed the Channel two or three months before, without concealing from his friends that he consented to brave sea-sickness in the hopes of marrying a bag of gold. The said bag had been found at Brighton, and belonged to an heiress far from pretty, whose conquest had not cost much effort to a practitioner of Pierre's merits.

Married on the spot, poor Lily Emerson was not happy, as it was easy to see from her letters. Without being an intimate friend of the young Marquise, Dorothy had been told of the bad conduct of Saint-Cybars, who had been presented as a future model husband.

This is the reason why, after having placed the letter from the odious man on the table, she continued to break her eggs, at the same time laughing in her sleeve at the funny side of the situation. Her mouth drawn up at the corners by a half smile rendered her still more fascinating as she indulged in these reflections: "Here is a young Vicomte who appears to me to be looking for a bag of gold also. I am sure that this dreadful Saint-Cybars has made out a list for him. How shameful it is to think that this intriguer will find a Vicomtesse among us all the more readily because he certainly is a handsome fellow. But Dorothy Corbins is not for him. She is not such a silly as to make one more unhappy woman in the world for the satisfaction of having embroidered coronets on her linen."

Alas! It was quite an easy affair for Dorothy not to marry Max de Résal, but it was indeed too bad to be compelled to cook his dinner. Should he find Mr. Corbins at his office, most assuredly they would return together for dinner. A fine pleasure in truth to receive a stranger, a Frenchman, a Vicomte at a time when one has not a cook.

As the young girl was thus reflecting, Max's eyes having grown accustomed to the dim light of the kitchen, he said to himself that English cooks were still more remarkable for their beauty than for their free manner. Although his tastes as well as his education had preserved him from certain flirtations, he did not seem disposed to take his departure, and he asked nothing better than to enjoy a chat with this pretty creature. But what in the world to talk about?

It was she who resumed the conversation. Without stopping the mixing of her cake, she had thought of a means to prevent Max from growing old in Coventry, and in advance she was amused at the device which she was going to employ to put this dot-hunter to flight before he should wish to carry the acquaintance farther. Suddenly employing the French tongue, which she spoke in a praiseworthy way, she asked:

"So it is on business that you desire to see Mr. Corbins?"

Max, dumfounded, raised his hands.

"Now just hear her speak French! Mademoiselle, were you in my country I should declare that you were a princess in disguise. But ever since I reached England I have sworn never to be astonished at anything. Did I learn that it was required for a good cook in Great Britain to possess the brevet of sea captain in her letter of recommendation, I would say the thing is quite natural, I have had so many puzzling experiences for the past month. In spite of all, if I dared to employ an expression of your language, I should say that the cook of Mr. Thomas Corbins was 'holding the record.' We will add, then, if a spark of intelligence is left in me, that I wish to make to this gentleman simply a visit of politeness."

"But he does not wish to be disturbed when he is at his factory by 'simple visits of politeness.'"

"Nothing could be more natural," said the young man, "only, as apparently he is at his factory all day, we must conclude that he is not visible to tourists like myself."

"We see very few tourists here," insinuated the pseudo cook. "Frenchmen, particularly, seldom come here for the mere pleasure of travelling."

"On my word," said Résal, seating himself on a chair, "I am not an engineer, a painter, a singer, nor a novelist."

"So I guess why you visit England," continued Dorothy, beating her eggs. "You are looking for an heiress. Oh, you need not be afraid to admit the fact to a poor servant girl like myself."

"Young, marriageable men are always on the look-out for heiresses," admitted Max as a sort of axiom.

"During the season it is at Brighton the heiresses are to be found; you must go there."

"I have come from there. I spent fifteen days and fifteen nights, if such can be called nights. I am worn to the bone with fatigue; another week would have killed me. I left that delicious but infernal spot this morning. Of course, you know Brighton?"

"The Corbins spent last season there," explained Dorothy, who, to say the least, was as much amused as Max. "And did you not meet with any success?"

"Not the smallest in the world, and, goodness knows, I have lunched, dined, danced, yachted, played tennis, swallowed concerts, and undergone excursions. But not one of these young ladies paid the slightest attention to me."

As if to console him, she said: "The 'dots' to be found at Brighton are too big for a mere Vicomte. Now, if you had only been a Marquis! Monsieur de Saint-Cybars arranged his affair very quickly. I almost saw the—bargain completed. Poor Lily Emerson, she has found out that a coronet is not sufficient to produce happiness."

"Saint-Cybars behaved like a brute," said Max. "To begin with he never loved his wife. As for myself I would never make a marriage of that kind."

"What, monsieur, you are hunting for a poor

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English girl? Oh, well, sir, you will find them; there are some!"

"I am poor myself," replied Max quite simply, "and I cannot earn my living. So I must needs have a rich partner. But I wish to love her and wish her to love me. I desire above all things that we may be a happy couple. In truth I do not think that that will be a difficult thing with me."

"These are very fine phrases, monsieur," said Dorothy, with a mischievous twinkle in her black eyes. "They have not fallen on deaf ears. I know what there remains for me to do."

"What?" protested Résal. "You believe——"

"I believe nothing at all. You would like my help—rest easy; Miss Corbins will receive your little profession of faith with not even a comma left out. In the meantime go to see the father. Do not fear to disturb him. Poor man! It is not every day that he is asked for his daughter, and still less by a Vicomte. Gracious goodness; it is not he who will throw stumbling-blocks in your way."

For a quarter of an hour Max believed that he had been dreaming; at this insinuation, full of danger, he woke up:

"What do you mean? Is Miss Corbins——"

"Oh, she is a model of virtue and goodness. If only the physical were equal to the moral."

"What, is she a monster?" asked Max, drawing nearer.

"Well, that depends on what you mean by a monster. Some people will tell you that she is humpbacked. In my opinion that is going too far. I admit that her neck is in her shoulders, and her figure—is sadly wanting. Unfortunately, her complexion is like her figure, wanting also. Remember, however, that with us men are hard to please. The girls are not married for their money. That is why I say it again, you have every chance of being received by the father, at least."

The shrewd girl never doubted but that Max would reply: "It is a shame that she is so ugly, but in as much as she is a model of virtue—and, since there are other advantages to compensate for this ugliness—one has to sacrifice something when it comes to a marriage." Then what embarrasssment for this intriguer when she would reply: "Monsieur, you are speaking to Dorothy Corbins." Poor Vicomte, if he stayed to dinner after that, really he had a strong nerve.

Instead of replying Max drew a louis from his pocket. Did he intend to bribe her? That would be even worse than cynicism. Dorothy had already raised her hand to show him to the door.

"Young woman," said he, "will you do me a service? Do not mention one word about my visit."

"Why not? What do you intend to do?" stammered the beautiful Dorothy, greatly troubled by this unexpected request.

"I intend to sleep in London. It is only a few hours' journey from here, is it not?"

The young heiress would not believe her ears. Wishing to push the test as far as possible, she said:

"But, monsieur, do not lose sight of the fact that Father Corbins will give one hundred thousand cash. There is no knowing but what he would give two if pushed."

"You pain me," said Résal, laying his louis on the table. "I would have thought you higher-minded. But that is your business. Only be discreet, for I do not wish to pass for a cad in Miss Corbins' eyes."

He looked again at Dorothy, then with a heavy sigh he turned away, leaving his gold-piece on the table.

When he entered his room at the hotel he made an effort to collect his ideas, but feeling that he would not succeed, he went out. The woman who filled his mind, who haunted his curiosity, who astonished, amused, and was not far from charming him, this woman was a cook. It is true that her figure, her eyes, her smile, her white arms, might serve as an excuse for any madness. But after all, she was a cook. She wore an apron and beat eggs like every other cook in the world. And he, the correct man, the nobleman of good descent, was wasting three days of his life, because, by chance, he had fallen across this Circe of the saucepan.

Of what use was it to deceive himself? If he were delayed in his departure, it certainly was not because of the Corbins' dinner, which in fact he could refuse if he wished—it was to give himself the chance of seeing again the apparition which filled his memory.

When the next day Max turned up Dorothy was quite content to see him, but in no wise surprised.

"Well," she said, "you have come for an answer to your card. Here it is, from Miss Corbins' hand, who has been obliged to go out again to-day. Indeed, ill luck pursues you."

"Less, perhaps, than Miss Corbins supposes," said the Vicomte, putting the note in his pocket.

"What! You are not going to read what she has written?"

"Confound the 'monster,' I have plenty of time for that. There is something else that interests me more."

Dorothy gave him a peculiar look, less limpid than usual, and then, choosing her words, she said:

"You do me an honour that I do not deserve. What I am now, I shall be all my life. But after all," she added, laughing, "does it count for nothing to be a good cook?"

This consolation scarcely appealed to Résal, who muttered, unaware that he was doing so aloud:

"It is a shame!"

"Why is it a shame?" asked this princess in disguise.

With the sorrow and wrench of an inevitable parting he kept his own counsel, and replied:

"I had hoped that you had been created for another destiny. At least you are happy here?"

"Quite happy, perfectly happy," said Dorothy, her cheeks brightened by a rosy tint.

"Then it is all right—and what are you making now?" continued the young man, who tried to put the conversation on normal ground.

"Sherry wine jelly," she replied, endeavouring to steady her voice. "By-the-way, what are your favourite dishes, for this note which you will not read invites you to dinner to-morrow."

"Confound the dinner, it's a nuisance! I will go back to the hotel and write to the 'monster' that I am inconsolable, but urgent business prevents my accepting. I ought to have followed my first impulse and gone away yesterday. Life is too short to waste it in waiting the Corbins' pleasure."

"Monsieur, they mean it for the best. This evening you would have stumbled across a family of not very amusing sisters and cousins. To-morrow you will be alone."

"With the 'monster'? Very kind, I am sure. That decides me. I only wish I were already in the train, and still more I wish that I had never seen Coventry!"

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He stood up ready to take his departure, for in fact it was necessary to cut short this situation, which was contrary to good sense, when Max saw something which he could not endure. Bending her pretty figure, stiffening her body in one convulsive effort which justified rather late, 'tis true, her fine colour, Dorothy was vainly endeavouring to uncork a bottle of sherry for which her jelly was waiting. Almost angrily the young man snatched the bottle from her small hands, which were none too strong. When the cork was out, he said:

"You were never intended to do such work, my poor child. It would be so easy for one possessing your intelligence to find some better situation. Permit me to tell you that you are absurd."

"You would appear scarcely less absurd in the eyes of society could you be seen at the present moment, monsieur. But one thing is sure, you are very good."

"I?" he groaned, shrugging his shoulders. "I am not good. I am a man, that is all. If you were ugly and humpbacked as this Corbins girl, do you think that I would help you to do your cooking? And yet you are right to say I should be subject to ridicule; that shows how society has perverted the laws of Nature. Once upon a time a brilliant beauty in a woman was enough to raise her to a throne. What is the use of being handsome to-day? Should I return to France with an heiress on my arm, even though she were a perfect scarecrow, there would be a tussle amongst my neighbours to be the first to congratulate me. But should I marry Venus herself in the garb of a servant, the world would forget my name, and my children would not be able to marry. Ah! the world—it is stupid, cowardly, unjust, odious!"

Dorothy stood with her two hands on the back of a chair, her figure slightly bent, looking at Max with eyes which finished by completely turning the young man's head.

"I implore you not to go away without having dined here with my employers."

"So that I can test your cooking? I should find it detestable—you a cook! I can never, never accustom myself to such an idea."

"Do what I ask, monsieur, for if you think so much of me you ought to find pleasure in eating of my cooking."

Several voices were heard in an adjoining room.

"Go quickly," cried Dorothy. "The family have returned."

Max had already reached the garden, and was creeping behind the bushes in order that the "monster" should not see him; so true it is that heroes are rarely found when it is a question of facing social prejudices.

* * * * *

An hour later Miss Corbins received a polite though formal note that the Vicomte de Résal would accept her gracious invitation.

He walked about all the next day, and while returning to the hotel he met a man in the street. The stranger stared at him for a second with sympathetic interest; then said to him in French:

"Monsieur Vicomte de Résal, I believe."

"Perhaps," said Max. "Have we met somewhere?"

"No, but I am aware of your being in this town. I am Thomas Corbins. An hour ago I heard that my daughter had invited you to dine this evening. Will you come to the house now? You can have a chat with my daughter, who is well acquainted with your country. She is showing the new cook her duties."

"It is possible," exclaimed Max with an interest which, to say the least, was odd, "the other has gone away?"

"Oh, I did not regret her. Too fine a lady. A. *poseuse*, as you would call her in your country. Monsieur, if you want to know how a servant in England gives herself airs you must study the type in the country. If only I could follow the example of certain Parisians and pass my life at a hotel so as not to see this sort of cattle."

Max longed to beat him for his stupidity. Here was he condemned to dine at this house without the possible chance of seeing the dismissed cook, perhaps dismissed because of him. This was the last straw.

After a few words he took leave of his host, pretending, which was true indeed, that he was worn out and wished to rest a little at his hotel. Rarely since he had attained the age when most of our joys and sorrows are caused by women had this good fellow experienced such depression of spirits. Thus far his love affairs, or rather escapades—for his heart had never been seriously affected—had always shown himself to be a refined, poetical and sentimental man, so much so indeed that often he had been ridiculed by his friends as not being up-to-date.

He put on his evening dress and wended his way to the Corbins. Naturally it was the maid with the flaxen hair who answered the bell. The double doors of the drawing-room were opened wide, so with firmness and resignation he penetrated into the monster's den.

At the first glance the room seemed deserted and he fancied he was before time; but on closer examination he saw there was a lady seated in the shadow of the bow-window. Never doubting that he was in the presence of Miss Corbins, he advanced, resolved to introduce himself. But at the fourth step he stopped abruptly. The unknown person was evidently of remarkable beauty, though he could not perfectly distinguish her features.

At the same time the sound of male voices reached him from the smoking-room, and clouds from redolent Havanas were floating through the half-open door. Without doubt this unknown lady was the wife of one of the smokers. That she was married her rich toilet and the diamonds sparkling in her ears left no shadow of a doubt to a man accustomed to French usages. So Résal contented himself with a simple bow, all that the situation demanded, and said to himself:

"Miss Corbins might have taken the trouble to be dressed in time to do the honours."

And once more he reviled the "monster." He had directed his steps towards the smoking-room to seek support from Mr. Corbins. But the mysterious lady had turned her face towards him and he stopped petrified, wondering if a certain cook of his acquaintance did not have a twin sister who had had better success in life. There were the same adorable eyes, the same mouth, ready to smile, and the gentle mockery beneath its serious expression. In a word, it was the same beauty enhanced by flowers, jewels, the *décolleté* dress made by a *grande contourière*.

"Great Heavens," sighed the young man almost in a whisper, "I imagine I see her everywhere."

Feeling that he was growing ridiculous in his too evident perplexity, he tore himself from this dream of contemplation and fled hastily to the smoking-room where the gentlemen were talking—Mr. Corbins and a clergyman, who could not be, without breaking all

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human and divine laws, the legitimate possessor of this beautiful woman.

The host welcomed Résal with British hospitality. After presenting him to the clergyman, he said:

"I ought to have been in the drawing-room to have received you, but you saw my daughter whom you already know. Why, here she comes."

The beautiful creature whom Résal had saluted a moment before appeared upon the threshold of the smoking-room.

"Well, shall we go to dinner?" she said gaily. Dorothy had extended her hand to the guest as she would have done to one whom she had seen the evening before, and marched him through the drawing-room, for he would have been unable to budge himself.

"Cheer up," she said in a low voice, laughing. "Am I not loyal? Did I not promise 'to leap the barrier'; and did I not also promise that we should see each other again? Have I not kept my word?"

"Yes," replied the unhappy Max, "you have kept it so well that I long to leap from that window and drown myself in the river."

Perhaps the round white arm which clasped his own was more efficacious in preventing him from flight than handcuffs of the strongest steel. At all events, he was led to his chair, into which he literally fell inert and silent.

Leon de Tinseau.

MONA'S MISTAKE.

A water-lily fell at Mona's bare feet. She knew quite well what it meant. She knew whose boat was coming round the bend in the river, but she did not stir nor look up.

She was leaning against the old oak tree at the water's edge, and idly picking to pieces a spray of golden rod. The sunbeams sifted through the tree, and flickered over the dusky head, slipped down past the lowered lashes, kissed the dimples on the bare elbows.

The oars in the water ceased their regular splash, and the boat glided to where she stood.

The bits of golden rod floated by on each side.

"An', Mona, did ye have no greetin' for me? Why did ye come?"

Mona drops the last scrap of flowers and looks at him.

"Is it that you think I have come here to you?" she laughs. "Gerald, sure ye don't think that?"

"And why not?" he says, in an injured way. "I told ye Sunday I was goin' to the Shallows; didn't I ask ye thin to come down?"

"Perhaps," she says. "I have forgot. I came down to pick the cress; 'tis busy I am."

So she flashes one glance at him, and picks up her basket, as yet empty.

"Cress! Why, Mona," he says, "come, get ye into the boat. This cress is not half so lush as some a bit further. Come on," he urges.

"Well," she says slowly, "well." In reality she is longing to go, but, of course, it would not do to let him see it. "Ye needn't help me. I can get in."

Lightly he dips his oars, and they glide down the river. Mona laughs.

"They will be after me soon," she says. "Aunt Mollie will be a-callin' me, but she won't know, will she, Gerald?"

"No, colleen," answers Gerald in delight at the smiling face she turns on him. He rests his oars in the rowlocks and lets the boat drift.

"Mona," he says, bending towards her, "Mona, listen——"

"An' won't I catch it, too!" she says with a peal of laughter, as though catching it would be a festive occasion. "Here's the place; yes, Gerald?"

"Yes," he answers moodily. "Wait, I'll get the stuff; ye needn't move."

She catches hold of the bending branch of willow and draws the boat close inshore. One small, bare foot swings back and forth in the water as she balances herself on the prow and hums softly to herself. She knows he is angry; she guesses what he had started to say to her a moment ago, but what does she care for that? The lips are demure and serious as she thanks him, but the violet eyes are laughing.

"Gerald," she says when the oars commenced to move, "Aileen's here."

"Aileen?"

"Yes. She has the chance to see us now while Lady Lindores is at home. She is still my lady's maid, ye know. Aileen is, and it's myself would like to be in her place."

"Mona! Ye would like to go away from—from Kilgarnock?"

"Yes," she cried, "surely."

The boat's keel ran up to the landing place. She jumped out and then turned away with the basket in her hand. One glance she gave him over her shoulder.

"An' would ye care, Gerald?"

"Faith, 'tis not the likes of me she would be afther plasin'," he said to himself as he watched the little figure trip up the green sward and over the stile.

He forgot about the fishing expedition he had planned. He leaned back in the boat and fell to thinking. All the witches in the world are not yet suppressed; there are still some few left to tangle up the senses of a man and leave him in bewilderment.

The witch in Kilgarnock must have taken up her abode in Mona Carey's small head. To torment the lads of the village, to beguile and capture each unsuspecting heart, were accomplishments in which long practice had made her perfect.

Unlucky Gerald! All her life he had known her, even back to the time when she had begun to talk in broken baby phrases.

Although he was years older than she, Mona treated him in the same careless, laughing way in which she did all the other suitors. And though not one of them could boast of any especial mark of favour, yet each one believed himself to be ahead in the race—each one except Gerald Sheen.

Daily he questioned himself, tried to understand her; "but no," he thought bitterly, "it's an omadhaun I am; she laughs at me."

With all the love of his passionate Irish nature, he worshipped pretty Mona, who would look at him so

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roguishly from under long lashes and would not listen. And now he heard her voice calling:

"Lightfoot, Lightfoot, come up, come up; come to me, accushla!" and the twinkle of the cowbell echoed back again.

He pictured her sitting on the little stool and milking the cow; he knew how she would look—he had often watched her. The sleeves of her frock would be pushed up over her round arms; the dark rings of her hair would lie loosely over her head, and float against the dull dun of the cow's side. He imagined he could hear her talking and cooing to old Lightfoot, who seemed to him so unappreciative.

He remembered Aileen. She and Mona were about the same age, but so unlike in appearance that kinship would have never been suspected. While Mona was rather below the average height, Aileen was above it; Mona's curly tresses were black as midnight, and Aileen's bronze gold.

Lord Lindores, by whom Aileen was employed, one day announced that he would give a dance and bountiful supper to the people of the village.

Mona slipped down to the river in glee at the good news Aileen had just brought to her. She swung herself up to a limb that reached half way over the water, and scrambled recklessly out upon it till the bough swayed.

"Come here, Gerald, jist as quick as ye can!" she calls, quivering with excitement and splashing the water below with impatient heels.

"Comin'," he answers. "Sure, Mona, what is it? Is the cow after dyin'? Or the pigs stole? Tell it, colleen."

"The cow!" she says, her eyes dancing. "Oh, Gerald, it's me feet I can't kape sthill long enough to spake wid me tongue. The dance we're goin' to have in the new barn to-morrow night; ye didn't know that now? I have come jist to tell ye uv it."

"And is that all?" says Gerald, as he rests his oars and looks at her surprised. "An' I thought, Mona, ye had a thing to tell and afeared the news. A big bite I lost, too, for whin ye called so fast I didn't bide to finish."

"Well, ain't ye glad now, Gerald, for me to tell you?"

"Faith an' I knew that same already. It was no news to me, Mona."

Mona's red lips pouted.

"Go back then, Gerald, to your fishin'; 'tis not for me to bother ye."

Gerald surveyed her with an odd expression on his face.

"Look, Mona," he said, drawing a little bundle from the pocket of his corduroy trousers.

"See what I am goin' to ask the purtiest gurrl in Kilgarnock to wear to-morrow night." And he carefully unrolled a wide pink silk handkerchief, and held it up for Mona's inspection.

The little maid clasped her hands in admiration. She had nothing like it, and never doubted that it was intended for her.

"'Tis beautiful, sure, Gerald."

He craned his neck round to one side to behold the kerchief from her point of view.

"Yes," he said calmly, and then folded it up very carefully in its tissue wrappings, and put the bundle back into his pocket.

"Good-bye, Mona," he called, bending over his oars again.

She did not answer, but stared rather blankly at the little boat till it disappeared.

"Indade, thin, I don't care if it's not for me. I wouldn't have it," shaking her head, and speaking emphatically, "I wouldn't have it at all, at all."

When the next evening came the barn was full of life and laughter.

Mona looked in one direction and then another for Aileen, and at last found her sitting close to a window, and near by stood Gerald, gazing at her.

Mona turned a little pale. She did not see Patsy and Barney and Farron edging up to her; she never even thought of any of them. In her eagerness to make no mistake she stood up on tiptoe to see the better. Yes, it was Aileen, and now Gerald was leading her out to dance. The pink silk handkerchief was round her neck!

Something seemed to shoot across Mona's eyes with a blinding pain. When Barney begged her to dance she answered a little sharply, and he went away again.

"It is too warm here, aunt, just now," she said to Mrs. Kelly.

"Go stand in the cool a while, child," said her aunt. "There's Aileen coming over here; bide a bit."

But Mona was gone. Not under the trees did she stop, not by the little gate. Swiftly she passed out the side way, over the dusty road and into her own road. Here she paused a moment and, catching her breath with something that sounded like a sob, passed round the tiny thatched hut, and so over the stile to the river.

Down on her face upon the grass she threw herself, careless of the yellow sash of which she had been so proud. The yellow beads burst their string, and some rolled down the bank into the river. She lay very still and quiet, that a nightingale gave her no heed, and began to sing.

A whip-poor-will called on the opposite bank, and far off in the woods came the answer of his mate. The gleaming moon rolled slowly into view, and silvered each branch and blossom.

The birds sang on, but Mona heard them not. She was thinking—one hand on the heart that beat so fast, the other arm pillowing her head. She did not try to analyse her feelings; she would not have known how. There was a dull ache in her breast, and memory was torturing her.

"Holy Mother," she began, whispering, and could get no further.

She thought how unkindly she had always treated Gerald, and she laughed then to herself.

"Och, wirra, wirra," she ejaculated.

And now Aileen had taken him. It was Aileen's fault, not Gerald's. How could she do it, how could she?

"And wear his kerchief—the prettiest girl in Kilgarnock." Those were his words; and now she knew what he had meant. Oh, why had not Aileen stayed away! And now Gerald was gone from her entirely.

Slowly she made up her mind that she would be brave; no one—not Aileen nor Gerald—should ever know the truth. Gerald should never know she was sorry now, and so he would be happy. She murmured him a farewell in soft Irish words:

"Gerald, anoon, ma Gerald."

Then she fell asleep, worn out with her misery.

The bird at last hushed his sweet treble and flew away. He had heard a hasty step over the grass. But Mona heard not, saw not.

Somebody came down to the river bank almost on a run, and stopped short at sight of the little figure lying there so motionless. He knelt down beside her. With

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a quick eye Gerald noted the tear-stained cheek, the parted lips, whence came a long, long-drawn sobbing breath.

Without a word he gathered her up in his arms, asleep as she was, but Mona stirred, and then started from him wide awake.

"I—you—oh, Gerald!"

"They are all huntin' for ye," he answered. "Ye have scared the heart 'av me. An' why did ye come down here?"

"Don't," she whispered, trying to remember her resolution. "I will go back now."

She stood up, and then swayed a little dizzily.

"Mona, mavourneen!" said Gerald, holding her close.

She struggled to release herself, and stood back from him pitifully defiant.

"Ye shall not touch me!" she cried. "Go back to Aileen; go back to her and spake your words. Tell her that same mavourneen story; she will believe ye. Let me pass; I can go home; I'll not need ——" but the proud curve of the lips weakened, and the eyes commenced to brim with tears.

She turned away her head, and tried to spring past him. Gerald stood motionless at first, looking at her in surprise, and then he caught her by the arm.

"Mona, stop a bit," he said, almost sternly. "What is this come to ye? What is Aileen to me? Are ye dhramin', child?"

"Let me go," she whispered, "let me go."

"No, I'll not let you go. Spake to me, Mona. What is it? Nay, ye cannot go. Tell it to me!"

She faced him then, and her eyes flashed through the tears.

"An' ye would talk to me, would ye? An' ye would wait for me to market; an' ye would sing to me under the thatch at night; an' ye would tell me ye loved me! Och, it is not thrue at all, at all. Ye knew I am spakin' but the truth, an' ye will make me say it. Ah, but the heart of ye is black. Aileen is there dancin', to-night; Aileen is there waitin' for ye with your kerchief round her neck—the pink kerchief ye showed me and said 'twas for the purtiest gurrl in Kilgarnock; go to her, go!"

The little figure was quivering with wrath and emotion, then she remembered all at once that she had broken her promise to herself, but having broken it she was not going to yield an inch.

"Shure, 'tis not that I care for ye, 'tis the base desate I hate. Let me pass now, if ye please!"

"An' I don't plase, Mona," he said. "Is that all? Now ye shall listen to me. Ye would never hear to me afore, Mona, 'tis not my fault. I do love ye, an' ye wrong me when ye say no. Shure, mavourneen, I love the very ground ye walk on, an' the sound of your voice is a music to meself. The kerchief—aroon, are ye angered with the poor purty thing? See, I have it yet for the purtiest and smartest gurrl in Kilgarnock. An' won't ye wear it now? I knew not even did Aileen wear one, an' 'twas not mine she had on her neck. Aye, bide your head; 'tis here on my heart is the right place for it. No tears, Mona; Mona, mavourneen; 'tis all right now. An' won't ye wear the poor kerchief, colleen?"

He drew it round her neck and held the ends close up under her chin. Presently she looked at him shyly from under lowered happy lashes.

"Ah, Gerald, 'tis too beautiful for me!"

G. W. Prescott.

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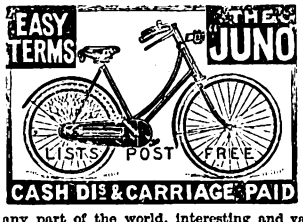

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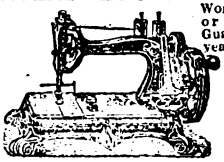
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Answers to Correspondents.

With the opening of Spring comes the opening of the Fresh Air Fund. An article on the subject appears on p. 401, and I would draw the attention of my readers to this, and ask them to tell their friends about the fund and its object. All subscriptions sent will be acknowledged in *Pearson's Weekly*, and the senders of sums over a sovereign will be presented with a pencil-case, if they wish. I hope that you will do your level best to assist the scheme this year, both by contributing yourself and by inducing others, equally generous, to do so.

Psyche.—Yes; it is quite true that priests have been forbidden to ride the bicycle in Paris. The reason is that on account of their ecclesiastical robes they rode ladies' machines and did not appear sufficiently dignified.

Peter J.—Queen Victoria rules over more Mohammedans than the Sultan of Turkey, over more Jews than there are in Palestine, and over more negroes than any other sovereign who is not a native of Africa.

L. T. P.—If horse-racing were abolished quite 20,000 people would be thrown out of employment.

F. G. K.—The British have won 82 per cent. of the battles they have fought. This is a better percentage than that of any large nation.

R. S. G.—Sounds can be heard distinctly twice the distance on water that they can on land.

Gertrude.—No; the orange blossom is not at all universally worn by brides. In Italy and some parts of Switzerland white roses are worn, in Spain red roses and pinks, and in Greece brides adorn themselves with vine-leaves.

D. G.—A healthy man to be correctly proportioned should weigh twenty-eight pounds for every foot of his height.

M. M.—There are three places in the world possessing the phenomenon green snow. One of these is near Mount Hecla, in Iceland, another fourteen miles east of the mouth of the Ohio, and the third, Quito, in South America.

W. H.—France is the greatest snuff-taking country in the world. I am glad to say this habit is fast dying out in England.

Gardener is anxious to know if there are any means by which he can arrest the ripening of fruit.———Experiments have been made to accomplish this by means of the refrigerating process. Apples were the only fruit, however, in which the experiment was successful.

J. M.—The Forth Bridge is constantly being repainted. So vast is the structure that it takes fifty tons of paint to give it one coat, and the area dealt with is something like 120 acres.

Furrier.—The reason that the skin of the Polar bear is mutilated in the way you mention when sent to England to be cured is owing to a superstitious belief among the Esquimaux, that, if when a Polar bear is killed his nose is not cut off and thrown upon the ice, bad luck will be sure to follow the hunter.

H. G.—It is the skin of the fruit which gives colour to wines. In the case of white wines, the skins are removed before fermentation.

D. W. B.—To find out if you are well formed, you should stand close up to a wall with your face towards it. The chest should touch the wall, the nose should be four inches away, the thighs five, and the tips of the toes three.

Clerk.—A good way to soften new pens is to hold the nib over a flame of some description for a few seconds and then dip it into water.

Eugene asks: "Is it possible that the smell of flowers could have the effect of making one hoarse?"———The fact has, I believe, been noticed by singers. The smell of freshly-cut flowers and artificial perfume in a much smaller degree will often produce temporary loss of voice. The violet, of all flowers, is supposed to be the worst offender, while tuberose, mimosa, lilac, and hyacinth, are all bad. A bouquet composed of these blossoms might, if presented at the end of a performance, make some prima donna hesitate whether to regard it as a compliment or otherwise. This would be very funny.

P. C.—The coldest hour of the day is generally considered to be five o'clock in the morning.

Ethel.—Tea is not so injurious when made from hard water as when made from soft.

Postman.—About forty tons of letters pass daily through the hands of the officials of the General Post Office.

Nellie.—(1) Yes. Most nations have a typical national flower. The following are a few that may be new to you: Greece, the violet; Germany, the cornflower; Spain, the pomegranate; Prussia, the linden; Egypt, the lotus; and Saxony, the mignonette. (2) No more stories of that sort, please.

R. W.—The room to which you refer is in the Imperial Palace at Petersburg. It is 100 feet long by 150 wide.

D. C. L. writes to ask me if I can tell him the reason bees prefer working in the dark.———This is due to the fact that sunlight causes the sugar to granulate out, and so to solidify the whole mass, when, of course, it is useless to them.

O. I. C.—A good method of restoring the perfume of flowers is to place them in a mixture of sugar and water. *Home Notes Bouquet* will do the same thing, too, and save the sugar.

The Laird wishes to know how the name of the Transvaal president is pronounced.———The correct pronunciation is "Krooyer." The "y" is pronounced as a letter which should be a cross between a "y," a "g," and a "j." If you want to make yourself understood though, you had better pronounce it "Krujer."

E. F.—The Viennese policemen are required to be able to swim, row a boat, and understand telegraphy.

Puzzled.—Certainly it is correct for a lady, after an introduction, to first acknowledge a gentleman in the street. Under no circumstances should he force his acquaintance upon her.

Guard.—If an express train moving at the rate of forty-five miles an hour were to stop suddenly it would give the passengers a shock equal to that of falling from a height of fifty-four feet.

D. D. B.—Surely there can be little doubt that bagatelle is a game of skill, although the element of chance in it is greater than that perhaps of billiards.

E. R.—I fully sympathise with you in your predicament. It is strange what a propensity Englishmen have for getting "hard-up," but the natives of India beat them in this respect. They put in pawn everything they can possibly lay their hands on, their lands, oxen, jewellery, their children, and even themselves.

G. P.—There are thirty thousand miles of telegraph in Great Britain.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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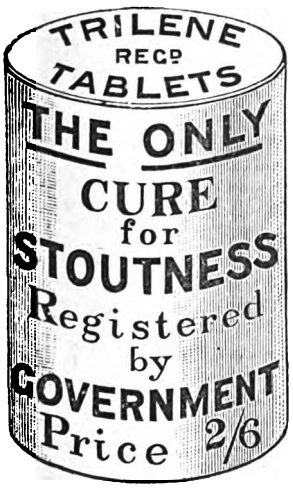

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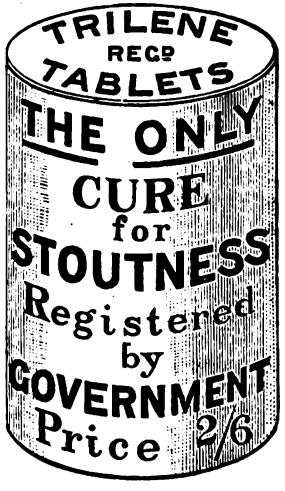

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87, Alexandra Road, Norwich.

"GENTLEMEN,—I have had some boxes of your Tablets for my wife, and she has derived great benefit from them.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Illustrated Family Novelist, November 30th, 1895, says: "A great many women who are plump by nature worry about their stoutness. However, there are some perfectly safe remedies for embonpoint, among them being the Trilene Tablets, which are not only safe, but absolutely beneficial to the general health, and speedily produce the desired effect."

MR. TAYLOR, Church Farm, St. James, Halesworth, says: "I have lost quite 2 stone since taking your Tablets."

"6, Brighton Terrace, Hull.

"MRS. JOHNSON has much pleasure in saying she has derived great benefit from your Tablets."

"8, Castle Road, Deal.

"MRS. J. PEARSON is glad to say she is much thinner."

Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.

MISS S. J. PRITCHARD says: "They have done me good. I am 21lb. lighter already."

"Bretton West, near Wakefield.

"MISS L. LANGFIELD has taken a box of Tablets, and is already 7lb. lighter."

MRS. HUTCHINSON, 46, Irwell Street, Widnes, Lancashire, writes: "I have taken three boxes and am reduced a stone."

A. D. BILLINGS, Bell Inn, Aldershot, writes: "Have derived great benefit already. Less in size and weight, and breathing greatly improved."

25, Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.

MISS M. FLAVELL says: "I have lost 2 stone, and am much better in health."

Extract from *Bury and Suffolk Times*, June 15th, 1894: "Miss Atherton sings and dances as piquantly as ever, and is a marvel of agility, considering how much flesh she has put on of late. Her friends should induce her to take a course of Trilene Tablets, about which I hear wonderful things. One portly acquaintance of my own by merely a few weeks' use of these little Tablets, has reduced his bulk perceptibly. I am assured the Tablets are harmless and tasteless, and that the Trilene Company in Finsbury Pavement, London, are doing an enormous and ever-increasing trade."

MR. GILLESPIE, 50, Chancer Road, Forest Gate, Essex, says: "I have lost just 3 stone."

2, Chariot Street, Hull.

MR. JUDD, Chemist, says: "My customers speak highly of your Tablets."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.

MR. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17½ stone, and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

MR. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17 stone, was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15 stone."

Aspern, 29, King's Hall Road, Beckenham.

MISS S. WOODHOUSE writes: "I have much pleasure in stating that your Tablets are really a safe cure for stoutness; they have cured me, and I am a perfect figure now."

MRS. GIBBON, of Radford Cottage, Bitterne, says: "I have derived great benefit from your Tablets, especially abdominal."

The Lady, October 8th, 1896 (giving advice to a reader who complained of stoutness), says: "The Trilene Tablets help to reduce stoutness, if taken daily; they are made of purely vegetable ingredients, and are quite harmless."

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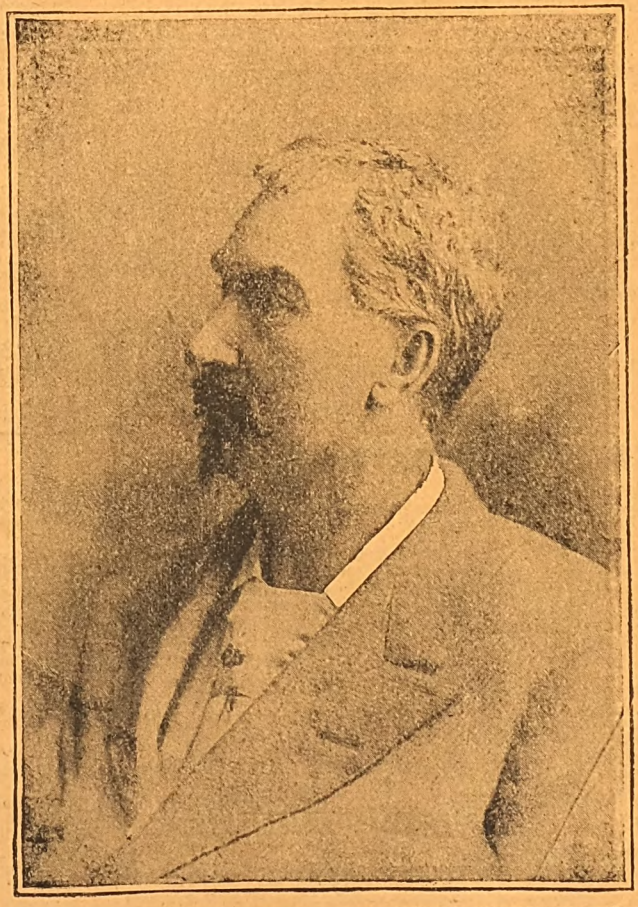
FOR THE HAIR



Arundel Lodge,
Putney.
3/7/'96.

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You are at perfect liberty to make whatever use you think proper of this communication, and I am ready and willing to answer any question from anyone upon the subject.

Yours respectfully,
J. EDGHILL COLES.

P.S.—I enclose my photo, just taken, and I consider it a marvellous recovery of my hair, especially when you know that I am over sixty years of age.

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EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 431. FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 3RD, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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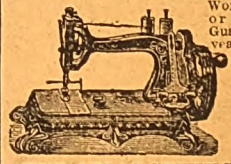

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Short Stories

Edited by C. Arthur Pearson.

No. 431.] For the week ending April 3rd, 1897. [One Penny.

GIVE ME WEALTH.

THERE was a strong personality about Eric Mansfield that raised him far above his fellow clerks at Bard's Bank. On the best of terms with one and all, yet none could say they knew him well. Some indefinable characteristic in his nature acted as a barrier to anything approaching friendship, and, apart from the daily association his fellow clerks had with him in the routine of their avocations, Mansfield was a stranger to them.

Different from most young men, Mansfield seemed totally unaware of the existence of personal pronouns, and as reserved men always seem to be keeping something back, endless efforts were made off and on by the employés at Bard's to learn something of this enigma; but they were as ignorant at the end of twelve months as on the first day Mansfield joined the firm.

The various heads of the firm considered him a model clerk. He was as punctual as the sun, and accurate and precise in everything he did, and at the time of the opening of this story had just been appointed confidential clerk to the junior partner, Mr. Arthur Bard.

It was an old custom at Bard's that when one of the rank and file received sudden promotion to any important or confidential position, to celebrate it in the form of a supper, for which the recipient of the new post had the privilege of paying. On this occasion, however, and it was openly mooted as being the only one on record, there was no conviviality.

Mansfield explained that he knew what the custom was, and what he was expected to do, but pleaded indisposition—he called it liver. He hoped nevertheless that his enforced absence would not in any way interfere with the ancient precepts being upheld, and he would be more than pleased if they would allow him the privilege of suggesting that the Holborn——

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His little speech was not permitted to go beyond that point, for one of the features of the supper was the ceremonials attached to it, which naturally necessitated the presence of the principal. So the supper was indefinitely postponed.

The possession of an affected liver is an affliction that only those who have realised the ownership of that special piece of the internal anatomy can truly understand and sympathise with, yet Mansfield, despite his, managed to demolish a good many epicurean dishes at his club that same evening, and as we find him now—is calmly smoking a cigar with two aristocratic-looking young men, while taking sips of liqueur and coffee.

"What are you going to do with yourself to-night, Mansfield?" asks the elder of the two strangers.

"Oh, I think I shall turn in—I feel as if everything jars to-night."

"Come and have a turn in the card-room," suggests the other.

"I never play cards," Mansfield quietly replies.

"What's the difference between cards and backing a horse, old chap? Come, that's straining at the gnat a little, isn't it?"

"There's a vast difference. You back a horse by speaking three words, or by a mere nod—but cards, pshaw! breathing bad air, smoking, drinking, and losing a night's rest!"

"If Mansfield did that, what on earth would become of Bard's bank, I wonder?"

"Oh, I suppose I should be compelled to resign, and no doubt my successor would be chosen from that class who have no brains to fuddle."

"Thanks, Mansfield."

"Well, you asked for it, Philip."

"If Mansfield is really going, I'll give you one in five for fifty, Phil."

"Not good enough; I'll take two hundred."

"Split it?"

"Any way you like."

"I wonder," thought Mansfield, as he slowly strode along Pall Mall, "what those two men would do if they knew I was on the brink of—of what—say ruin. This is almost Thursday. By Monday I must raise two thousand seven hundred. If I owed it to a man I don't

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think I would have any compunction in being dubbed a defaulter, but I cannot, no I cannot let Alice in, she has sacrificed a lot for me, and I've been blackguard enough in that quarter. No, I see but one course open. It will provide the evening papers with a good bill: Absconding bank clerk—enormous defalcations—yes, and as soon as Alice saw it she would return the two-seven to Bard's. I'll go and see her now.

"Is Miss Cartwright in, and alone?" Mansfield asked the question from the boy in charge of the lift at Bedford Mansions.

"I think so, sir, but I've been away for my supper. Goin' up, sir?"

"Yes."

Arrived on the fourth floor, he quickly crossed the balcony, and touched the electric bell on the door whereon "Miss Cartwright" was printed.

"Is Miss Cartwright in?"

"Yes, sir."

"Alone?"

"She is, sir."

"That will do, I know the way."

In a room furnished with exquisite taste—if slightly foreign in appearance, sat Alice Cartwright, reading. When she heard the well-known footsteps of Mansfield she rose and ran to meet him.

"Oh, Eric, my love, this is kind of you. Have you come for supper? Are you in a hurry, because I will order it at once if you are?"

"No, dear, I'm neither in a hurry nor hungry. I've come just to have a talk—if you'll have me."

"Ah, but have you come to talk to me nicely, or to hedge that bet on Will-o'-the-Wisp?"

"Who told you I had a bet on Will-o'-the-Wisp?"

"Sir Philip Marshall himself. He came this morning and asked me what the price was. I told him ——"

"A hundred to six."

"Yes, and then he offered to buy part of the book."

"The fool."

"I don't think he is a fool at all. He certainly allows that man Edgcombe to sponge dreadfully, but apart from that I don't think Sir Philip is at all foolish. But we are talking shop. Come and sit here by me, and put your arms round me, and love me as you used to do."

"No, dear, I would bore you, I——"

"You bore me, Eric, you know you couldn't."

"It is sweet of you to say so, dear, but what I want is sleep. Let me lie down here for an hour, will you?"

"Will I? You stupid boy. Now wait a minute, don't be so impatient. Lift your head—no, this way. Isn't that better?"

"Yes, darling."

"Are you warm enough, or shall I put this rug round you?"

"Put it over my feet. Ah, that's splendid. Call me when it's time for me to go."

"Is that all?"

"All! What do you mean?"

"Don't you want a kiss?"

This was the lady bookmaker over whom all London was agog. No paper with a society column but had some personal item concerning Miss Alice Cartwright—the usual paragraphs: How she preferred her soup cold, and never was known to tie her boot-laces in a double knot. Rumour, and the ever-moving current report, gave the most brilliant details of her career, all of which were wonderful pieces of news to the lady herself.

One particular item of *truth*, however, if put up for auction in Fleet Street, would have obtained a fabulous price, but that was a secret between Alice and Mansfield.

And she sat in the subdued light watching the sleeping form of the man she loved, not a movement of his escaped her. If in restless turnings he moved the cushion from beneath his head, she would promptly and gently replace it. She was perfectly happy, and he?

The tender pressure of her lips—their very warmth, was still upon his when his brain became troubled with dreams. At first they were mere reflections of his active thoughts, the passing in a clouded phantasm of daily scenes and troubles. A period of deep sleep followed. Then he became conscious that he was dreaming again, but the dream took the form more of a vision. Someone was speaking to him, he knew not whom, nor could he tell what was said at first. Gradually, however, the buzzing in his ears took more definite sound, and he saw a figure kneeling beside him—and understood.

In his imagination he said to the figure at his side:

"Have you come to warn me?"

"No, to offer you your choice. Which will you have?—and your wish shall be granted. Honour, health, fame, happiness, or wealth?"

"Give me wealth—give me wealth."

"Eric, Eric, wake up."

"Give me, give me, oh——"

"What, dear, some water?"

"I was dreaming, Alice."

"You are ill, darling. Do let me get you something—a little brandy?"

"No, I will go home. I'm all right except a touch of liver; it will be well in the morning."

And he went.

Settling day arrived, and Mansfield had failed to raise the necessary money. On the way to the office he pondered deeply over his affairs. His objection to robbing Bard's bank was not from any sense of honour—for he was absolutely unscrupulous—but it would end all his scheming and ambition.

"I will see Alice and put her off for a week, and do a plunge. It is my only chance," he muttered as he entered the bank.

Fate, however, in the shape of a fortune, rescued him from himself. Some old idiot—his thankful way of putting it—had left him seven or eight thousand a year. The old idiot in question was his father, who had died without leaving a will—at least none was found, fortunately for Eric Mansfield, for he had long left the family circle with the proverbial shilling.

As soon as all the necessary legal arrangements were settled Mansfield went away; "to let the thing blow over a bit" was his motive.

Much talk ensued at the club over Mansfield's good luck, but the general surprise was nobody knew Mansfield possessed a father. Major Bousfield and Sir Philip Marshall were discussing Mansfield and his affairs one morning, and Sir Philip staggered the Major by remarking:

"I suppose he will marry Alice Cartwright, now?"

"By Heavens, I hope not!"

"Ah, Major, have you a tender spot for that quarter?"

"Not I, my boy. I was meaning that Alice Cartwright is far too good for him."

"You haven't a very exalted opinion of Mansfield, seemingly?"

"I should think not; he is a cold-blooded cur."

"I say, that's strong for you, Major."

"Yes, but I mean it."

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"Well, I think Mansfield is strangely selfish, but I am certain Alice Cartwright loves him—dotes on him."

"Ay, and he?"

"Who could fathom that statue?"

For six months nothing was heard of Mansfield. He seemed to have dropped completely out of existence. Sir Philip Marshall was ruminating over the fact one Saturday morning. Sir Philip was an ardent footballer, and every Saturday during the winter assiduously scanned the lists of the teams in *The Sportsman*, and seeing the name of Mansfield, of course it recalled memories of Eric.

"Hullo, Phil!" the new-comer was Major Bousfield. "Have you seen this?" handing over a paper.

"The vile sneak!" remarked Sir Philip after reading. "It's odd, I was just thinking of him. But how on earth has this come about?"

"Simple as possible. The Earl of Blessington and family are at Cannes for the winter. Mansfield has evidently found the climate there equally charming."

"It will kill Alice Cartwright."

"Not it; she will be well out of it."

"I'll go and see her."

"Don't, Phil! She'll never like you again if you tell her. Your presence will always recall the misery—take my tip!"

"No; I'm off at once."

Ten minutes sufficed to reach Bedford Mansions.

"You are an early visitor, Sir Philip."

"Yes. I say, Miss Cartwright, I wish you would drop the handle, I hate it."

"But I cannot call you Mr. Marshall."

"Why not call me Phil, like the others? and you and and I are such old friends! I mean to call you Alice—Miss Cartwright is such a lot to get out, isn't it?"

"Yes—Phil."

"Now, Alice, I want you to think as well of me as you can, because I'm going to run the risk of—of making you hate and despise me."

"Whatever is coming? Are you broke, Phil?"

That was the maximum of calamities that Alice thought could be wrong with Sir Philip Marshall.

"No. I'm not going to speak about myself at all. And, first of all, I'm going to ask you a question, and don't think it is out of mere curiosity, or impertinent."

"You are beginning to frighten me, Sir Philip."

"Sir!"

"I mean Phil."

"Do you love Eric Mansfield? Oh, Alice, forgive me; I was brutal to ask so bluntly."

"Tell me all—quick, quick, is he dead?"

"No."

"He is ill, dying in some foreign land, and I here. Oh, tell me where he is?"

"He is neither ill nor dying, but, Alice, he is dead to you."

"To me?"

"Don't you understand, he is a cur, and has——"

"No, no, you don't know. What has he done? I forgive him, whatever it is—even if it is murder."

"He's married."

"Married!" with a gasp.

"Yes, he's married Lady Isobel, second daughter of the Earl of Blessington."

"Leave me, Phil."

"No, I won't yet."

"I want to be alone—to think."

"Let me manage a bit for you. How is your book?"

"Full. I shall never take another bet. This is the hand of Providence; I should never have taken up such an unwomanly occupation."

"Nonsense! I'll take your book over, if you'll let me."

"No, Phil; I mean what I said, so do go."

"And you won't hate me for bringing this bad news, but remember you have escaped marrying a blackguard."

"I shall never hate you, whatever you do; you have been very kind to me this morning. I would rather have heard it from you than anyone. Now go."

"Now, then, Phil, you fool, pull yourself together, else you'll be in fine trim this afternoon," and, with this admonition to himself, he walked off as straight as a British soldier—which he was.

* * * * *

"I am going with father and the girls to Daly's to-night. Will you drop in?"

"Let me see, what's on there?"

"The *Geisha*."

"I may if I get back in time, but in all probability I will have to run down to Newmarket."

"Whatever for, Eric?"

"Well, you see, Isobel, every man in my position is supposed to do something these days, so I mean to keep a few horses."

"But we have enough, surely?"

"I mean racehorses, my dear."

"Oh, Eric, cannot you find anything else than that?"

"I knew, of course, that you would object to any scheme I suggested, particularly if it would give me pleasure."

"I hate betting and horse-racing."

"Don't be foolish, Isobel. It is the duty of those who can afford it to try and improve the breed of racers in England and to purify the turf generally."

"I am sure your motives are purely philanthropical, dear, but I dislike the idea all the same."

"Of course you do! You dislike anything I do, and will soon dislike me also, I suppose."

"Is that kind, Eric?"

"Well, you goad me to saying nasty things. You seem perpetually trying to thwart me."

"Do I, Eric? Well, I won't even comment on your doings for the future, except that I do wish you would see someone about your cough."

"Oh, hang the cough! I beg your pardon, Isobel; come back—I am very sorry. Isobel!"

She had gone.

"I wonder what on earth is the matter with me. I used to have myself under better control. Isobel is very irritating sometimes; she either can't, or won't, see how her constant worrying annoys me, but I was a fool to swear. Yes, I'll go and see her."

Without speaking or knocking he made an attempt to open the door of his wife's boudoir, but found it locked.

"Let me in, Isobel," he asked pleadingly.

No answer.

"Isobel! do you hear?"

"Yes, I hear, but I am busy, and prefer my own company just at present."

Mansfield's lips twinged slightly; it was a unique experience for him to be baulked in anything.

"Open this door at once, or I will smash it in."

"Please yourself, of course."

For the moment his temper got the better of him, and he burst open the lock and entered the room.

"You had better continue the dictates of your breeding, and beat me now."

"Look here, madam"—grasping her by the wrist—"I want you to fully understand that I am master of this

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house, and will be obeyed. Don't think you've got one of your blue-blooded puppets to deal with now."

"At least, the blue-blooded puppets don't bully and swear at their wives. Eric, you are hurting my wrist. Eric, oh! you brute." With an effort she managed to escape from him.

"My Lady Isobel requires taming, and objects to the process."

"You will not have the opportunity of repeating your cruelty."

"Ah, you purpose showing only the velvet paw—a wise discretion on your part—very wise."

"Don't flatter yourself. I mean to leave you to-day."

"Oh, surely not. Will it be for good?"

"Do you think I am going to live with a man little better than a wife-beater?"

"I didn't know you had any private income."

"I shall go home again."

"I don't somehow think you will."

"Do you imagine that your threats will prevent me?"

"Well, my dear, your father is indebted to me for a few thousands, and has been for some considerable time. If he allows you to remain in his house against your husband's wishes I will—ah—request an immediate settlement—and I know he hasn't got it, and matters might become strained. Think the matter over, my lady, but don't do anything rash."

When Mansfield returned in the afternoon he was surprised to find that his wife had gone to Cadogan Place, and at once jumped to the conclusion that she had left him for good; whereas Lady Isobel had merely gone to see her father to verify Mansfield's statement regarding the loan, and to ask his advice.

All the pent-up venom and passion in Mansfield's nature appeared to suddenly spring into life, and instead of the calm, sneering, calculating man of the world, he was changed to a fiend incarnate. His features were distorted to ghastliness, and the violent fits of coughing that now and again attacked him with terrible violence only added to his devilish appearance. Martin, the butler, when summoned, stared horror-stricken at his master.

"Martin, have my things packed for a year's foreign tour, and send them to Charing Cross station."

"To-day, sir?"

"Yes, at once, and I want you to pay all the servants off and shut up the house as quickly as you can. If Lady Isobel returns she is not to enter this house on any pretext, do you understand?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"Have her clothes and things sent to Cadogan Place."

"I believe this is her ladyship coming in now, sir."

"Yes, go and obey the other orders."

"You have changed your mind too late, my lady, you can return to your father's house, no one wants you here."

"Eric! whatever do you mean?"

"Neither more nor less than what I said. In an hour's time this house will be shut up, so if you want any of your effects you had better see after them."

"Eric, dear, you are not well. Oh, surely you don't mean this just because of the few words we had this morning. Eric, speak to me!"

"It's too late, I tell you, my mind is made up."

"Oh, Eric, darling, forgive me, I didn't mean to vex you like this."

"Get out of my way. I am going."

"No, no. I cannot let you go like this. Eric, my love, my husband, forgive me."

She stood facing him with her arms pleadingly extended, and as he made a stride forward, she flung herself against him, crying and imploring him not to leave her. He tried to disengage himself from the nervous arms that were round him, but they held him with the strength of despair. Losing every atom of control of himself he threw her violently from him, and Lady Isobel fell with a crash against the marble fire-guard, her head striking the outer rail with a horrible thud—she was dead.

Mansfield left the house a different man—he hadn't the remotest idea that he had killed his wife. The evil passions deserted him as quickly as they had risen, and he felt almost inclined to go back and make it up with Isobel; and possibly might have returned on that errand, but for one reason. He didn't love her, and never had done since his marriage, which, in fact, was only a means to attain an end.

Earl Blessington had influence in political inner circles, and being pressed for money had consented to use his efforts on behalf of Mansfield for a consideration—the consideration being a loan and the marriage of one of his daughters. Unfortunately for all concerned, the unexpected resignation of Lord Rosebery had upset all calculations, and Mansfield's ambitions being shattered, his health failing, and being tied to a woman between whom and himself there wasn't a taste in common, his selfish nature became soured and bitter.

"It is always well," Mansfield mused as he walked towards Bedford Mansions, "to keep one good card in reserve, if only to gain the lead. Yes, I will play mine now, and when it scores, as it is sure to, I will return that doddering old imbecile his daughter and his I O U, having no further use for either, and Alice and I will leave this forsaken climate and go somewhere where there is warmth and sunshine."

"Miss Cartwright said she would be back by six, did she? Ah, then, I will wait, it is nearly that now."

A bright red fire gave not only actual heat to the room, but reflected a warm glow on the surroundings, and as Mansfield sat watching the ever-changing pictures in the grate, his thoughts, gradually released from their continued strain, ran riot for a while, but the warmth and soothing influences soon impelled reflections of that last visit, and everything that occurred, even to his dream, was vividly depicted in his mind. The reverie was interrupted by the sound of voices and footsteps approaching, and Mansfield turned to see who it was just as Alice and Sir Philip Marshall entered the room.

"How do you, Alice? How are you, Phil?"

"What's the matter? Can't you speak?" as Alice and Sir Philip drew back.

"Yes, Mansfield, kindly drop Christian names for the future. In fact, I think we had better drop acquaintanceship altogether. My wife and I don't——"

"Your what?" meaningly.

"My wife, sir," taking Alice's hand.

Mansfield sank into a chair; he tried to articulate something, but the red stream of life choked all utterance, save a sickening gurgle; he had burst an artery.

When Sir Philip returned to Bedford Mansions, after taking his wife to a neighbouring hotel, two men accosted him.

"Excuse me, Sir Philip," said one. "Is Mr. Eric Mansfield upstairs?"

"He was; why do you ask?"

"We're two police officers, and we have warrants for his arrest for forgery and murder. Do you know where he is, sir?"

"Heaven knows that; he is dead." C. E. Cowan.

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A STORY OF NEW SPAIN

Padre Quintana drew a breath of relief as the red-tiled roof of the hacienda appeared in the hollow beneath him. He urged his small horse smartly down the gentle descent, for the midday August sun was all but intolerable, and thick clouds of fine, irritating dust rose about him from the road, on which no rain had fallen for three months. The rolling mesa extending on every side was burnt brown, the foot hills beyond a bright sere yellow. But the mountains bounding all showed a shadowy, cool, violet colour with a silvery powder of snow on their highest peaks, and the Californian sky was more purple than gentian.

The Padre, narrowing his eyes to escape this fierce glory of colour, and mopping his hot face with the sleeve of his gown, crossed the dry grass to the square of beaten ground in front of the hacienda, whose long, low, white-washed walls seem half submerged in the surrounding sea of golden wheat. A broad, covered gallery or verandah ran entirely round the house, which otherwise stood bare to the sun, without a tree or shrub to relieve its white glare. On this verandah lounged a couple of half-clad peons playing mora. They sprang up upon the Father's approach, and while one held his stirrup and led away the horse, the other ran to warn Donna Ysabel.

Pausing a moment to shake the grey dust from his robe, Padre Quintana followed him through the long sala and out again into cool, green fairyland. A second verandah surrounded the little patio or court, which was full of faintly rustling foliage, peppers and bananas and palms, and softly murmurous with the trickle of water in the stucco fountain. In the verandah, overlooking the patio, sat Donna Ysabel with her daughter Concepcion and three Indian maid-servants, sewing busily in the midst of piles of snowy linen and lace.

Mother and daughter, both dressed in sombre mourning garments, came forward to meet the Father. Donna Ysabel bent her proud, dark head for his blessing, but Concepcion fell softly on her knees, her brown braids trailing on the floor, and her round, childish face drooping. Padre Quintana laid his hand kindly on her head.

"Maria!" called Donna Ysabel to one of the maids. "Set a chair for the Father and fetch a fan and a fresh towel and a basin of water. And you, Josefa, bring instantly some azucarillos and water for his drink. Sit down, Father, you must be perishing with the heat."

"Truly, it is a little warm," said Padre Quintana, smiling.

"And no rain to come for a month at least—the dust will bury us!"

He sat down on a bench and leant his head against a pillar of the verandah. He was unusually tall for a Spaniard, and his slight tendency to corpulence carried no hint of grossness. His face was dark, and lined with care and fatigue rather than years, his eyes deep, grave yet fiery, his lips thin and beautifully cut. Donna Ysabel, small, straight, and milky white as became her pure Castilian blood, seated herself opposite him and took up again the piece of exquisite drawn-work on which she had been engaged. Concepcion perched on the verandah railing, giving a surreptitious kick to the heap of linen beside her.

"It was nearly dinner-time, Father," she said in the lingering, dragging Spanish accents. "I was afraid you would not get here in time."

"I shall be glad of it," said the Padre, "for I have not yet eaten to-day. And after dinner you shall confess all the mortal sins you have committed in my absence. See now if you have an appetite!"

But Concepcion did not return the Padre's smile. Her soft, long-lashed eyes met his forlornly, and he noted suddenly the stain of recent tears on her rounded cheeks.

"You are not well, my child," he said gently. "It seems to me you are paler than you should be. The heat, perhaps——"

"Concepcion is quite well," broke in the chill voice of

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Donna Ysabel. "Go, daughter, and tell Sandra to serve dinner out here, and at once."

The young girl rose and went away silently with downcast eyes.

"I have something to tell you which concerns her," said Donna Ysabel, "but it can wait till after dinner."

She folded her square of drawn-work, leant back in her low chair, and unfurling her black fan waved it to and fro in slow languorous spirals. No one looking at her would have supposed Donna Ysabel to be a grandmother. Her smooth, black hair, coiled high on the head, was without a thread of grey. Her large eyes were clear and brilliant as Concepcion's own, and somehow she had escaped the bane of Southern matronhood, that cruel redundance of outline which too often ends the brief reign of beauty! But a certain rigidity of hauteur about the Señora's thin lips and the coldness of her eyes robbed of charm this autumnal fairness.

"You had a good journey, Father?" she asked in her colourless tones.

"Good, my daughter—eight baptisms, two funerals, one marriage. Padre Josefo is to arrive at the Arroyo this week; so I shall be spared the long journey thither. In truth I find that my work hereabouts demands my whole time and strength."

"But you will rest a few days now?"

"I have to go on this afternoon to San Rafael to bless the new church there. I shall be gone four days. Father Vincent is lately dead, as you know, and there is no one yet to fill his place."

The Señora sighed. Then she stopped fanning herself for a moment, looking thoughtfully at the tip of her French shoe.

"I am sorry," she said slowly. "I had hoped we could persuade you to stay the night here. I have two things to ask at your hands. One concerns Concepcion; the other the young foreigner——"

"I have two things to ask at your hands."

"Ah, yes, the English engineer. He is still here, Mr. Fish? And his arm—he is mending?"

"He is quite well, I believe," said Donna Ysabel, still more slowly. "It is now three days that he has been out. Yet he makes no move to go. You understand that I cannot exactly ask him to go—but I will not have him here—at this time, I cannot."

"And you wish me to speak to him," said the Padre, looking out absently into the tangle of greenery. "Is he visible to-day?"

"That is the vexing part of it," said Donna Ysabel. "He has ridden to town this morning—on the horse that nearly killed him, and with his arm in a sling, imbecile!—and the groom says he will return at evening. He will return, you see! But now you will not be here to speak to him—fool of a foreigner!"

"Well, well—doubtless he will take his leave altogether now that he can get about. And the other thing—about Concepcion——"

"Ah, yes—Concepcion! Well, this—I have selected a husband for her."

"A husband—little Concepcion! Why, it was only yesterday——"

"She was sixteen, Father. At her age, I myself was already a wife. And you know that I have long desired the day when I could give her into another's keeping. I fear to leave her alone, and of late, Father—in short, I feel my life a matter of a few months, weeks perhaps, and therefore——"

Donna Ysabel indicated with a significant gesture the piles of wedding-linen which still strewed the floor of the verandah, then laid her finger to her lips. Concepcion came out, carrying a lace-edged cloth. Two of the maids set a small table close on the edge of the verandah, and Concepcion spread the cloth upon it while they went to fetch the dishes.

Padre Quintana submitted to be installed in a chair beside the table. His absent gaze rested on the light figure of Concepcion as she moved about and finally seated herself beside her mother. He halted and stammered twice during the lengthy grace, and when food was set before him he ate mechanically. Donna Ysabel's gesture of silence had not been necessary. Yet there was nothing apparently in her simple announcement to discompose him. He had heard similar statements many a time with no feeling save that of acquiescence.

Girls had to be married apparently—but little Concepcion! Only yesterday it seemed he had made the baptismal cross on her baby forehead, had taught her childish lips the first stammering prayer, had stretched his hands over her head shrouded in the veil of her first communion. And then so soon after her father's death—that strange death, of which he alone——

Here the Padre pulled himself together with an effort, answered a question of Donna Ysabel's, permitted a second serving of vermicelli soup and tortillas de maiz, accepted frijoles and declined the puchero, beef stewed with chillies. As he crumbled the home-made sweetmeats on his plate and drank his claret, his eyes and thoughts again strayed to Concepcion's pale face. She ate little and kept silence, leaving the conversation, as became a properly-reared young woman, to her elders. They talked desultorily of the prospects of the wheat harvest, the yield of the Tokay wines; and then of the Father's harvest of souls and of his labours in the spiritual vineyard, whose soil, like the golden land itself, needed only the unceasing bedewing of heavenly grace to prove matchlessly fertile.

At last to the relief of all the meal was ended. Immediately after service was held in the little chapel of the hacienda, all the servants being summoned to attend and afterwards given an opportunity to confess their sins. Then Donna Ysabel insisted that the Father should take his siesta. She conducted him to a hammock in a shaded and silent corner of the verandah, placed a fan and a glass of sugared water on a small

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table by his side, and was about to leave him when he laid a detaining hand on her arm.

"My daughter, I have some questions to ask you first. Concepcion is unhappy—has it to do with this marriage?"

"Father, all girls are so; I myself wept through the night before my marriage. But I married the man my mother brought me, as Concepcion will do, and she, too, will be reconciled."

"And this man—you have not told me his name?"

"Luis de Vargas."

Padre Quintana sprang out of the hammock, upsetting the little table; the glass splintered into fragments on the floor.

"Impossible! I have not understood you. Donna Ysabel—you do not mean——"

"I mean that my daughter will marry Luis de Vargas—my husband's old and trusted friend, a man against whom no one dares to breathe a word."

Donna Ysabel's voice was slow, and her eyes meeting the Padre's gaze expressed a cold surprise.

"My daughter——" he began; then paused, drew a long breath, and went on: "My daughter, you have made a mistake. That man is not the husband for your child."

"Father, you amaze me. Pray, why not?"

There was a pause. The imperious eyes of the woman met the kindling eyes of the priest.

"For one thing, he is more than twice her age. De Vargas is nearly as old as I. For another, he has been married. He has children older than Concepcion. For another—why do you stand here proposing to my face such a thing? It is impossible, I tell you. Dismiss him at once, do you hear?"

The Padre had lost control over himself. He shook with rage.

"Señor de Vargas is the accepted suitor of my daughter," said Donna Ysabel with a snake-like anger. "The betrothal has been announced, the wedding-day set——"

"In my absence!" interrupted the priest.

"In your absence, unavoidably and by no choice of mine. But I never dreamt you would object. Señor de Vargas is a gentleman of family, wealth, unblemished name. Moreover, this match was talked of two years ago, and my husband then gave his free consent to it, on the one condition that nothing should be said to Concepcion before the end of her sixteenth birthday. Señor de Vargas has behaved most honourably in observing this condition, and I have no hesitation now in giving Concepcion——"

"I command you to hesitate, to draw back, to break off this match while it is yet time. I forbid you to go on with it. Do you dare dispute my authority?"

Donna Ysabel's gaze fell before the concentrated fire of his eyes. She stood silent a moment.

"Your reasons?" finally she asked, scarcely opening her lips.

"You know that they are sufficient. It is not alone that the man is middle-aged and a widower, not alone that Concepcion's eyes are red with weeping because of him—no, I set against these things your anxiety, the approach of the time when you must leave your daughter. If that were all, I should sanction it, yes, though unwillingly. But not that man! Never! Donna Ysabel, believe without questioning me. If after my solemn warning, in spite of my commands, you bring about this marriage you will have committed a crime—a crime for which Heaven will as surely hold you to account as I stand here this moment!"

Padre Quintana turned away, wiping his forehead. Without looking at his hostess he went to the door and called one of the servants.

"Allon, my horse! Saddle at once—I must go on!"

He went on to the front verandah and there stood, his hands clenched in the folds of his black gown, looking sombrely out over the gold grain rippling in the breeze from the sea. Suddenly a small figure burst from one of the long windows and fell at his feet.

"Oh, Father, I heard you! You will save me? You won't let me be married? Oh, I think you must be an angel from Heaven!"

"Get up, Concepcion. Let go my hand."

Sobbing hysterically the girl seized his hand in both hers and kissed it.

"Get up, Concepcion! You are behaving like a baby. Let go my hand. Your mother will do what is best for you."

"She will make me marry him, and I can't bear it!"

"She will not make you marry Señor de Vargas. That I promise you. Do stop crying."

"But, Father, it is to be a week from to-day—and you are going away. And you do not know my mother——"

"I shall return in five days. Can you not trust me, silly child? Concepcion, tell me, why do you dislike this man?"

"I hate him! He is old, and fat—and—oh, oh, I can't bear him!"

"Reasons enough, surely! Yet"—the Padre looked piercingly at her—"tell me this—is there not someone else? If there were, I could almost—there is someone, eh?"

The girl's face grew rosy with surprise, and her long lashes swept her cheeks.

"And who is it? Why doesn't he run away with you?—no, Holy Saints, I don't mean that—but—come, his name?"

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Concepcion murmured something into the bosom of her gown.

"Ah, the Englishman! I thought as much. You have known him—how many days is it? Seven—nine—as long as that? My poor Concepcion, you are very foolish. A stranger, a foreigner! Here is my horse. And now go, with my blessing—I must say farewell to your mother."

He walked slowly back through the hall. Donna Ysabel stood where he had left her. At his approach she turned her head and looked at him with unfathomable eyes.

"You are going, Father?"

"I am going. Assure me first that you will heed my words. They were not spoken idly."

"Father—on your return we will speak again of this."

Their eyes met, clashed, and parried like steel blades.

When he had left the hacienda behind him, when it had sunk again into the hollow, foaming over with musky grain, even when in the midst of the mesa he watched the setting sun flash its red light along the low hills, the look of those eyes haunted the Father, and an evil fear woke in his heart. Once out of the ruddy west, a horseman came towards him, swinging gaily along and whistling a careless tune. By the outline of his lithe figure with its helpless arm he recognised the English engineer. But pulling his broad hat lower over his eyes the Father passed without even a greeting. His was in no mood for speech.

On the third day after this visit to the hacienda Bandini, a man riding at full speed across the trackless plain hailed the first gleam of the white church walls of San Rafael with thankful relief. It was then near sunset, and the mountains before him were glorious with colour, but the rider, urging his panting horse up the hill towards the church, noted only that the day had almost gone. The little adobe houses among which his horses toiled heavily upward were apparently empty and the village entirely deserted. A few chickens and a brown baby or two digging in the road seemed the only inhabitants.

All at once came from the church the sound of a chant, abruptly bursting forth, ceasing as abruptly. Then an interval of silence, then the voices again. It was the vesper service—of course. Dropping from his horse at the door, the stranger railed impatiently at this combination of circumstances, which meant a further delay, and then turned his attention to his over-ridden beast, whose appearance did not improve his temper.

The mare stood with feet planted wide apart, quickly heaving flanks, drooping head and bloody nostrils, while the breath came with an ominous wheeze. Biting his lips in anger the man unbuckled the cinch, and with his one available hand lifted off the cumbrous Mexican saddle. Then he walked up and down before the church door until, after a final outburst of rude melody, a final brief murmur, the people came pouring out. When the last of them had passed, scanning curiously the figure of the stranger silhouetted in the dusk against the pale yellow western sky, the Padre appeared in the doorway. Henry Fish took off his hat and went forward.

"Padre Quintana, I must speak to you at once."

"Señor Fish—you! You have come——"

"From the hacienda—in two hours."

"There is trouble! Is anyone ill?"

Leaning against the door-casing, his hands deep in his pockets, his eyes on the dark face of the priest, Fish told his brief story, halting now and then for the Spanish phrase.

"Concepcion sent me, as you may guess. I left the hacienda yesterday at her suggestion—it was time, perhaps! This afternoon at four o'clock came a note from her. I went to the house, saw her for a moment. The affair is arranged for to-morrow morning."

The Padre uttered an inarticulate exclamation!

"Concepcion has some idea that you have influence over the Señora and so——"

"It seems not," said the Padre grimly. "And you, señor, how do you happen to be here? You wish to marry Señorita Bandini yourself?"

"Certainly. She will marry me if her mother consents, not otherwise, she says. I have no idea that the Señora would regard me favourably as a son-in-law. So, Father, unless you interfere, it is possible that Concepcion will be married to-morrow morning—and not to me."

The young man's grey eyes looked out moody and frowning from under his thick, light brows. Where he stood the pale light was reflected in them, and made visible his brown, resolute face. To the Padre's scrutiny he looked every inch a man.

"So you could not persuade Concepcion to run away with you?" said the latter suddenly.

"Well, in that case I should scarcely be here now—but how did you know I had tried?"

"I guessed it. You are not a man to be stopped by trifles."

There was a tone of sarcasm in the words. Henry Fish laughed and looked with interest at this country priest.

"You are right. Short of carrying her off by force I have done all I could. But she dare not disobey her mother. *Probrecita!* she is but a child after all. And now, Father, to come to the point. Will you go back with me to-night and do what you can to stop this marriage? From what Concepcion said I judge that you have some good reason and also the power to prevent it. Well?"

"I do not know. You bewilder me," murmured the Padre confusedly. "It is true, I would prevent it if I could—but—deceitful woman, she takes advantage of my absence, defies my authority! What am I to do? I cannot permit it—and yet——"

"You will go back with me, then? It is settled? My horse must have a rest—three hours at least. We can easily do the distance before dawn——"

"No!" cried the Padre suddenly. "I will not go back! If Señora Bandini chooses to disregard my commands, the sin will be upon her own head. I can do nothing. To prevent her from sinning, would you have me commit a sin ten times greater? No, I tell you—you are mistaken, I can do nothing."

Shaken completely out of his usual stately calm, Padre Quintana attempted to push by the Englishman, whose sinewy arm barred the doorway.

"Father, you must come back with me. Concepcion is there, waiting for you—you will not desert her? You can move the Señora, or perhaps this man—Vargas——"

"De Vargas!" exclaimed the Padre suddenly. "It is true I might—I will go with you then, señor. I will do all I can. But if I fail—I cannot reproach myself."

"That's all right—you won't fail," said Fish promptly. "You know something, I can see—Concepcion was right after all. And now I must look to my horse—poor beast. It is past seven now, we will start at ten, and arrive by six easily. Good!"

So it happened. When they reached the hacienda only the servants were astir. The Padre commanded the

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Indian girl, who led him into the house, not to announce his arrival to the Señora, and retired to the room he usually occupied on his pastoral visits. Fish, after seeing the horses turned loose in the corral, wandered away over the fields. Here he threw himself down among the wheat, wet as it was with dew, and presently overcome with fatigue, fell into an uneasy sleep.

But there was no sleep for Padre Quintana. He lay on his bed facing the ornate crucifix of ebony and silver which alone relieved the bareness of the walls, and listened to the servants moving stealthily on their bare feet about the galleries and guest-rooms on either side of him. His heart was full of perplexity and bitterness.

No doubt these rooms were being prepared for the bridegroom and the priest, hastily summoned from somewhere to perform the shameful ceremony. This was how they meant to trick him! This was his authority in the house where his word had been unquestioned for twenty years! So long as Don Felipe, his friend, had lived, not one of the household would have dared disobedience — but now — and above all others, his wife! The Padre groaned and hid his face in the pillow. He could not stand by and see this thing done.

Presently the Indian girl brought in a little tray of hot chocolate and bread, and, while he ate, the Padre constrained his pride to put a question or two. The marriage was to take place at eleven in the chapel. Señor de Vargas was not in the house yet. No guests, the family being in mourning, save certain relatives of the groom and the two married daughters of the house, who with their husbands had arrived the day before.

Padre Quintana watched the sunlight brighten through the closed curtains of his window, listened to the gradual awakening of the household, the clatter of dishes from the kitchen, the sound of a broom vigorously polishing the tiles of the verandah, then outside the Señora's window a slow voice issuing orders. Presently came the thud of horses' feet on the dust of the roadway, then their clatter on the hard ground before the house, the jingle of bridle-chains and housings. The Padre peered out between his curtains.

The prospective bridegroom, sitting to perfection his magnificent black horse, was attended by three gentlemen, his brother and his two sons. With the sun-glitter on the silver trappings of their horses and their own gay-coloured finery, the little *cortège* was sufficiently pleasing to the eye. De Vargas himself on horseback appeared stalwart and noble. But, dismounting, the stately man seemed metamorphosed. His legs were shrunken from lack of use—for a Californian rarely stirs except on horseback—and scarcely served to support his body, now taking on the stoutness of middle age. Still, in his rich apparel of crimson velvet, gold lace and embroidery, linen fine as cobwebs, and silver spurs to his high-heeled boots, he looked a cavalier by no means to be disdained.

The bustle of this arrival, the gaiety of the attendant squires, the welcome which Señora Bandini graciously extended to them, fell unheeded on the Padre's ears. His eyes were riveted to the swarthy face of De Vargas until he had passed across the gallery and entered the house. He turned away from the window, sat down until the sound of voices had died away, and then called softly to a servant, bidding her find out which room Señor de Vargas occupied and if he were now within.

"That's all right—you won't fail."

When she returned the Padre followed her to the door she indicated, opening like all the others on the verandah. With a firm hand he knocked on the door, and, without waiting for an answer, walked in. De Vargas was there, sitting on the edge of the bed and dusting his boots with a large handkerchief. He looked up, and as he met the priest's eyes, changed colour under his brown skin; the pupils of his eyes narrowed cat-like, and his jaws shut together with a click like a trap.

The two men remained staring at each other for a moment. Before either of them could speak there was a light tap at the door on the opposite side of the room; it opened, and the Señora appeared on the threshold. Above her dark-blue robe her face was pale enough, but at sight of the priest it turned grey, and her hand went to her heart. On the instant, however, her steely eyes flashed defiance into his.

"I did not know you had returned, Father," she said icily.

"Not too soon, it seems," was the stern response. "However, there is time enough for what I have to do. Senora Bandini, you have behaved most treacherously—you thought to carry out your mistaken plans in defiance of me. But it was not the will of God you should succeed. Before you leave the room, Señor de Vargas

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will have signified to you his intention of abandoning this marriage."

A scarcely suppressed sneer curled the Señora's pale lips! She turned to De Vargas, who still sat motionless.

"Luis, what have you to say to that?" she demanded ironically.

He rose, pushing his long hair back from his forehead with an angry gesture.

"It is quite false," he said loudly. "I have no intention of abandoning the marriage."

"Nevertheless, you will abandon it," said the Padre, advancing a step nearer and towering threateningly above him. "Do you understand, I will not permit it!"

Suddenly hatred blazed up in De Vargas' black eyes, and an ugly red flared in his sallow cheeks. He laughed.

"I will not allow this incredible insult to the memory of my dead friend. If you do not instantly withdraw your pretensions and leave this house I will expose you."

"Luis, what is all this, what is it he threatens——"

"Lies," muttered De Vargas hoarsely.

"Donna Ysabel, do you know what the man is, who enters your house as a son? Does not the spirit of your husband rise from his grave to warn you? Look at him! Look at the man who murdered your husband. Look at your own lover! Ask yourself what guilt——"

The Padre paused, his eyes fixed in terror on the Señora. With staring eyes and parted blue lips she leant against the wall, clutching at the bosom of her gown. Suddenly she staggered, and before he could reach her she fell heavily to the floor, striking her head against the iron foot of the bedstead.

There was no wedding that morning at the Casa Bandini, the bride in her white robes wept terrified tears; the bridegroom rode blackly away. The awe-stricken servants busied themselves in clearing away the untouched feast.

When Henry Fish approached the house he came upon Padre Quintana sitting in the verandah, silent and rigid, staring out into the hot sunshine. For some moments the Padre did not recognise him nor answer his anxious questions. At last he spoke drearily.

"It is all over—she is dead and will trouble you no more. Go and find Concepcion."

He started up, but, when the Englishman went on, stared vacantly after him and sat down again. They came out presently—Fish with a startled, grave face, and Concepcion clinging weeping to his arm. Then the Padre came back to himself. Ignoring the Englishman, he laid his hand gently on the girl's head.

"Farewell, my daughter—may you be happy. I am going away—a long journey of penance——"

"But you will return, Father!"

"I fear not, child."

He made the solemn sign of the cross above her, and went with slow, tremulous steps out of the house.

Neith Boyce.

A TEMPTING BILL OF FARE.

The April number of *PEARSON'S MAGAZINE*, now on sale, contains such a bewildering amount of good things that it is difficult to make a selection for special mention.

There is the new serial by H. G. Wells, entitled **THE WAR OF THE WORLD**, in which is described the invasion of this earth by the people of Mars. You must on no account miss the opening chapters of this thrilling story.

There are powerful stories by Max Pemberton, Guy Boothby, Cutcliffe Hyne, and other well-known writers.

Amongst the articles are included:

THE QUEEN'S DRESSES,

Comprising beautiful illustrations of the most striking costumes ever worn by Her Majesty.

ODD MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

A description of the most interesting and curious-shaped instruments of music, profusely illustrated.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE PASSOVER.

An account of the quaint custom and curious beliefs of the Jews in connection with the great festival, now at hand.

SINGULAR CYCLE TRICKS.

In the interesting article under this heading appears a series of photographs of the most extraordinary feats of two cyclists who are now performing in England. Every cyclist will be interested in their marvellous tricks.

ABOUT SHOW DOGS.

Photographs are here given of many champion dogs, and we are told of the numerous prizes won by, and the enormous prices obtained for them.

THE OUTPUT OF AUTHORS.

Nearly all the best-known authors have favoured us with interesting particulars of their method of work. Photographs and autographs are given in each case.

THE SHADOW PLAY.

A most interesting and entirely novel form of amusement is here described. Full directions appear, adequately explained with numbers of diagrams.

The April PEARSON'S, now on sale, Price Sixpence.

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Short Stories

£50 IN 23 PRIZES. PICTURE PUZZLES. No. 1. First Series.

1st PRIZE	Twenty Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE	A Ten-Pound Note.
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4th to 13th PRIZES	Ten Sovereigns.
14th to 23rd PRIZES	Ten Half-Sovereigns.

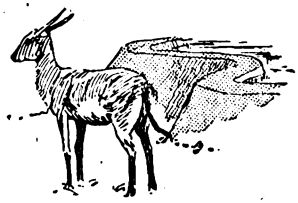
BELOW you will find ten pictures. Each represents the name of a gentleman who, on January 1st, 1897, was a Member of Parliament. If you look at the first sketch you will see that it represents Mr. J. G. Butcher. Who are the other people?

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your list until four other sets have appeared. **DON'T SEND THEM IN UNTIL TUESDAY, APRIL 27, NEXT.** *Each set of five sheets must come to us in one envelope.*

Don't be discouraged if you cannot solve them all. Others may be no more clever than yourself. Send in forty-five, or forty, or even fewer.

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of four must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.

No. 1. Mr. J. G. Butcher.



No. 2.....

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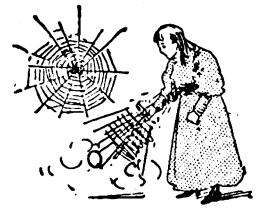

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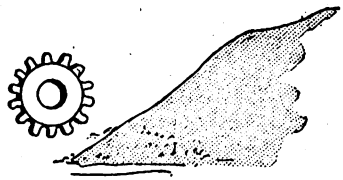

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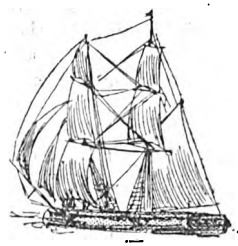

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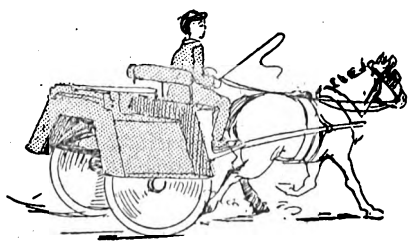

No. 10.....

Remember these Things. . .

YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the surnames of the people, except in cases where the christian names are depicted.

Name.....

Address.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of M.P.'s.—Whitaker's Almanack, the London Post-Office Directory, Hazell's Annual, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

Miji-br-r-r-r-ick! Miji-br-r-r-ick! You fat rascal! What right have you to lie before the fire on that Persian rug, dozing and purring as happy and cosy as a cat can be while your master is out in the storm? Oh, you needn't come rubbing against my leg and singing any songs of peace to me! I'm tired of seeing such laziness and contentment. There you are, sleek, dignified, fat and lazy, while I am almost the exact opposite. Burr-r-r. what a cold night it is. There, now, wait until I take off my coat, and shake the snow off it. Then I will hang it up—so—take off my shoes, put on my slippers and jacket, draw my chair up to the fire, and light my pipe.

Now, now, I didn't say anything about petting you, did I? Well, if you must be petted I suppose I shall have to do it. There is no one else, is there? Miji-br-r-r-ick—old fellow—I am as happy as a lord to-night. You ought to have seen her to-night. But you don't know her, do you, old fellow? Never mind, you shall know her, for she is coming to-morrow to sit for me, and I will paint such a picture it will surely make my fortune. My fortune? Nay, our fortune—hers, yours and mine.

"Mmmmmmmm, mmmmmm, mmm."

Now, what are you saying? How did I meet her? Well, you see a poor artist like me doesn't often have such rare fortune, but it seemed as though an angel dropped from Heaven a moment to pluck from danger a wee doggie. There! there! don't arch your back and spit merely because I mentioned your bitterest foe. It was a wee doggie, and you abused it.

You haven't forgotten the other day when I let you out in the hall for a run about, hoping you might catch a fat mouse and save me the price of a piece of meat for you, and how you had a fight with a mite of a terrier, one-third your size?

It was through your fight with the little pup that I made an acquaintance with her. Who is she? Now you won't know until she comes here to live.

You remember how you proudly walked through the hall like a caged tiger that day, how you soon saw that your domain was invaded by the tiniest dog you ever saw. It was then that your sleek fur stood on end; that your gentle eyes shone fire, and you spat, as though you were trying to get the taste of a bad word out of your mouth. But the little rascal was not afraid of you. He came bravely to the attack, and you had to fight, and fight hard at that.

You made him run? Yes, and he ran right under the skirts of the prettiest lady you ever saw, just as she was coming by the door. I heard the row, and I looked to see what it was, when in you bounded. The little doggie, seeing your flight, took up the pursuit and darted between my legs. In an instant I saw that you had been in the wrong, and took off my cap to apologise for you.

What did this vision say, but that it was all the fault of Gyp. Gyp—indeed! As if I didn't know better. How could anything belonging to her, living about her, do anything wrong?

But, anyway, we made an acquaintance with each other, she with Gyp in her arms, and I with you safe behind me I learned that she sometimes came here to give music lessons to a friend of hers, an artist, on the floor above. I didn't know until then that there was any floor above.

I suppose her friend must be making great progress in music, for she gets a lesson every day. I have seen her every day. And some days I would walk a short distance with her. "Her father did not like the idea of her going to see her friend," said she, "so it was better that I did not call until I met her in some other way." But every time I walked with her, and every time I spoke to her, the blood surged madly through my veins until I could hardly keep from telling her how much I adored her.

* * * * *

Mrow-ow-ow. Mrr-r-ow. Mr-ow-ow-um-ummmmm. I wonder when that foolish fellow will come back? Here he has been out for an hour or two, when he should have been hard at work. And what a bustle he was in this morning. The place was all upside down. After the hint he gave me last night about the fat mouse, I think he might have let me have a little quiet here by myself this morning, so that I might have hunted up something good to eat.

Heigh-ho! Men never can understand cats. We are too sensitive for them. That is the reason we get along better with women. Their natures are so much like our own.

Well, he cleaned up all the place this morning. Everything was dusty and dirty before. Now it is clean

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and bright. There is not much of it, to be sure, but still it makes rather an attractive picture, even for a well-bred creature like myself. I do hope she is a thoroughbred. I hate those models with their loud talk and boisterous laugh.

Well, well, there is his step on the stair and his whistle. Here he is, with his arms full of bundles. Why, where did he get the money? I heard him complaining all day that he was broke, and muttering bad words under his breath.

Why, he has lost his ring, that beautiful ring that I admired so much. And I know he thought so much of it. I am sorry he lost it. Mmmmm. Meow! Meow! Mmmmm. He's looking out of the window. There he runs to the door. She is coming. Meow! She is here.

Oh, what a darling girl! Her fluffy brown hair falling over her rosy cheeks; her dimples and her long lashes. Her dark eyes and that beautiful blue suit which clings to her figure so closely.

My! My! Wow! What? Miji-br-r-r-ick! You're getting excited. What is that curious creature hanging about her neck, Miji-br-r-ick? It is detestable. Well, I shall soon see, for she is taking it off.

How he watches her every action. How caressingly he speaks to her. And she seems to avoid looking at him.

Will she have a cup of tea after her cold walk? Tea? Tea? Are my ears deceiving me? Why, I haven't smelt tea since I came to this place; that is, except some evil-smelling stuff the caretaker sent up one day when he was ill. He must have fallen heir to some grocer's shop.

And then they talk of many things—the weather, music, art, and all the rubbish that mortals in love usually talk about. Mortals in love did I say? Well, don't correct me. He confessed as much to me, and my eyes tell me the same about her. Of course he doesn't see that she loves him. Trust a man for that. Why, he wouldn't believe it if I told him myself.

It was getting late, and he could not paint her this afternoon, and he told her so. Would she come again? Yes. She would come again to-morrow afternoon, and every afternoon until the picture was finished.

Under such conditions the picture would never be finished. Now she is about to go. She picks up that creature she had about her neck when she came in. How its vicious little eyes glisten in the firelight. Why, the impudent thing! I believe it is defying me! You will, will you? Mrowoow! Mr-r-rw! Fizz! Br-r-r! Miji-br-r-r-ick!

* * * * *

It is all past now. I shall never do it again, but when I saw those little beady eyes blinking at me I sprang for it and tore the creature from her hand. I pawed and shook it. I slapped it, and was wrestling with it on the floor when she tried to take it away from me. What, take first my master, then my prey? The only thing I had seen all day that looked as though it might be eaten.

I carry in my paw four sharp claws, and she found it out, for with one movement I sent them down on her hand so hard they made great ugly scratches in her soft, white flesh. And the blood came. And there was a terrible clamour. For when she saw the blood she screamed gently and quietly sank downwards. If it hadn't been for him she would have struck the floor. But his arms were round her, and he was crying, "Oh, my darling girl! How did it happen? Sweetheart, it will soon be all right. My dearest!" and other idiotic expressions.

Pretty soon she opened her eyes. She may not have heard his last words, but I think she did. Any way she saw she was in his arms, and instead of struggling to get away she simply twisted herself round a little, threw up one hand over his shoulder, rested her head quietly on his breast, and fainted again. This spell was longer than the other. When she came to this time he was kissing her, and she was blushing, oh, so red.

Well, I haven't heard how it came out yet. You see, when he finished kissing her, she explained how it happened. Then I went out. I took a pane of glass with me, as I was in such a hurry to go. It was eight storeys down. But I knew the window opened on a verandah a little below, and alighted there.

He came down and picked me up about an hour later. He was trembling with joy, and said he would forgive me. That it was through me he was the happiest man on earth. That she loved him, and, oh, such nonsense.

But when it was all over, and I had eaten my supper, he sat in front of the fire and gazed into the dancing flames. Then he looked sad, then sadder, and finally two big tears rolled down his cheeks as he softly said "Miji-br-r-r-ick." I wonder why?

Esther Summers.

RESULT OF JUMBLED PICTURE COMPETITION.

No. 2.

The sum of £2 2s. has been forwarded to Harry Nobbs, 67, Frobisher Road, Hornsey, N.

A bottle of *Home Notes Bouquet* has been forwarded to the following five: Miss Jessie Holyoake, 16, Norfolk Street, Leamington Spa; Alan T. Jones, Tregleath, Newport, Mon.; S. Barker, 6, Corbett Street, Hanbury Street, Spitalfields, E.; C. Puttock, 123, Malvern Road, Kilburn, N.W.; and Miss E. Philson, 2, Queensland Street, Liverpool.

Result of Watch Competition.

No. 2.

The time at which the watch stopped was 1hr. 59min.

The Five-guinea Watch has been awarded to Sergt. A. E. Smith, Forton Barracks, Gosport, Hants., who alone correctly named this time.

TO AMUSE and at the same time to interest our readers we have retained the services of the most expert graphologist of the present day, and even those who do not believe in the art will soon find themselves convinced if they care to send along a specimen of their hand-writing upon an unruled sheet of paper with their usual signature and full address. From this their characters will be told. These characters will not necessarily be flattering. They will be bare statements of the truth. In each case six stamps and a stamped addressed envelope must be inclosed. All letters should be marked "Graphologist," and forwarded to "*PEARSON'S WEEKLY*" *BUILDING, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.*

The Shadow-Hand

By Louis Tracy.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Search for West.

Jack Heathcote and Cécile took up their abode at Quiltering, the birth-town of Annie West's husband, about ten days after Edith's arrival in Paris. They immediately set about prosecuting their inquiries.

"It is a wonder the creature does not reply to our advertisement," said Jack sometimes.

"But you are queer," Cécile would answer; "carpenters' wives do not read often advertisements in newspapers, I think?"

"Most likely she's dead," suggested Jack.

"No—not *most* likely. Death is a big thing, of which people talk when it occurs. As we have heard nothing, it is a probability that she lives, and that her life is uneventful. You are not a great reasoner, sir."

"I never thought that I was," said Jack. "But *you* are, and I've got you—which comes to the same thing."

"You have not got me yet. Find for me Edith, and then—you shall."

He caught her roughly, rumpling her, kissing her, grown bold by assured possession.

"That is against rules," she said crossly. "We are not children. Do not let me think that you have more lips than brains."

Cécile broke into the sitting-room of their inn.

They ransacked Quiltering, speaking to nearly every one of its inhabitants, for nearly three weeks, and found nothing.

In the second week they received fifteen letters, forwarded by the London agency, from fifteen Annie Wests; but further correspondence elicited the fact that only two of them had lived in Dorsetshire, and only one was named "Hall" previous to her marriage; and Hall was not a first husband's but her maiden name. For some days Jack Heathcote was a busy scribe, writing letters of answer and inquiry all over the country.

At the end of the third week, Cécile broke into the sitting-room of their inn, with the glad tidings:

"I have found his mother! I have seen her!"

"Good news!" cried Jack, hoping for a kiss on the strength of this evangel; "has she told you about him, then?"

"No—she cannot speak—she cannot see—she cannot hear——"

"Oh, I say!"

"She is a hundred and fifteen years old. I found her in an almshouse at Tlahual, twelve miles from here. She has been buried away there for the last thirty years. That is why we did not hear of her till now."

"Then we are exactly where we were before," said Jack.

"No. You are a mere child. We have advanced—a step."

"I don't see it, then."

"That is because you go with your eyes half shut People live in a sort of mental moonlight. The sun does not shine for them, in general."

"I must try to improve," said Jack, making a mouth.

"No—I like you just as you are. Do not change a little bit. It is because you are just as you are that I—I love you so. But do you not see that we have advanced? West does not *know* that his mother is dead, for she is alive, though he may imagine that she is dead. *We* therefore now know something more about his life and its concerns than he knows himself. And we can use that knowledge at once."

"But how, darling?"

"We will put a story in all the papers; we will say that his mother is just dead, and left him a large legacy."

"But we don't know his Christian name."

"You are playing, I think? Did we not get his Christian name in the register of marriage?"

"Oh, aye, true enough. I admit, darling, that I am no good. But as he has not answered the advertisement for his wife, the chances are that he won't see this new one either."

"But this," said Cécile, "is the advertisement of a *legacy*. The working public take an enormous interest in *legacies*—in a definite piece of news, not a vague promise of something unknown. Besides, this new advertisement is directed to a man, not a woman. Men read these things in the papers more. If John West is not a reader his fellow workmen are. They will see his own name plain before them; they will speak of it. He will see it."

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Her eyes wore their strange, far-away look.

"Suppose he has emigrated?" said Jack.

"No; he has not emigrated."

"How *do* you know that, Cécile?"

"If there were one reason against it that would make it improbable," she answered; "if there are two, they make it almost incredible; if there are three, the three together make it impossible."

"And *are* there three?"

"Yes. People in general do not emigrate, for one thing, though in general they migrate. Then again, carpenters emigrate least of all tradespeople, for the rough carpentering work of pioneering can be done by hands unskilled. It is the landsmen and the metal-workers who emigrate chiefly. But emigrants, seldom more than once or twice—but at least once or twice—write home from abroad. The shock of the great change of environment makes them think with fondness of home. It is only when they tarry in the same country with their left ones that they lack the impulse to write. John West, the carpenter, never wrote. He is in England—probably not far from here."

"Darling, how shrewd you are! What a cunning little——"

Jack was in prone career to break rules again, but Cécile fled.

Two days afterwards the advertisement of the legacy was published broadcast. Of fifty letters received from "John Wests" throughout the country, Cécile held up one, saying:

"This is the right!"

He lived in Manchester, and awaited instructions. They telegraphed that they would present themselves before him the next day.

And on the next day at noon Cécile stood alone at the door of a mean cottage, in a mean, grimy street made up of cottages all precisely like one another. At her knock a tall, raw-boned woman of fifty, with rolled-up sleeves, evidently straight from the wash-tub, opened the door.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A NAME.

"DID your husband tell you of a legacy advertised——" began Cécile.

"I should just think he did!" said a loud voice. "He can think of nothing else. He's been out on the booze ever since——"

"Well, can one speak to you about it?"

"Yes; you can come in."

She led the way into a parlour, neatly, but meanly and garishly furnished.

"You were married before, I think?" said Cécile.

"I was."

"And named 'Hall'?"

"Yes."

"'Annie'?"

"Yes; but I don't hardly like all this prying——"

"I mean no harm, you know. I have in my pocket £50 for you, and if you do not answer my questions I shall simply give the money to your husband, that is all."

"Who are you, miss?"

"My name is Cécile. I have the management of this money-matter. I wish you would be friendly with one. I want to ask you a few questions, merely."

"Well, ask away."

"You were once employed as servant near Crossley in the house of the Hon. Ernest Wentworth, I think?"

The woman threw her mind back down the years and nodded.

"You remember his wife?"

"What, the Frenchwoman?"

"Yes."

"I should just think I did. She was a pickle, I can tell you, in the house."

"Did your husband tell you of a legacy advertised?"

"Ah, yes—a 'pickle.' It is well. She was not a very good wife, I think?"

"No, the messer, that she wasn't. Wasn't there something about another man—— ?"

"But, yes! What was his name?"

"Oh, I don't think I can remember his name, after all these years. But I saw him several times. She used to meet him in the park, the horrid thing."

"Yes! Tell me! What was he like?"

"He was a tall man, with a pale face."

"That all?"

"That's all that I can remember. He was a foreigner, of course. He used to wear coloured waistcoats."

"Well, but that is something!" said Cécile, "a tall man, pale, with coloured waistcoats, and a foreigner. But his name! can't you remember?"

"Stop a bit—I'm thinking. No—I can't remember."

"Didn't it begin with an 'L'?"

"You are right! It did! 'Le' something. I knew it well once—but it's gone now."

"It was a French name, I think, beginning with 'Le'?"

"Yes, it was French right enough."

"You are sure it began with 'Le'?"

"Quite sure."

"'Lebon'?"

"No."

"'Lefrère'?"

"No."

"'Lemaitre'?"

"Right you are!" cried Annie West in a rapture of recollection, "that was it!"

"'Lemaitre,' then. Very well. I thank you much. What was he?"

"We servants knew him as 'the Doctor.' He was Dr. Lemaitre."

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Cécile was ushered into the presence of a white-haired old lady.

"Excellent! You have told me much. I will add £10 more to the £50 on my own account."

"Oh, for that matter, you ought to be able to find out all about him from the Darrels. I don't know if they are still thereabouts; but they used to live about ten miles from our place, at—at Something House—I forget the name of it at this minute. It was the Darrels that Lemaitre was staying with at the time, you see."

"You are very good," said Cécile. "Here is the money. And tell your husband to go and see his old mother, who is still alive in the almshouse at Tlahual, and not be a brute. That of the legacy was a little trick to get at you, you see!"

She laughed, and Annie West, with the money in her hand, laughed, as they went together to the door.

"It's only a rough hand, miss, but you're welcome to it, I'm sure," she said, holding out her water-crinkled fingers.

Cécile walked back to the hotel where Jack waited her, and the same hour they set out by train to return to Crossley. Cécile wanted to pay a visit to the house of the Darrels.

They were a family of some importance in the county, but nearly extinct. On sending up her card, Cécile was ushered into the presence of a white-haired old lady in the drawing-room, who received her kindly. She told her errand. She wished to obtain some information of a Dr. Lemaitre who had been a guest of the house some twenty years before.

"Really," said Mrs. Darrell, "I am afraid I can tell you hardly anything. He was introduced into the house by a friend, and did not stay long. We have not been brought into *rapport* with him for many years. What is it you wish to know of him—his address?"

"That would help me a great deal," said Cécile.

"Well I *think* he wrote us a letter from Paris just before his visit, and in that case we are certain still to have it. Mr. Darrel, poor man, never destroyed a document."

"It would be difficult to find, would it not?" said Cécile.

"It would be difficult?—Yes. But if you will leave me your address, I will find it and send it you," Mrs. Darrel said, nodding and smiling.

"You are too good. I *should* like to know you better," murmured Cécile as she shook hands.

The next morning she had in her hand the twenty-year-old address of Dr. Lemaitre—17, Rue de Printemps, Paris. At ten the same night she and Jack were at the door of the Hilton's town house in Hyde Park.

"Good-night, darling," she said. "Go to bed, will you? You look so tired, poor boy. To-morrow, remember, we start for Paris. Be here by eleven. Good-night."

Almost immediately on entering she came upon Arthur, lounging at full length upon a couch.

"I am so glad to see you!" said Cécile. "I did not know you were in town. Is there any news?"

"Nothing to speak of," answered Arthur, recomposing himself among the cushions. "Lady Hilton is somewhat better, and *I* expect shortly to leave for Egypt."

"To Egypt? But no—you would not go, I think?"

"Yes, I should go. Can you suggest any reason why not?"

"Edith?" said Cécile.

Arthur winced.

"Edith," he said, "has chosen her own path, Miss Delisle. If she could desert me—her home—in the company of such vermin as Danton, you will admit that her affection for me, for any of us, could not have been very——"

"But hear me!"—Cécile in her eagerness stooped to her knees before him—"she is not with Dr. Danton! I know her—trust me to that extent! I admit that his being here on that day looks bad, but have faith in her—in me—her affection for you *is* very deep—don't you think I would know? If you went to Egypt now, that might spoil all——"

"It is quite likely, however, that I may have to go."

"When?"

"Within a few weeks."

"What, then, is the matter with Egypt?"

"You would hardly understand, I think. There is a vile

"I am so glad to see you," said Cécile.

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man named Arabi Pasha who is giving some trouble there, and my regiment has received an intimation from the War Office to hold itself in readiness to proceed to the front. Ah, it is of no great importance, Miss Delisle. Nothing is of the slightest importance."

"That point of view you will change—only wait!" cried Cécile, and ran upstairs, where she was announced to Lady Hilton, who still lay on her back on a couch.

"Dear Cécile!" cried the old lady, "I am overjoyed. I was really anxious about you, you know. What *have* you been doing?"

"You are to go first," said Lemaitre.

"Poking about—making inquiries."

"About Edith?"

"Indirectly, yes."

"Have you discovered anything?"

"I may soon."

"What have you done to that poor Heathcote?"

"I have sent him to a hotel to bed."

"Has he looked after you well, dear?"

"Yes, he is good. I am taking him with me to Paris to-morrow."

"To-morrow, dear! Why, you live in a whirlwind, my child."

"Yes—to-morrow. Can you give me Dr. Danton's Paris address? He wrote you once, I think, from Paris?"

"Yes. I will put Mary on the hunt for it presently, dear. Have you had anything to eat? You must be so tired, dear Cécile."

Cécile was soon fast asleep beside Lady Hilton, who would not let her leave her.

In the morning she found that Dr. Danton's address, about the time of the end of the old year, was "17, Rue de Printemps, Paris."

Cécile started violently. It was the same address as the address of Dr. Lemaitre twenty years ago.

She had decided that the two were known to each other. Now she decided that they were *intimately* associated. The two doctors had lived, as doctors sometimes do, in the same house.

It did not dawn upon her, clever as she was, that Danton and Lemaitre were the same man. The probability of such a complexity of circumstances was too far away to occur to even her keen intellect.

She went groping on in the dark, coming ever nearer to light.

That day, before she and Heathcote had started for Paris, the advertising agency in London which had done all their work for them, telegraphed to its Paris branch this advertisement, for insertion in the French papers:

EDITH. Be good, and come back. But above all, avoid D. He is a man of dark antecedents, and will prove *dangerous*. You know I would not tell you false.—CÉCILE.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BIRD AND THE SERPENT.

ON the night following their discovery of Edith, Hawke and Lemaitre stood before No. 13, Rue Morcelle.

"You are to go first," said Lemaitre. "You are to present yourself suddenly. And you are to claim her with paternal vigorousness. You are to be rough—be rough—but not too rough. It is not intended that you should strangle her, Mr. Hawke. You gently terrify her, that is all. Later on, say in a quarter of an hour, I shall appear as a delivering Perseus and slayer-of-monsters."

Mr. Hawke rolled up the five stairs, and tapped at No. 165, while Lemaitre went walking about the neighbouring streets. The door was locked, and no one opened to Hawke.

"She must be out," he said.

But, even while he stood in doubt, there was a quick woman's step behind him. He turned sharply round, and a shriek went ringing through the house.

Edith's two arms flung out; her deathly face worked horribly; but no sound came from her lips. She fell forward, and was caught by Hawke.

That face had been fearfully present with her from the day when she first saw it. If she opened her eyes in the darkness of night, before her, in a bluish, sepulchral halo, stood the face of Hawke; not the face of Arthur, or the face of Cécile, but the face of Hawke, whom she had seen but once! All she could dream of terror, all she could imagine of heinous loathsomeness, was embodied for her in that visage of horror. She dreaded it worse than the grave; she hated it worse than hell.

"Now, here's a darned to-do!" said Mr. Hawke, holding her up in the dim passage, lighted by only one lamp. "I never did like this job!"

He searched her pockets, in which he found her key, and, half lifting her, opened the door, and laid her in the dark on the bed.

In five minutes Edith opened her eyes. She felt rather than saw the presence of Hawke near her, and, in wild dismay, leapt up from the bed and rushed towards the door.

He caught her by the arm.

"Come, you're not a child!" he said, shaking her a little. "Who's going to hurt you, eh? Is that the way you treat your own father? Haven't you got no lamp?"

"Yes," she gasped; "I promise you—I will light it—only—don't touch me—I am very poor—I am so wretched—if you have any pity——"

"All right—pull yourself together.

A shriek went ringing through the house.

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I want to take you away—quick. There's that man, Dr. Danton, he is on my track; he does not want me to have you—he wants to take you away from me. But he shan't! See, I have come all this way to claim you. Quick now!"

"Dr. Danton?" she panted. "Does *he* know?"

"Yes, I tell you. He's on my track. Quick now——"

At that moment there was a tap on the opening door, and Danton walked in.

Edith was holding a trembling match to her little lamp.

"Ah—I thought I heard you, sir!" he said sternly to Hawke. "How dare you?"

Hawke assumed an appearance of great terror.

"Well, well," he said, "so you've caught me again?"

"Leave this room!" Danton pointed majestically toward the door.

"That I shan't! She's my own daughter, I suppose?"

"Quick, sir!"

Hawke backed reluctantly toward the opening.

"But I'll be back again," he cried threateningly as Danton banged the door upon him.

"Miss Wentworth—Edith——" said Danton, bowing before the trembling girl, "I am so glad to be able to rid you of that presence. I have been tracking his movements for some weeks. I can almost promise that he shall never molest you again—if you will only put yourself into my hands."

She sank into a chair, staring before her, Danton sitting in front of her.

"You cannot, you know, for one thing, continue to live in a den of this kind. I wonder it has not killed you, my poor child."

His voice was full of genuine tenderness. Edith was speechless.

"You must let me obtain suitable lodgings for you this very night. Promise me that."

"No, no—I will stay here, please."

"Ah—you will be unkind to me? to *me*, Edith? No—I cannot believe that," said Danton, clapping his knee with a folded newspaper, which he held in his hand. "You cannot give yourself so much pain. If you pain me you pain yourself, and if you pain yourself you pain me. There is only one way to be free and happy—we must be married in a week or two."

"Oh, I cannot!" she cried, covering her face. "I cannot marry anyone! *You* should know it—*you* know what I am."

"Yes, I know what you are. You are me—you are mine. I am not an English aristocrat. I do not at all remember or care who your father, your mother was. I only know that you are flesh of my flesh, soul of my soul—Edith!"

The man once more was breathing his energy of passion into her, frowning upon her with his old mesmeric dominancy.

The bird, fascinated by the eye of the serpent, wishes to fly and is paralysed. Only the wings flutter—flutter, and with down-bent beak, with a strange trance in its little fixed and staring eyes, it gazes on into the glittering, saffron eyes of the snake, still fluttering—fluttering.

"Promise, Edith! Promise now!"

"What can I do?" she wailed, with writhing body. "What can I say? I am utterly helpless—utterly alone and helpless!"

Danton slapped down the newspaper on the table rather angrily.

"You shall *not* be cruel to us both. In two weeks? Say yes."

She heaved a sigh, which was consent.

"Very good," he said, relaxing his frown. "I sympathise with your reluctance, poor child! I am so much older than you, is it not so? But I will be kind to you, Edith. I will be a father as well as a husband. And now I shall go, and look you out a suitable lodging——"

"Wait!—one moment—stay here—I must go outside for a moment!" she cried with strange excitement, with panting bosom.

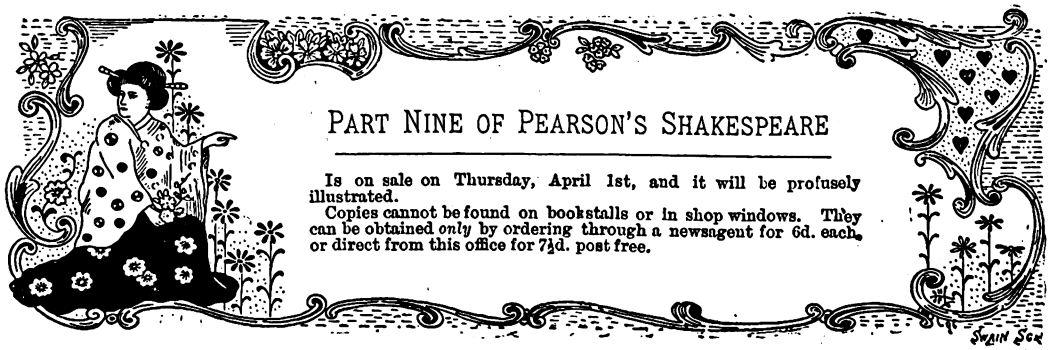
She went hurriedly to the door, snatching up her hat as she passed by the bed.

Her eye had caught these words on the newspaper beneath the lamp:

EDITH. Be good, and come back. But above all, avoid D. He is a man of dark antecedents, and will prove *dangerous*. You know I would not tell you false.—CÉCILE.

Danton, with impatience growing into frenzy, waited in the room an hour. Edith was flying away, away—in wildest panic—through the streets of Paris.

(To be continued.)



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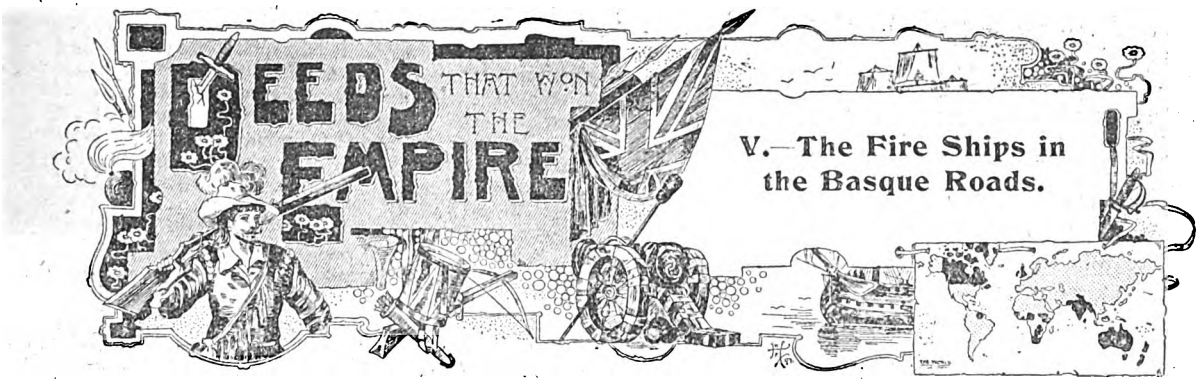

On the night of April 11th, 1809, Lord Cochrane steered his floating mine against the gigantic boom that covered the French fleet lying in Aix roads.

The story is one of the most picturesque and exciting in the naval annals of Great Britain. Marryat has embalmed the great adventure and its chief actor in the pages of *Frank Mildmay*, and Lord Cochrane himself—like the Earl of Peterborough in the seventeenth century, who captured Barcelona with a handful of men, and Gordon in the nineteenth century, who won great battles in China, walking-stick in hand—was a man who stamped himself, as with characters of fire, upon the popular imagination.

To the courage of a knight-errant Cochrane added the shrewd and humourous sagacity of a Scotsman. If he had commanded fleets he would have rivalled the victories of Nelson, and perhaps even have outshone the Nile and Trafalgar. And to warlike genius of the first order Cochrane added a certain weird and impish ingenuity which his enemies found simply resistless.

Was there ever a cruise in naval history like that of Cochrane in his brig, misnamed the *Speedy*, a mere coasting tub that would neither steer nor tack, and whose entire broadside Cochrane himself could carry in his pocket? But in this wretched little brig, with its four-pounders, Cochrane captured in one brief year more than fifty vessels, carrying an aggregate of 122 guns, took 500 prisoners, kept the whole Spanish coast, off which he cruised, in perpetual alarm, and finished by attacking and capturing a Spanish frigate, the *Gamo*, of thirty-two heavy guns and 319 men.

What we have called the impish daring and resource of Cochrane is shown in this strange fight.

He ran the little *Speedy* close under the guns of the huge *Gamo*, and the Spanish ship was actually unable to depress its guns sufficiently to harm its tiny antagonist. When the Spaniards tried to board, Cochrane simply shoved his pigmy craft a few yards away from the side of his foe, and this curious fight went on for an hour. Then, in his turn, Cochrane boarded, leaving nobody but the doctor on board the *Speedy*; but he played the Spaniards a characteristic trick.

One half his men boarded the *Gamo* by the head, with their faces elaborately blackened; and when, out of the white smoke forward, some forty demons with black faces broke upon the astonished Spaniards, they naturally regarded the whole business as partaking of the black art, and incontinently fled below. The number of Spaniards killed and wounded in this fight by the little *Speedy* exceeded the number of its own entire crew; and when the fight was over forty-five British sailors had to keep guard over 263 Spanish prisoners.

Afterwards, in command of the *Impérieuse*, a fine frigate, Cochrane played a still more dashing part on the Spanish coast, destroying batteries, cutting off supplies from the French ports, blowing up coast roads, and keeping perspiring battalions of the enemy marching to and fro to meet his descents.

On the French coast, again, Cochrane held large bodies of French troops paralysed by his single frigate. He proposed to the English Government to take possession of the French Islands in the Bay of Biscay, and to allow him, with a small squadron of frigates, to operate against the French seaboard. Had this request been granted, he says, "neither the Peninsular war nor its enormous cost to the nation, from 1809 onwards, would ever have been heard of!"

"It would have been easy," he adds, "as it always will be easy in case of future wars, so to harass the French coasts as to find full employment for their troops at home, and so to render operations in foreign countries impossible."

If England and France were once more engaged in war—*absit omen!*—the story of Cochrane's exploits on the Spanish and French coasts might prove a very valuable inspiration and object lesson.

Cochrane's professional reward for his great services in the *Impérieuse* was an official rebuke for expending more sails, stores, gunpowder and shot than any other captain afloat in the same time!

The fight in the Basque roads, however—or rather in the Aix roads—has great historical importance. It finally destroyed French power on the sea, and gave Britain an absolute supremacy. No fleet actions took place after its date between "the meteor flag" and the tricolour, for the simple reason that no French fleet remained in existence. Cochrane's fire-ships completed the work of the Nile and Trafalgar.

Early in 1809 the French fleet in Brest, long blockaded by Lord Gambier, caught the British napping, slipped out unobserved, raised the blockades at L'Orient and Rochefort, added the squadrons lying in these two places to its own strength, and, anchoring in the Aix roads, prepared for a dash on the West Indies.

The success with which the blockade at Brest had been evaded, and the menace offered to the West Indian trade, alarmed the British Admiralty. Lord Gambier, with a powerful fleet, kept guard outside the Aix roads, but if the blockade failed once it might fail again. Eager to destroy the fleet France possessed, the Admiralty

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strongly urged Lord Gambier to attack the enemy with fire-ships, but Gambier, grown old, had visibly lost nerve, and he pronounced the use of fire-ships a "horrible and un-Christian mode of warfare."

Lord Mulgrave, the First Lord of the Admiralty, knowing Cochrane's ingenuity and daring, sent for him, and proposed to send him to Basque roads to invent and execute some plan for destroying the French fleet. The Scotsman was uppermost in Cochrane in this interview, and he declined the adventure on the ground that to send a young post-captain to execute such an enterprise would be regarded as an insult by the whole fleet, and he would have every man's hand against him.

Lord Mulgrave, however, was peremptory, and Cochrane yielded, but on reaching the blockading fleet was met by a tempest of wrath from all his seniors.

"Why," they asked, "was Cochrane sent out? We could have done the business as well as he. Why did not Lord Gambier let us do it?"

Lord Gambier, who had fallen into a sort of gentle and pious melancholy, was really more occupied in distributing tracts among his crews than in trying to reach his enemies; and Harvey, his second in command, an old Trafalgar sea-dog, when Cochrane arrived with his commission, interviewed his Admiral, denounced him in a white heat on his own quarter-deck, and ended by telling him that "if Nelson had been there he would not have anchored in the Basque roads at all, but would have dashed at the enemy at once."

This outburst, no doubt, relieved Admiral Harvey's feelings, but it cost him his flag, and he was court-martialed and dismissed from the service for the performance.

Cochrane, however, set himself with characteristic daring and coolness to carry out his task. The French fleet consisted of one huge ship of 120 guns, two of 80 guns, eight seventy-fours, a 50-gun ship, and two 40-gun frigates—fourteen ships in all. It was drawn up in two lines under the shelter of powerful shore batteries, with the frigates as outguards.

As a protection against fire-ships, a gigantic boom had been constructed half a mile in length, forming two sides of a triangle, with the apex towards the British fleet.

Over this huge floating barrier powerful boat squadrons kept watch every night. Cochrane's plan of attack was marked by real genius. He constructed three explosion vessels—floating mines on the largest scale.

Each of these terrific vessels contained no less a quantity than *fifteen hundred* barrels of gunpowder, bound together with cables, with wedges and moistened sand rammed down betwixt them, forming, in brief, one gigantic bomb.

On the top of this huge powder magazine was piled, as a sort of agreeable condiment, hundreds of live shells and thousands of hand-grenades; the whole, by every form of marine ingenuity, compacted into a solid mass which, at the touch of a fuse, could be turned into a sort of floating Vesuvius. These were to be followed by a squadron of fire-ships.

Cochrane who, better perhaps than any other soldier or sailor that ever lived, knew how to strike at his foes through their own imagination, calculated that when these three huge explosion vessels, with twenty fire-ships behind them, went off in a sort of saltpetre earthquake, the astonished Frenchmen would imagine every fire-ship to be a floating mine, and, instead of trying to board them and divert them from their fleet, would be simply anxious to get out of their way with the utmost possible despatch.

The French, meanwhile, having watched their enemy lying inert for weeks, and confident in the gigantic boom which acted as their shield to the front, and the show of batteries which kept guard over them on either flank and to the rear, awaited the coming attack in a spirit of half-contemptuous gaiety. They had struck their topmasts and unbent their sails, and, by way of challenge, dressed their fleet with flags.

One ship, the *Calcutta*, had been captured from the British, and by way of special insult they hung out the British ensign under that ship's quarter gallery, an affront whose deadly quality only a sailor can understand.

The night of the 9th set in stormily. The tide ran fast, and the skies were black and the sea heavy—so heavy, indeed, that the boats of the English fleet, which were intended to follow and cover the fire-ships, never left the side of the flagship. Cochrane, however, had called the officers commanding the fire-ships on board his frigate, given them their last instructions, and at half-past eight p.m. he himself, accompanied only by a lieutenant and four sailors, cut the moorings of the chief explosion vessel and drifted off towards the French fleet.

Seated on top of 1,500 barrels of gunpowder and a sort of haystack of grenades, he calmly floated off, with a squadron of fire-ships behind him, towards the French fleet, backed by great shore batteries, with seventy-three armed boats as a line of skirmishers. "It seemed to me," says Marryat, who was an actor in the scene, "like entering the gates of hell!"

The great floating mine drifted on through blackness and storm till, just as it struck the boom, Cochrane, who previously made his five assistants get into the boat, with his own hand lit the fuse, and in turn jumped into the boat.

How frantically the little crew pulled together to get clear of the ignited mine may be imagined. But wind and sea were against them. The fuse, which was calculated to burn for twelve minutes, lasted for only five. Then the fifteen hundred barrels of gunpowder went off simultaneously, peopling the black sky with a flaming torrent of shells, grenades, and rockets, and raising a mountainous wave that nearly swamped the unfortunate boat and its crew.

The fault of the fuse, however, saved the lives of the daring six, as the missiles from the exploding vessel fell far outside them.

"The effect," says Cochrane, who, like Cæsar, could write history as well as make it, "constituted one of the grandest artificial spectacles imaginable. For a moment the sky was red with the lurid glare arising from the simultaneous ignition of 1,500 barrels of powder. On this gigantic flash subsiding the air seemed alive with shells, grenades, rockets, and masses of timber—the wreck of the shattered vessel." Then came blackness, punctuated in flame by the explosion of the next floating mine. Then, through sea-wreck and night, came the squadron of fire-ships, each one a pyramid of kindling flame! But the first explosion had achieved all that Cochrane expected. It dismissed the huge boom into chips, and the French fleet lay open to attack.

The captain of the second explosion vessel was so determined to do his work effectually, that the entire crew was actually blown out of the vessel and one member of the party killed, while the toil of the boats in which, after the fire-ships had been abandoned,

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they and their crews had to fight their way back in the teeth of the gale, was so severe that several men died of mere fatigue. The physical effects of the floating mines and the drifting fire-ships, as a matter of fact, were not very great. The boom, indeed, was destroyed, but out of twenty fire-ships only four actually reached the enemy's position, and not one did any damage.

Cochrane's explosion vessels, however, were addressed not so much to the French ships as to the alarmed imagination of French sailors, and the effect achieved was overwhelming. All the French ships save one cut or slipped their cables, and ran ashore in wild confusion.

The fifteen hundred barrels of gunpowder went off simultaneously.

Cochrane cut the moorings of his explosion vessel at half-past eight o'clock; by midnight—or in less than four hours—the boom had been destroyed, and thirteen French ships—the solitary fleet that remained to France—were lying helplessly ashore. Never, perhaps, was a result so great achieved in a time so brief, in a fashion so dramatic, or with a loss so trifling.

When the grey morning broke, with the exception of two vessels, the whole French fleet was found helplessly aground on the Palles shoal. Some were found on their bilge with the keel exposed, others were frantically casting their guns overboard and trying to get afloat again. Meanwhile Gambier and the British fleet were lying fourteen miles distant in the Basque roads, and Cochrane in the *Impérieuse* was watching, with powder-blackened face, the curious spectacle of the entire fleet he had driven ashore, and the yet more amazing spectacle of a British fleet declining to come in and finally destroy its enemy.

For here comes a chapter in the story on which Englishmen do not love to dwell. Cochrane tried to whip the muddy-spirited Gambier into enterprise by emphatic and quick-following signal. At six a.m. he signalled: "All the enemy's ships except two are on shore," but this extracted from drowsy Gambier no

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other response than the answering pennant. Cochrane repeated his impatient signals at half-hour intervals, and with emphasis ever more marked: "The enemy's ships can be destroyed," "Half the fleet can destroy the enemy," "The frigates alone can destroy the enemy," but still no response save the indifferent pennant.

As the tide flowed in the French ships showed signs of getting afloat, and Cochrane signalled: "The enemy is preparing to heave off." Even this brought no response from the pensive Gambier. At eleven o'clock the British fleet weighed and stood in, but then, to Cochrane's speechless wrath, re anchored at a distance of three and a half miles, and by this time two of the French three-deckers were afloat.

Gambier finally despatched a single mortar vessel to bombard the stranded ships, but by this time Cochrane had become desperate. He adopted a device which recalls Nelson's use of his blind eye at Copenhagen. At one o'clock he hove his anchor atrip and drifted, stern foremost, towards the enemy. He dare not make sail lest his trick should be detected, and a signal of recall hoisted on the flagship.

Cochrane coolly determined, in a word, to force the hand of his sluggish Admiral. He drifted with his solitary frigate down to the hostile fleet and batteries, which Gambier thought it scarcely safe to attack with eleven ships of the line. When near the enemy's position he suddenly made sail and ran up the signal: "In want of assistance;" next followed a yet more peremptory message: "In distress."

Even Gambier could not see an English frigate destroyed under the very guns of an English fleet without moving to its help, and he sent some of his ships in. But meanwhile, Cochrane, though technically "in distress," was enjoying what he must have felt to be a singularly good time. He calmly took up a position which enabled him to engage an eighty-gun ship, one of twenty-four guns, and in particular that French ship which, on the previous day, had hung the British flag under her quarter gallery.

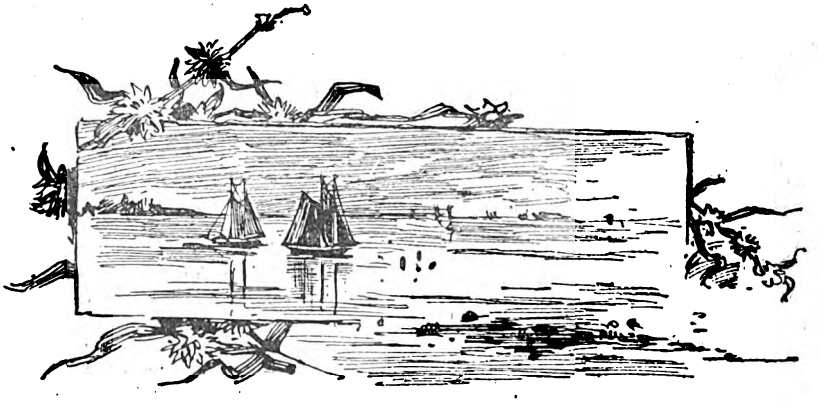
For half-an-hour he fought these three ships single-handed, and the *Calcutta* actually struck to him, its captain afterwards being court-martialed and shot by the French themselves for surrendering to a frigate. Then the other British ships came up, and ship after ship of the French fleet struck or was destroyed. Night fell before the work was completed, and during the night Gambier, for some mysterious reason, recalled his ships; but Cochrane in the *Impérieuse* clung to his post.

He persuaded Captain Seymour in the *Pallas* to remain with him, with four brigs, and with this tiny force he proposed to attack *L'Océan*, the French flagship of 120 guns, which had just got afloat; but Gambier peremptorily recalled him at dawn, before the fight was renewed. Never before or since was a victory so complete and so nearly bloodless. Five seamen were killed in the fire-ships, and five in the attack on the French fleet, and about twenty wounded; and with this microscopic "butcher's bill," a great fleet, the last naval hope of France, was practically destroyed. For so much does the genius and daring of a single man count!

That the French fleet was not utterly destroyed was due solely to Gambier's want of resolution. And yet such is the irony of history, that of the two chief actors in this drama Gambier, who marred it, was rewarded with the thanks of Parliament; Cochrane, who gave to it all its unique splendour, had his professional career abruptly terminated!

That wild night in the Aix roads, and the solitary and daring attack on the French fleet which followed next day, were practically Cochrane's last acts as a British sailor. He achieved dazzling exploits under the flag of Chili and Brazil; but the most original warlike genius the English navy has ever known fought no more battles for England.

("*The Man Who Spoilt Napoleon's Destiny*" *next week.*)



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AN EPISODE OF LIFE

SUMMARY.

Roy Arbuthnot is in love with Nelly, a beautiful girl beneath him in the social scale. His father, Sir Richard Arbuthnot, an impecunious baronet, wishes him to marry his cousin, Mary Arbuthnot, an heiress, to retrieve the family fortune.

The story opens with the parting scene between Roy and Nelly, which affects him to such an extent that he resolves he will not give her up, whatever the consequences, but being urged to do so by his friend, Jack Sinclair, and again by his father, he finally yields.

CHAPTER III.

The Alternative.

A marriage has been arranged, and will shortly be solemnised, between Roy, son and heir of Sir Richard Arbuthnot, Baronet, of Hatfield, and Mary, only daughter of the late John Arbuthnot, Esquire.

The paper dropped from Nelly's grasp, her face had grown white and drawn. But a few minutes ago and she had listlessly turned the pages and skipped the paragraphs, dipping here and there where a headline caught her notice, waiting for Roy. Surely he would be with her soon, they had so many plans for the future to discuss, and he had not been near the house all yesterday. She had been surprised, pained even, after their tender parting, but she had made excuses, had told herself that he was worried, was making arrangements, still she had not doubted. Had he not sworn?

And now this cold, cruel, stereotyped notice stunned her. For a time her brain whirled in confusion, she could not realise what had happened, it was too sudden. Gradually the power to think returned; all too quickly the knowledge that she was abandoned rushed to her. Her senses reeled under the blow, but with intense pain came consciousness.

The numb sensation disappeared before the acute agony of lucid thought. The cruelty, the heartless manner of it, the giving this notice to the world whilst she had been left in ignorance; could Roy have been guilty of that?

She would not believe it. It was so mean, despicable, so unlike him, she told herself. White to the lips, trembling in every limb, she stooped to pick up the paper. Faint and dizzy, she nearly fell, but, steadying herself by the back of a great easy-chair, which had been Roy's favourite lounge, she tried once more to read the announcement.

The lines seemed blurred and misty, surely the type was faint. By an effort of concentration she conquered her weakness, the letters were clear cut, there could be no mistake. Sinking back into the depths of the chair, she broke into hysterical sobbing which caught in the throat, which had no relief in tears.

It was finished—her dream was ended. She might have forgiven, but the manner of the parting made her writhe with pain.

Steps crunched upon the gravel outside the window, quick, heavy steps, which she knew, almost without thought, were those of the postman. In moments of intense strain perceptions come quickly, and before he had reached the door and had rung his double knock, she knew somehow he brought news from Roy. With no surprise, then, she received from her maid a letter addressed in the well-known hand.

"You look ill, m'm; can I get you anything?"

"Nothing, Frances, I have a headache. Leave me, please," Nelly answered wearily.

And Frances confided to Thomas very shortly afterwards that, "If the goods in this 'ere shop wasn't to be sold at a sacrifice before long, she hadn't cut her eye teeth."

Which remark showed Miss Frances to be a young woman of some discernment.

Nelly opened the letter with feverish haste. As she expected, it was from Roy. He wrote how he dare not meet her to tell the news—sad, killing news to him—that they must part.

His father had put it so that he could not refuse. It was ruin with her. For his mother's sake—in extenuation he used his mother's name—they must not meet again. He dare not, he could not, face the pain of parting. He would do all he could for her. She was, and would be dear to him always. No woman could hold in his heart the place she held, and, in spite of all, would hold. It was, so far as a selfish man can write a manly letter, an honest admission of

Steadying herself by the back of a great easy-chair.

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wrong-doing, and, strange as it may sound, it distinctly comforted her. The value lay in the last sentence:

"In a few days the world will learn that I am to marry my cousin. You know I have no choice, but you must hear before anyone else. Forget me, Nelly, and, if you can, forgive."

Roy, then, had not put this notice in the paper. Doubtless his father, fearful that Roy would change his mind at the eleventh hour, had fixed him so. Nelly, in all her grief, breathed a sigh of relief. He was not so callous, not so heartless as it had seemed. Again she read the letter, now more steadily, eagerly devouring the expressions of his love. Though she realised that he was lost to her, it was gratifying to know that he was unhappy. He suffered and she could not attempt to deny it gave her pleasure.

Her mortification was too acute to allow her to generalise. In calmer moments she would have moralised at the expense of others. She would have declared glibly enough that misfortune spread over numbers affects no one in particular, that the general burden so divided is easier to bear. She had not reached that stage, it would come later. Must she reply? Did his letter require answer? What could she say? She had implored him not to leave her, she had told him of her love, she had humbled herself, she had flung herself upon his mercy, she had pleaded, and this was the result.

A neatly-gloved hand stretched out.

Like a flash of light the question sprang unbidden to her lips. Was he worth it? Was he not utterly selfish? She had excused him but a few minutes ago, and pride which came to her aid told her plainly she had been foolish. She was not a slave, she had not sold herself body and soul to this man. The colour returned to her cheeks, her eyes flashed with anger. She passed from one extreme to the other. She would show him and his world she did not care. As the thought was framed she gasped with pain. She did care, but no one should know it. The past life was gone, ended; what of the future?

A summer storm beat upon the window and mimicked petulantly the tumult of her thoughts. Nelly, with face pressed against the glass, bitterly noted the similarity, the mockery. The elements were at war, she would war with the world. No pity had been her lot, no pity would she show. She would fight for her own hand, unaided, alone; she would fight and win. No more of love, no more tenderness. Never again should love warp her judgment. That hollow sham was gone, a pleasant dream whilst it had lasted, but with a rude awakening.

What was to be the next step? She would neither see nor write to Roy again. He should be blotted from her being. So far certain, but then?

As if in answer to the question, at that moment the garden gate was violently pushed open, and Charley Duff, under an umbrella which dripped rain from all its points, hastily approached the door.

"Kismet, it is Kismet," said Nelly bitterly. "I am answered."

CHAPTER IV.

After Many Days.

It was a dreary, sunless autumn day. A drizzling rain fell which soaked through wraps and cloaks and seemed in sheer malice to turn upwards under umbrellas to wet faces.

A day upon which pessimism was natural, and it was in no cheerful mood that Jack Sinclair made his way to the boat at Calais. He had been travelling aimlessly from place to place for months past. With no fixed purpose he had wandered on, now dawdling here, and then rushing with express speed to far distant towns. He would, as in other years, have been a welcome guest at many a country house, and indeed he had intended to return weeks sooner, but somehow a spirit of unrest had possessed him, and it was not until this miserable day in early November that he had turned his steps homeward.

He had paced the deck moodily for some short time after the boat had started, his chin buried in the upturned collar of an ulster, without taking note of other passengers, when as he passed a chair placed under the shelter of the paddle-box, a musical voice called to him: "Mr. Sinclair, Jack."

He turned hastily to see a figure huddled up in a large cloak and under a dripping umbrella. A neatly-gloved hand stretched out, and he was asked plaintively: "Don't you know me?"

"Nelly!" he exclaimed. "This is indeed a surprise. Are you alone? Are you not wet? Where are you going to?"

"What a string of questions! I am alone. I am not wet, and I am on my way to town. And you? But sit down, unless you are cold. Under the lee of this paddle-box you will get no more wet, anyway, than in walking the deck. I am sadly in need of a talk, Jack. You don't mind me calling you Jack, do you? You were always a friend to me. I know who looked after the sale of the house and things after Roy left me, and your letters, as Roy's friend, were so kind. I am delighted to have an opportunity of thanking you. But tell me, how is Roy? He is married, of course?"

"Yes; but I have not seen him since. I went abroad directly afterwards, and am only now returning."

"But you have heard from him?"

"Oh, yes; he and I are old chums, as you know. Still, men are bad correspondents, and his letters, and mine, have been few. I think I have had two from him."

"Tell me, is he well and—happy?"

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"He was well enough when I heard last, and, I suppose, happy. He did not say; he would not be likely to. But, Nelly——"

"Yes, yes, I know," she interrupted quickly; "you mean that I had better not ask. He is married—has passed out of my life. I should forget. I cannot, Jack; it is no use. Do not tease me; the day is too unspeakably wretched—my nerves are all wrong. Tell me all you know about him, or I shall cry."

"Don't do that, for goodness' sake!"

"No, no; I won't, really. You need not fear a scene; but tell me."

So he told all he knew—which was not much.

How Roy, after the honeymoon, had gone to the country, had taken a house near to the family seat, and was determined to study economy, and to fulfil what he had in bitterness called his mission. How he progressed he could not say, for he had not heard from Roy for many weeks.

"It is not much, as you say," Nelly remarked as he ended. "I would like so to hear from him."

"No, Nelly, don't. Keep away. No good can come of that. In kindness forget."

"Manlike, you do not think of me."

"Yes, I do, but I see trouble ahead if you meet. For your sake as well as his, banish him from your thoughts."

"It is impossible!"

He did not answer. What could he say?

The rain beat down mercilessly. Big drops splashed without cessation upon the sodden deck. The speed at which the fast boat ploughed its way through the grey water slanted the rain upon them, and made an umbrella but a poor protection.

Nelly shivered and huddled closer within her wraps, but she would not go below. There was a sufficient roll to make her feel that the stuffy cabin with a varied assortment of suffering humanity would complete her misery. It was bad enough on deck, but below—she shuddered.

"No," she said, "I will remain here." And then hurriedly, as if this were on her mind, and she must unburden: "You know Charley Duff is dead? Somehow I thought you would know; he was never strong, poor boy, and in the Mediterranean contracted a wasting fever which seemed to beat his strength at every turn. One day he would rally, only to sink again the next. He fought hard for life, and sometimes I thought—but the end came.

"Three bad days of delirium and raging fever, and then collapse. He was quite sensible to the last, he simply sank from exhaustion. His mother arrived in time—just in time. He must have told her how I had nursed him, and I did do my best, Jack—for she was really kind to me. She said no nasty things, but rather thanked me for all I had done for Charley. I think if she had acted the part of the virtuous mother and flung scorn at my head, I should have drowned myself, but she did not. Of course I only saw her once or twice by his bedside, and he would have me there, but after the funeral she sent kindly messages and offered help. Fancy a mother who doted upon her son never once saying that I was the cause of his death. I shall never forget her consideration."

"Poor Charley. I am sorry to hear of this. He never was strong, though he had plenty of pluck."

"Pluck! To use his own phrase, he spurted too soon in the race and could not last the distance."

"And you, Nelly, now?"

"I do not know. I am a waif and stray. I did not know it until weeks afterwards, but he left me £300 a year for life. I tell you, Jack, when I think of that, I feel, oh! so cheap. I think sometimes I wish we had never met; he might be alive now. Then again, I know he could not have lived long. He had gone the pace, indeed, and his was not the constitution to bear the strain. And then I remember that I am at any rate removed from want, and hideously selfish thoughts come unbidden. Sometimes I think I am utterly callous, dead to all emotions, thinking solely of self."

"No, no, Nelly. Not so. I never did think so."

Which was not strictly true, as Sinclair knew, remembering his talk with Roy at White's. But he was learning to see this woman in another light. He was now inclined to separate her from the class of which he knew something. She was not the mercenary courtesan who would desert the rich for the richer; she had finer feelings, higher emotions, even aspirations. Seldom is a woman all bad, or, for the matter of that, all good. So he told himself, and recognised that here the good more than balanced the bad. Perhaps he was inclined to make allowance easily, as most men are when pretty women are in question. At any rate, he persuaded himself that to befriend her was now his part.

"I am glad, Nelly, that you are left with, at any rate, bread and-butter. The position is not so cruel."

"But I must do something. I want work. I must have an object in life. So far I have drifted with the stream, but I near the rapids, and to have a chance must grip the helm firmly. But what can I do? That usual refuge the stage? I can sing. I think I can act. Heavens! have I not acted lately a part I was not cast for? Feigning love until almost—but no, I could not forget Roy."

"Roy, always Roy. Put him away, Nelly. It would mean ruin to him, think——"

"Yes," she interrupted quickly, with a pathetic catch in her voice more eloquent than many words. "Yes, I fear, I know, you are right, but——"

"Promise me you will avoid him, for Mary's sake—his wife—a woman I respect highly and—pity—promise, and I will try to find you something to do. Something to distract your thoughts, to give you a life to live. Something, I don't now know what, but I will think it over. I have many friends in the artistic world, and probably it could be arranged."

"You ask me a hard thing, Jack."

"Promise," he said shortly.

And after a pause, whilst she looked frowningly at the dull waves which rolled by with unbroken crests, she said sadly: "Yes, I promise; you are right." Her face was drawn and haggard. He saw that to so decide was not what she had intended, she had had other views, had possibly thought out for herself another future, perhaps herself before the footlights, but Roy, always Roy, ready to take his cue. He clinched it at once.

"That's right. Now I help. But here we are nearing Dover. May I see after your luggage, get you a seat and so on? There won't be a crush, but, if you will let me, I will travel with you, and we can talk things over on the way up."

On arrival in town, Sinclair, having seen Nelly into a hansom, went to White's to dine.

As he entered, he met Roy Arbuthnot face to face; there was no chance of avoiding him, or at that moment he would gladly have done so. He was not good at lying, and he knew instinctively that he would be questioned about Nelly. Whether he had seen or heard of her, of her doings, and he knew he could not bluntly say he knew nothing. There he was, and he must face the music.

Roy's greeting was effusive. "Jack! old man, of all men the one I have longed to see. How are you? Come and dine with us. Mary and I are in town for a few days. She says she positively must have some new frocks. I don't understand, but suppose it is all right. We are staying at the Métrôpole. You will come, won't you? That's all right. You can get a room there. Now, do not disappoint me," as Sinclair hesitated.

"I am with you, Roy. I'll leave my traps here for the present. My rooms are ready, I wired my man that I was coming.'

He had known Roy's wife for years, and called her Mary with the familiarity of an old friend. She was glad to see

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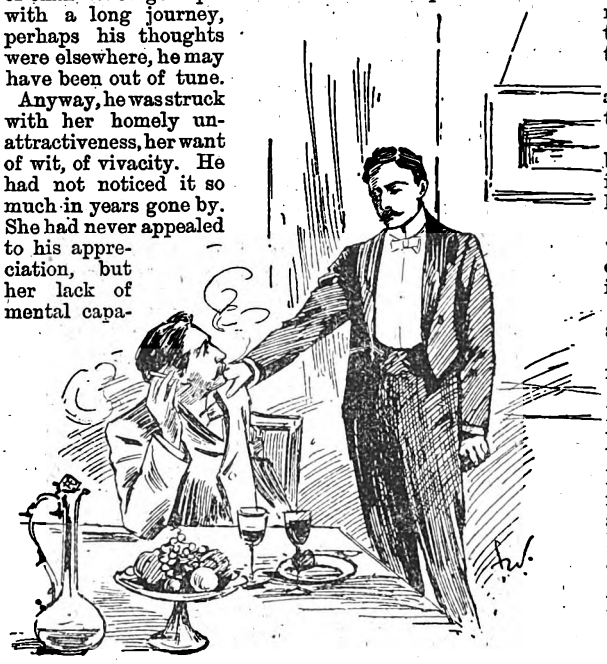
him and chatted of old times and doings when they were all children together. She questioned him about his travels, his long absence from home, and heavily, yes, it must be confessed, heavily chaffed him about the grief his desertion of familiar haunts had caused to admirers.

Indeed, Sinclair was distinctly bored. Hers was the sort of chaff which got upon his nerves. Perhaps he was tired with a long journey, perhaps his thoughts were elsewhere, he may have been out of tune.

Anyway, he was struck with her homely unattractiveness, her want of wit, of vivacity. He had not noticed it so much in years gone by. She had never appealed to his appreciation, but her lack of mental capacity to-night irritated. She chatted freely enough, but of the commonplace events of their life in the country which had no interest for him, and she seemed incapable of extended ideas.



Placed his hand on Sinclair's shoul:r.

He pictured the wife suitable to Roy, a man of sensitive, highly-strung temperament, and unwillingly he drew comparisons between what he had as a helpmeet and what he should have had. Here was Roy married to a woman, an estimable woman in many ways, but how unfitted to him! He noticed how now and again a tired look crept over his face, how it was only by an effort he joined in the conversation, and how from time to time he tried to lead her to general topics, with, however, indifferent success.

Mary was so evidently contented with her position as the newly-married woman, the future Lady Arbuthnot, taking her stand in the county amongst people she had not previously known, that their doings, their sayings, were an engrossing subject to her.

Sinclair did not like the outlook. She would not be able to keep Roy by her side. He felt that, and wished her mind's view could cover a wider field. He had time to reflect, as she wandered on, that women of her type develop in middle age into excellent, if somewhat over-anxious, mothers, into, perhaps, fussy patrons of local charities, village schools, and the junior clergy. He could see Mary inclosing her life with a fence, and living within it with no longing for the world beyond, and but little sympathy with its doings.

It would be a high fence, and the area surrounded would be small, so small that he feared Roy would wander afield. Already he thought he saw indifference, want of interest. He had an uncomfortable feeling that something was wrong, and he said to himself again he did not like the outlook.

Mary was a handsome woman, now at her best. She would probably, in still young life, grow stout and heavy, become the middle-aged, unattractive matron before her time.

Her deep, musical voice, clear as a bell, would, however, remain. It reminded him of Nelly continually, and several times he caught himself listening to its tones rather than to the words.

At length Mary left the room to prepare for the theatre, and the two friends, lighting cigarettes, pulled their chairs to the table again.

There was an awkward silence which Sinclair hesitated to break. He realised that one thought, one remembrance was in Roy's mind, and he knew also the question to expect, but he would give no lead.

Roy sat with bent brows, drumming upon the table with a knife balanced between his fingers, not heeding the cigarette which smoked in spiral rings from the plate where it lay.

Suddenly he looked up and asked quickly: "Have you seen Nelly?"

"My dear Roy, don't you begin about her. You are married, she is gone, that book should be closed."

"For Heaven's sake don't preach, Jack. I must know. Every time Mary speaks she reminds me of Nelly. Her voice tells me every minute of the day what a cad I have been. I left her to marry a woman I don't love, oh, yes! I know, common decency should stop me. I cannot hide it from you. I loved Nelly, I love her now. I can never love another woman. Mary's voice keeps her before me always. I shut my eyes and I hear Nelly, always Nelly. I open them and see—Mary."

"You are a fool, Roy. You are infatuated. You forget Duff."

"He is dead. I heard it yesterday, and you know it, I see you do. And you tried to deceive me. You know where Nelly is, you have seen her. Don't say you have not, I won't believe you." And in his excitement he sprang to his feet and shouted across the table to Sinclair, "tell me, I say."

"Arbuthnot, you are mad," answered Sinclair, controlling his temper by an effort.

"Tell me," again Arbuthnot said hotly. Then he rapidly crossed the room and placed his hand on Sinclair's shoulder as he said in lower tones: "Forgive me, Jack, I was mad, I am mad. I cannot bear this tension. I must see Nelly if only for a few minutes, just to explain, just to tell her I am not the heartless brute she must think me. Tell me her address, Jack," he almost pleaded.

"I will not," Sinclair answered shortly. "It would be suicidal for you to see her, ruin to both of you."

"Then she has asked of me. She does not forget. I knew she was true whilst I was false.

She had in surprise paused at the door.

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When did you see her, Jack? Tell me that, anyway. I am in a fever. I am a brute, I know, but let it pass. Quick! Mary will be down directly. Is she well? How did she look? What is she going to do? Go on, man alive, go on."

"She is well—but, Roy, do drop this. Think, think what it means—ruin——"

"Ruin; what do I care about ruin? I have married to

It was with wondering thoughts that she took her seat.

save the father, if I efface myself how does that concern anyone?"

"Mary?"

Roy laughed bitterly. "Oh, Mary, yes, of course I will—I must—remember her. There shall be no scandal. I only want to see Nelly to explain—to bid her good-bye. Tell me the address, Jack. Quick, man, she may be here any minute."

"I tell you again I will not. You are mad."

"You will not?" and Arbuthnot, with a face white with passion, confronted him.

"No."

The two men stood facing each other, drawn to full height, with flashing eyes and clenched fists as the door opened and Mary appeared enveloped in a cloak ready to start.

She stood there for a moment with startled eyes, with paled cheeks, looking from one to the other. Hearing voices raised in anger, she had in surprise paused at the door. She had heard the word "Nelly," and her husband had passionately asked for an address.

Who Nelly might be and what the reason for this heat she could not guess. She had no time to think, as the door swung open and they turned smilingly to her with commonplace remarks and passed down the stairs to the carriage. Perhaps they over-acted a little, and she noted the restraint.

It was with wondering thoughts that she took her seat, and through the play, Nelly, Nelly rang through her brain.

"I will find her without you," whispered Roy sharply, as they left Sinclair on the pavement.

(To be continued.)

£240 IN PRIZES.

£100 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in PEARSON'S WEEKLY as follows:*

1st PRIZE - Fifty Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE - A Ten-Pound Bank of England Note.
3rd, 4th, and 5th PRIZES - Five-Pound Bank of England Notes.
6th to 20th PRIZES - Fifteen Sovereigns.
21st to 40th PRIZES - Twenty Half-Sovereigns.

The sketches, of which the first ten appear in **Pearson's Weekly** dated April 3rd, represent the titles of popular novels. There will be thirty pictures in all, and the prizes will go to those who correctly solve the greatest number.

£50 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in HOME NOTES as follows:*

1st PRIZE - Twenty Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE - A Ten-Pound Bank of England Note.
3rd PRIZE - A Five-Pound Bank of England Note.
4th to 13th PRIZES - Ten Sovereigns.
14th to 23rd PRIZES - Ten Half-Sovereigns.

The sketches, of which the first ten appear in **Home Notes** dated April 10th, represent the Christian names of men and women, and the prizes will go to those who correctly solve the greatest number.

£40 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in THE SUNDAY READER, as follows:*

1st PRIZE - Ten Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE - A Five-Pound Bank of England Note.
3rd PRIZE - One Sovereign.
4th to 9th PRIZES - Five Half-Sovereigns.
And One Hundred Magnificent Five Shilling Books.

The sketches, the first ten of which appear in the number dated February 27th, represent the names of Biblical characters, and the prizes will go to those who correctly solve the greatest number.

£50 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in SHORT STORIES.*

Full Particulars Appear on Page 427.

START AT ONCE.

THERE IS MONEY IN IT.

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The Air Squadron.

"Have another cigar, lieutenant," I said, pushing the box across the table towards him.

"No, thank you," he replied. "But, with your permission, I'll fill my pipe from your jar. Indeed, when I came up to your room, it was only for a little tobacco—ran out myself—cigars all gone. And here it is already twelve o'clock. My, my, how time flies when one gets reminiscencing! But, to continue."

Now, when my good friend Lieutenant Swash takes possession of me and my room at eleven p.m. I do not always consider it my duty to listen to him. He has been such a frequent visitor of mine since he has been staying at our boarding-house, and then he is one of those individuals who so lose themselves in their own narrations, that they even forget they have an audience. So, when the lieutenant said: "But, to continue," I sank deeper into my big chair and gazed absently into the fire.

He was talking warfare of the future. What cared I for that, who possessed neither stocks that would go down nor food products that would go up? My eyelids closed wearily. How I wished he would go! Then he made a statement so absurd that I laughed.

"It took place on July 16th, 1946," I heard him say.

"Eighteen forty-six," I corrected.

"Now, look here," said the naval man testily. "How old do you think I am—80? Pshaw! I was thirty then. It was 1946, and please don't contradict me. It was fifty years hence it all happened."

"If you will have it so, very well," I said.

"Now the date is settled, and you thoroughly understand the cause of the war. Great Britain claimed the atmospheric covering of the earth to a height of 10,000 feet, basing the claim on the fact that as far back as 1899 an English balloonist had disappeared from view at that height. He was never seen again. Such a claim as this, had it been recognised by other nations, would have given her too great a control over mankind's supply of breath. France claimed up to an altitude of 1,000 feet over their country, but Great Britain would not recognise this, and refused to arbitrate. The result was war—terrible war."

I took my pipe from between my teeth, and fixed a cold eye on the speaker, who went on calmly:

"You will remember that it was July 16th, 1946, that the fight occurred. There were three battleships in our fleet—Admiral Wad's flagship, the *Swallow*, carrying fifteen tons of dynamite and two machine-guns; the *Lightning*, Captain Blower, ten tons of dynamite, and two 6-inch rifles; the *Hawk*, Captain Wood, eleven tons of dynamite, and a pneumatic gun, used in throwing explosives at the enemy in case she got above us.

"We were accompanied by two small torpedo-boats and the swift unarmoured cruiser *Kalamazoo*, which we expected to be of little service, since a bullet could have punctured her and sent her to earth for ever.

"We lay in mid-channel for four days awaiting the approach of the enemy's flying squadron. It was ten o'clock on the morning of July 16th when we sighted them, about 200 miles away, running towards us at a rapid rate. They must have seen us at about the same time, for they sheered off a little towards the north and began to rise.

"Admiral Wad, at whose side I was standing on the quarter-deck of the *Swallow*, at once understood their manœuvre. In modern warfare it's the fellow who gets above the other and drops dynamite on him that wins.

"We were then at an altitude of about 8,000 feet, and did not lose any time getting higher. I can see the grand old admiral now as he stood at the switch-board, coolly puffing his cigar as if he were at his club in London. There was not a tremour observed on his long thin finger as he pushed the button marked 'Up.' Then we began to ascend.

"The other two battleships followed, and as we rose we cleared for action. The *Kalamazoo* and the torpedo-boats were left behind, as it was not deemed advisable to expose their frail structures to the enemy's fire.

"I confess, as I stood beside my brave leader and felt our ship mounting higher and higher and shooting on towards the enemy at a speed of ninety miles an hour, watched the crew of ten men coolly placing dynamite bombs in the most convenient places, saw the three great steel balloons of our enemy's squadron glistening in the sunlight as they shot towards us, I felt that strange inward sensation that heretofore I believed could only be caused by a Welsh rarebit at 2 a.m.

"I was in full possession of my mental faculties. Otherwise I should never have been able to have lived through those awful two hours. And the crew, too—I never saw a braver set of fellows in my life. Not a moist eye or a trembling lip amongst them.

"The enemy had two first-class battleships and two second-class. They advanced in a line parallel to ours.

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Admiral Wad signalled Captain Blower to engage the two second-class ships on the left, the *Hawk* to take the right, leaving us the flagship in the centre.

"This vessel, I saw through my glasses, was a little larger than, but of almost the same construction as, the *Swallow*. There was a great cylindrical balloon of steel, fully 800 feet in length, with the car swung beneath it, an armed turret, fore and aft, protecting her guns, at her stern a great propeller fan and two huge rudders for steering. I saw her crew running two and fro, getting in readiness for the conflict; her commander, with a little knot of officers about him, standing forward, eagerly scanning our fleet.

"Higher and higher we rose, the air rapidly getting more and more rare, and our breathing becoming more and more rapid. I looked down at the sea, which was glimmering 15,000ft. below us in the sunlight. I turned my eyes at the great cylinder over head. Shot holes in two of its air-tight compartments, and what a fall! But there were other things to think of.

"'Admiral,' I gasped, 'if we go much higher, we shall die for want of air.'

"'Mr. Swash,' replied the grand old salt, 'duty before breath always—remember that, sir. I'm afraid the ship will not carry much higher. We'll get over them, don't you think, Captain Howitzer?'

"Howitzer gazed anxiously at the enemy, who were now within fifteen miles, and replied:

"'Close call, sir.'

"Then to the men:

"'Stand ready to drop a ton of dynamite on them if we get over them!'

"As he spoke there was a puff on the enemy's flagship, and a solid shot came singing half a mile below us. Old Wad laughed, and ordered the bow gun to return the fire when we were within five miles. Our shells passed over them. We had then reached as high an altitude as it was possible for the ships to float, and then we reduced speed. They approached to within two miles, and stopped and began to circle about us, evidently intending to subject our balloons to a cross fire. Higher than we they could not go, and the discovery of this fact brought jeers and cheers from our crew.

"For some fifteen minutes there was terrible suspense. Each vessel circled warily around its chosen opponent, banging away with its machine-guns in vain endeavour to puncture the enemy's balloon. But the distance was too great and the movements of the vessels too quick for any successful gun work. Suddenly Howitzer seized my arm and pointed towards the *Lightning*. Her crew had just thrown overboard her whole cabin, her two guns, and a great quantity of dynamite bombs.

"For a moment we were speechless with astonishment. Were they going to take to flight? Admiral Wad seized a flag and was about to signal, when he stopped. Slowly the great vessel was mounting in the air. A cry of dismay was heard from the hostile ship with which she was engaged. In five minutes she was 400 feet above them. The French crew madly threw overboard all the weight they carried—guns, bombs, and everything. But they were too late—the *Lightning* was above them. Then a black object dropped down upon them; a deafening roar followed, with a rush of wind that hurled the *Swallow* a mile out of her course. And when we looked towards the *Lightning* she was alone, but slowly sinking towards the sea, for the concussion had torn off the end of her balloon cylinder. We could see her crew at the rail cheering wildly.

"Admiral Wad at once ordered us to pursue the same tactics. Everything went by the board—guns and all ammunition but five bombs. We loosened some rivets in the floor and let the cabin fall; then we, too, began to rise. But the French Admiral was not to be outwitted, for he had been busy at exactly the same work, and when we found ourselves 1,000ft. higher, he lay a mile away at the same altitude.

"Admiral Wad swore. Our guns were gone and we could have lain there for eternity and not harm each other, unless we closed. For a long time he paced the deck in silence. At length he called the men together, and in a neat, touching speech asked for one volunteer for a forlorn hope.

"'All that can be done,' he said, 'is to ram the enemy. One man and myself can handle the ship, and it would be useless for you to stop on board simply to lose your lives.'

"Every man volunteered; every man offered to stay in their commander's place. He chose me for his companion, since I alone of all the crew was unmarried, and he positively refused to accept a substitute. He would go down with the old ship, he said.

"The scene that followed was most touching. The men wrung the brave old man's hand in a last parting. One by one they took their parachutes, swung over the side and went sailing away into the blue.

"The last man was gone, and old Wad turned towards me and embraced me. Between his emotion and the extreme rarification of the air he could not speak. This show of feeling lasted but a minute, for we were brought to our senses by a great cheer from the enemy's crew. They believed the ship deserted, and were bearing down towards us.

"Instantly the Admiral straightened up and firmly pushed the button, turning the full force of the electrical current into the propelling motors. The great ship swung round, and, with terrific speed, sailed at the enemy. The enemy tried to swing their ship out of the course, but in vain. In a minute we struck them. A crash like a thousand peals of thunder, a flash like the explosion of a dynamite factory, and all was still. And when I looked again there was nothing but blue, the endless blue of infinite space. The *Hawk* and her two opponents had been wrecked, I suppose, by the awful concussion."

Lieutenant Swash had finished his narration, and for a long time puffed silently at his pipe. I, for my part, was wrapped in silent wonder at the man. I knew Swash well, but such assurance as this I had not believed him capable of.

After all, he was one of those persons who lie so habitually that, coming from them, a story of their own death was not surprising.

C. B. Luyére.

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A VERY UNEXPECTED DENOUEMENT.

Bill, by profession, was a burglar—hard-working, straightforward, skilful. With his partner it was different. Jim, by profession was a gentleman at large: "Jim-the-Gentleman." Frequently, however, he accompanied Bill on his excursions, while it was his brain that devised the plots and ruses by which he had become famous among his confederates.

Jim, in elegant attire, with a high, white collar, was reclining on a heap of straw in one corner of the room, puffing at a cigar. Bill was sitting huddled up on a three-legged stool, sucking a black clay pipe.

Suddenly he put his foot on the floor, and brought his hands down on his knees with a slap.

"Jim," he said, slowly and impressively. "Jim, funds is low."

"Funds *are* low," corrected Jim. "I do wish, my dear fellow, that you would learn to speak more grammatically."

"Funds are low," said Bill. "Hev you any idees for raising 'em?"

Jim leant back on the straw, half closed his eyes, and remained for a few minutes in deep thought.

"During the course of my afternoon stroll," he said at length, "I noticed a palatial residence in the vicinity of Clapham, set well back in fine-looking grounds. It occured to me that in this place we might find some funds."

"Who's the owner?" asked Bill.

"The owner is a retired merchant named Bankum."

"Any family?" enquired Bill.

"None. I also discovered that he dines at half-past six."

"Good," said Bill, rubbing his hands. "And goes to bed nice and early!"

"That I didn't trouble to enquire."

"Didn't you find out when he goes to bed? Oh, Jim, I'm ashamed of ye."

"If you will allow me to disclose my plan, perhaps you will be better able to criticise it," said Jim haughtily. "I propose that we visit this gentleman at about half-past seven."

"'Arf-past seven? Oh lor'!"

"We shall not, however, go in our present costume."

Jim pulled down his cuffs.

"I have in my bag the necessary paraphernalia."

Jim opened his bag, and drew out two new policeman's uniforms.

Bill stared at them in open-eyed amazement.

"This is for you," said Jim. "This, an inspector's, you will notice, for me. Now listen. At half-past seven we present ourselves at Mr. Bankum's residence. I find him sitting in his drawing-room. I tap him on the shoulder, and tell him that he must consider himself under arrest. He demands our warrant. I show it." Jim drew out a well-imitated warrant.

"He will storm and rave, of course, and fly into a temper. However, I will put you on guard, and tell you not to allow him to leave the room while I proceed to search the house. I will order all the servants into one room, and lock them in. Then I will take my sack, and proceed to examine the house, picking up anything that I may think useful. What do you say to that as a good idea? How will that raise the funds, eh, Bill, my boy?"

Bill was scratching his head. The idea had not yet quite sunk in.

"We start in an hour," said Jim. "In the meanwhile I have some letters to write, while you may be trying on your uniform." Saying which, he rose from his bed of straw, and, lighting a fresh cigar, strolled into the adjoining room.

Subdued roars of laughter came from Bill as he put himself into policeman's clothes.

An hour later the pair started off for the suburban residence of Mr. Bankum, at Clapham.

Precisely at half-past seven Jim rang the bell. The footman started back in amazement when he saw an inspector of police and a constable standing before him.

"I will inform Mr. Bankum of your presence," said the footman.

The drawing-room door was directly in front of the hall door. As the footman opened it, and delivered his message, the two visitors saw a curious sight. Mr. Bankum's face turned pale, fear shone from his eyes, a pen dropped from his hand to the floor. He half rose from his seat, and then sat down again, and mopped his brow..

"Show 'em in," he said. "Show 'em in. I'm—er—expecting them."

"What's up," whispered Bill.

"*He's expecting us*," said Jim. "Be prepared for a bolt," he whispered, as he was ushered into Mr. Bankum's presence.

"I am very sorry, sir," he said in his most polite manner, "to be under the painful necessity of putting you under arrest."

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Bankum, "I quite understand. You come from Scotland Yard, eh?"

"Yes," said Jim.

A gasp came from Bill. His jaw dropped.

"What would happen, now," continued Mr. Bankum, trembling with nervousness, "if you were to go back to Scotland Yard, and say that I had gone? Left twenty-four hours before you came?"

Jim was silent for a moment. The question took him completely by surprise. Bill was gasping behind him.

"Nothing would happen," said Jim at length, "as far as we are concerned."

"Well, now, to come to the point," said Mr. Bankum, "what will you take to do it? A thousand for yourself, and five hundred for your man? How will that suit you, eh, Mr. Inspector?"

"Couldn't do it," said Jim promptly. "It's not worth the risk."

"Two for yourself, then—three—three thousand for yourself, and one for your man. On this condition," continued Mr. Bankum, when Jim nodded, and he counted out the notes, "you will inform Scotland Yard that I left twenty-four hours before you came?"

"Yes," said Jim.

"Good-night," said Mr. Bankum, and a moment later inspector and constable found themselves outside, gazing blankly into each other's eyes.

"Well," said Jim, completely taken off his guard, "I'm blowed."

"Whatever did he do it for?" whispered Bill.

They found out a few days later. Then all the world was startled by the news that Mr. Bankum, the well-known merchant, had absconded with an enormous amount of his firm's money.

"Now you understand," said Jim, as they discussed the affair over an oyster supper, "why Mr. Bankum was so generous."

But Bill was calling for champagne.

J. M. W.

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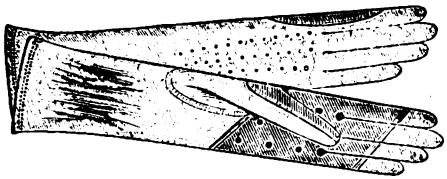
GLOVES.

MOST of our readers feel the essential need of being neatly gloved, and fortunately prices at the present day are now so moderate there are few of us who cannot afford this necessary finish to the toilet.

Quite recently I called at The London Glove Company's Warehouse, 45a, Cheapside, E.C., to inspect the novelties for the coming season, and I was really surprised at the remarkably low price for which an excellent and well-fitting pair of gloves may be here obtained. The variety at this well-known establishment is almost bewildering, and it would be impossible for me to describe the many styles of pointings and finish. For the benefit of our cycling friends, I must, however, draw attention to a smart Tan Doeskin glove, ventilated and tilburied, with leather palms, the price of which is only 2s. 4d. The illustration shows the style of glove I mean, and the same glove can be had in White Doeskin without the tilburied palms, at 1s. 11d. per pair.



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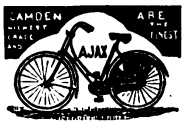

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Answers to Correspondents.

The attention of readers this week is directed to the Puzzle Picture Competition, the first ten pictures of which appear on page 427. As everybody is familiar with the names of certain Members of Parliament, or has the means of discovering or obtaining a complete list, there is no reason why you should not have a try to obtain at least a portion of that £50. Bear in mind the fact that even if you are unable to solve every one of the first ten, there are thousands of others who are in the same position as yourself. Do as many as you can with the assistance of your friends. You cannot do more.

J. F. T.—No, you cannot compel any of the Post Office authorities to lick your stamps for you. All they do is to supply you with a little moistening wad.

E. R.—A "morning session" in the House of Commons begins at two o'clock in the afternoon, and lasts till seven in the evening.

Recruit.—The standard of height is greater in the British Army than in that of any other nation.

N. W.—I believe that the most valuable modern painting is Meissonier's "1814," which was bought by a Frenchman a few years ago for £56,000.

L. B.—Rosewood is so called because when first cut it gives out a perfume like that of the rose. You are wrong in supposing that roses grow upon the tree which supplies it.

Briton.—The Boers are descended from the Huguenots, who left France under the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and from Dutch emigrants in search of civil and religious liberty.

K. L.—Toothache can generally be cured immediately by putting a small piece of cotton, saturated with strong ammonia, into the hollow of the affected tooth.

Singer.—No, wine taken in moderation will not injure your voice; beer, however, will tend to thicken it and make it guttural.

C. D. writes to ask me if I consider early rising conducive to long life.——This has been the general opinion until recent years. An authority on the subject now says that a man has so many hours to be awake, and the fewer of these he uses up each day, the longer he will live. The proper way to economise life, therefore, is to sleep every moment that it is not necessary or desirable that you should be awake.

W. S.—Previous to the year 1748 there was no regular uniform for sailors. In this year, however, the "blue-jacket" was adopted.

H. C.—You are wrong. A ruby of the best quality, and of more than three carats, is worth more than a diamond of the same size and weight.

T. H.—No, silver is not legal tender in Great Britain for amounts over forty shillings.

P. C.—The use of amber for the mouth-pieces of pipes originated in a belief of the Turks that amber is an infallible preventative of the injurious effects of nicotine.

D. F. G.—The largest lighthouse in the world belongs to Havre, in France.

H. N. has been insulted by a man who is considerably bigger than himself, and wants to know the best way to repudiate.——There are two courses open; one is to bear it with Christian fortitude, the other is to hire a bigger man to show him the error of his ways.

W. A. J.—I am sorry that I cannot entertain the idea of publishing your Military Band March.

B. B.—The largest flower in the world grows in Sumatra. It is called the Rafflesia Arnoldi, and some of the specimens are thirty-nine inches in diameter. The central cup will hold six quarts of water. The other portion of your letter will have the best consideration.

B. D.—A few of the lower order of creatures live without sleep. Many short-lived insects do so, and some species of fish, such as the pike, salmon, and goldfish.

T. F. L. wants to know if when eggs are sent through the post, and chickens are hatched on the way, whether the creatures become the property of the Post Office authorities, the sender, or the receiver.——If the eggs were paid for, I should say the receiver; any way, certainly not the Post Office people.

A. B. D.—Perhaps, on the whole, the Chinese are the longest lived people in the world.

C. H.—There are a thousand parcels lost every day on the British railways.

Esther—Fulness of the temples above the eyes is supposed to denote musical ability.

H. D. C.—Frogs are not eaten all the year round in France. Like oysters, they are only in season during the months that contain the letter "r."

Athlete wishes to know what winter pastime is most popular in Russia.——Skating is, perhaps, the favourite, and in the parks the ice soon becomes roughened by the runners of the skates. A large roller is brought on to the ice, which is heated so as to melt the surface sufficiently to make it smooth. This roller is pushed or pulled over the ice by three men.

H. K.—Yes, ink-bottles should always be corked when sent through the post.

D. H.—You may be surprised to hear that the mosaic pavement you admire so much in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral was made by the female convicts at Woking.

G. H.—The crown of England is worth £120,000.

S. B.—The person who speaks the purest English is the man or woman with regard to whom it is impossible to say from what part of the country he or she comes.

Instead of waiting for a policeman to tell you that your bicycle lamp ought to be alight, you need only consult the "Dot" lighting-up calendar—a tiny frame that may be fixed to any part of the machine, containing a number of cards on which is printed the information you require. The price is sixpence, and the patentees live at 55, Fisherton Street, Salisbury, and are named Smith.

Mr. G. Nicholls, of Weybridge, is the inventor of a novel device for pumping a continuous current of air into the tyres of a bicycle while the machine is being ridden. Underneath the saddle is a small pump, and the energy exerted by the elasticity of the saddle-spring is utilised in passing the air along the framework of the bicycle, and through a false spoke in each wheel. By this means it is possible for one to continue riding even with the tyre severely punctured.

Messrs. Thorn and Hoddle of 164, Camberwell New Road, London, S.E., are the inventors of the patent "Incanto" Acetylene gas-generator. By means of this contrivance anyone can, without any previous knowledge, be his own gas-fitter, gas-supplier, and consumer. The generator is sold in three sizes, and is to be bought at a price ranging from £3 10s. to £21. For photographers and magic-lanterns the invention is of especial value.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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CAN YOU EXPLAIN IT?

Here is a fact for the reader to think over and explain: Out of the thousands of letters written to us by people on the subject of their illness, the great majority assert that such illness began in the spring of the year—commonly in March or April. Of the remainder, the most cases are said to arise in the autumn; very few in midsummer or in midwinter.

Now, there is a reason for whatsoever happens. What is the reason for that? While you are cogitating on it, I will cite you an illustration or two.

"In the spring of 1892," says one of the many women who, in spite of what men say to the contrary, know how to tell a long story in few words, "I fell into a low, weak state of health. All the energy and ambition seemed to leave me as the snow melted off the ground. I was languid and tired, and felt heavy in body, as if I had somehow increased in weight—whereas the truth was the other way. My appetite was poor, and what little I ate hurt me at the chest, and lay dull and cold on my stomach.

"Presently a hacking cough set in, with night sweats, which made me extremely weak. I was often taken with a pain between the shoulders, and had a sense of sinking, as one has when wholly exhausted from some unusual labour or worry.

"As time went on I became still more feeble, and it was with great difficulty that I met the demands of my business. This will give you a general idea of my condition for nearly two years. None of the various medicines I resorted to gave me more than temporary relief.

"In February, 1894, a friend urged me to try Mother Seigel's Syrup. I got a bottle from Messrs. Robinson & Co., chemists, Hunslet Carr, and it helped me greatly. My appetite awoke, food agreed with me, and I felt better and stronger altogether. Holding on with the Syrup the cough abated, all pain left me, and I was once more in the happy possession of my former good health. This result I owe to Mother Seigel and her justly popular medicine; and if the publication of my experience of it will, in your opinion, be of use to others, you have my consent to use this letter in that way. (Signed) (Miss) Alice Green, 10, Moor Road, Hunslet Carr, Leeds, March 28th, 1895."

"One day in April, 1890," writes another, "I was suddenly seized with a strange feeling in my head, as though I was about to have a fit. My body writhed and my face grew dark and discoloured. The doctor said I was suffering from a form of nervous prostration which would probably produce spasms. He was right. I began to have three or four fits each day. I felt low and queer, and never knew what it was to be hungry. About my stomach and chest strange gnawing pains came and went. I had always a starved sensation all over me. I got no rest day or night, and thought I should never leave my bed alive. The doctor attended me constantly, but his treatment availed nothing. Month after month I remained in this condition.

"When I had given up all hope, I first read about Mother Seigel's Syrup in a small pamphlet which was left at our house. The book said my symptoms were due to inflammatory dyspepsia, which had filled my blood with poisons, and that my nerves were prostrated with lack of food—virtual starvation. Cure the diseased stomach, it said, and the fits, etc., would vanish of themselves. I sent to Messrs. Thompson & Son, Grocers and Tea Merchants, Ampleforth, for this medicine, and began taking it at once. Relief came in three or four days. After that, continuing with the Syrup, I improved every day. I now enjoy my food. After using two bottles the fits left me entirely, and I was strong and well as ever. Since that time (now four and a half years ago) I have had the best of health, and required no medicine whatever. (Signed) (Mrs.) Mary Annie Elsworth, Ampleforth, Oswaldkirk, York, April 10th, 1895."

The accuracy of the latter statement is vouched for by the Messrs. Thompson, who have known Mrs. Elsworth for many years. Although no witness is really needed, as every case of cure by Mother Seigel's Syrup is thoroughly investigated before publication, only unquestionable facts being allowed to appear.

As to why the majority of people are taken ill in the spring, we shall reserve that point for future discussion. Be the solution what it may, one thing is certain: wise folk will keep a bottle of Mother Seigel's Syrup by them every week in the string of fifty-two.

PICTURE PUZZLES. £50 IN PRIZES. START TO-DAY.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 432. FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 10TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

What to Eat, Drink, and Avoid.

BY A MEDICAL MAN.

Diet.—Under this head we will consider what is the best. Every man or woman must be a law unto themselves as to what to eat, drink, and avoid. The saying, "One man's meat is another man's poison," is very true, and the time of year and the climatic surroundings have much to say in the matter. In the Arctic regions you can eat and relish fats or fat mixtures such as would be fatal to you in the tropics. Why do our countrymen suffer so much from liver complaint? It is because our insular training in the British Isles has induced a love for roast beef, spirits, and strong beers, and we indulge in these with one result: *liver* complaint. Were we only rational, and adapted our diet to our surroundings, we would lead healthier, happier lives. Were we to a great extent to shun animal food we would be healthier.

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 432.] For the Week ending April 10th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

The Publisher, the Author, and the Duchess.

The Study of a Deep Plot.

ALTHOUGH I broke into my friend Hawtree's room in a manner that was not remarkable for its gentleness, it did not seem to disturb him in the least, for he continued calmly reading the book that he held in his hand, in which he appeared deeply engrossed.

This fact was suspicious in itself, for Hawtree is not a man to take up a novel in the small hours of the morning. It seemed evident to me that he had recognised my step on the stairs, and having a history prepared about the book, he had taken it up as an excuse for telling the tale.

I hesitated a moment whether to advance or retire. Then I thought that the day was yet young, and Hawtree's stories were worth the hearing, and his cigars were very good.

So I ventured on a cough. Hawtree continued reading. I tried again to attract his attention.

"Well, old man," I said heartily, "good-evening. I thought I would just look in as I was passing."

Still it pleased Hawtree's plans to ignore my presence, and it was not until I had crossed the room and stood directly between him and the light that he deigned to look up with a very well feigned start of surprise.

"Well," he said, springing to his feet, and shaking hands heartily, "I declare I never saw you come in. Why didn't you speak? Sit down, man, and make yourself at home."

He turned down the leaf he was reading of his precious book with much ostentation, and with a sigh laid it regretfully on the floor.

"Studying?" I suggested.

"No," he replied, "just peeping into a little book that has been unopened on my shelf for about five years. It was a most extraordinary thing altogether," he continued, gazing meditatively at the fire.

"What," I enquired, "was extraordinary?"

"Why," said Hawtree, "that I should meet the author of this book this evening as he was coming down the steps of the Empire. A man, mind you, that one has not heard of for five years, although at one time his reputation was world-wide. You know him by name, no doubt. James-James, the man who wrote 'Stones of Great Value.'"

"James-James? I don't know him," said I.

"You don't know James-James?" cried Hawtree. "You have never heard of 'Stones of Great Value'?" He sprang to his feet, and his voice fairly shrieked with excitement. He took up the book, and showed me the number of editions it had run into, then threw it on the floor, and would have raved about the ignorance of the modern man of letters for the rest of the night, had I not calmed him.

"You must remember," I said, "that we are not all so well up in men and things as you are, and that we journalists have to discuss so many subjects in the course of the year, that it is not surprising that we forget about them all. Now sit down and calm yourself, and tell me all about it from beginning to end."

"It's a long story,' said Hawtree, sinking back in his chair, "but when a journalist comes to me, and tells me he has never heard of James-James, I certainly think it is time that I should refresh his memory for his own good. Besides," he continued, gradually getting under weigh, "it's a story of your own trade; the story of a great 'boom'; the first boom in literature of modern days. For it is only quite recently, you understand, that men took to making little wars on their own accounts, and exploring out-of-the-way lands, and writing books on the subjects, and making their fortunes in this way.

"The beginning of James-James' literary career, then," went on Hawtree, while I was feeling for my notebook and pencil, "was the orthodox beginning of famous writers. He threw up a good trade, invested in a garret, a ream of foolscap, and a shilling's-worth of ink and pens, and proceeded to waste them as fast as human hands could work. His stories went the orthodox round of publishing houses, and returned to him in the orthodox way, having gained nothing but a vast accumulation of dirt. He came to the end of his resources, starved for a day, and was just giving up in despair when an idea suddenly took birth in his mind, which he immediately put on paper and sent out on its travels. It returned to him, of course, and after living for half a year on his landlady's money he took it to the last publisher he could think of, who gave more hope than the others—all in the orthodox way.

"This publisher, you must know, had just set up business when James-James called on him, and had plenty of time in which to read stories by unknown authors, and plenty of knowledge in his trade to recognise a good investment when it came in his way.

"He promised to read Hawtree's novel, and let him hear in a day or two what he thought of it. He read through the story, and having satisfied himself that it might make a book under certain conditions, and that those conditions would never be realised, he sent round for its author.

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"'This book,' he said, smiling sweetly at James-James as he stood expectantly before him, thus raising his hopes to the utmost, 'is a very good book, but,' he continued, dashing all hopes to the ground, 'would probably, under the ordinary conditions, have no sale at all.'

"James-James' face turned pale.

"'What do you say,' he stammered, 'it is a good book, and yet it would have no sale? How can that be?'

"'It is a book, you see,' replied the Publisher, 'that people would take no notice of unless it were forced under their eyes. In fact, it is a book that must be "boomed" to go. It must be forced along, shoved, hurried into attention, have some scandal raised about it, so that it can't be disregarded. Unless we can do that, all that remains for your book is this——' and the publisher kicked a new waste-paper basket in which he had invested, and James-James groaned aloud.

"When he had gone the Publisher lit a cigarette, and fell to considering again the manuscript that lay before him. And the more he thought about it the more he was determined that there was merit in the book, and merit, properly applied, that would not only make its author's fortune, but make him, the Publisher, both rich and famous. Then he wavered again, and determined that it was too risky a venture for a new publisher to undertake, and he threw away his cigarette, put the book aside, and began reading the morning paper.

"As he glanced down the columns a certain little paragraph caught his eye. It ran as follows: 'The Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels are not only the most beautiful, but among the most valuable in London at the present time. They are valued at £50,000, although the Duchess would not part with them for more than twice that sum. They have been in the family for a long while, and she looks upon them almost as sacred heirlooms.'

"Now, James-James' novel, 'Stones of Great Value,' was entirely founded on the idea of a great jewel robbery, and it was for this reason that the paragraph I have quoted caught the Publisher's eye. And the stones of great value of James-James' estimation were set down as being worth about the same amount as the Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels—and the jewels of the story also belonged to a duchess. All that was required to complete the resemblance between fiction and reality was for the genuine duchess to be robbed of her stones.

"The thought that it would be rather curious if this should happen by any strange chance occurred to the Publisher. And as he was thinking an idea came to him.

"He leant back in his chair, and closed his eyes, and the possibilities of the idea passed before him. Never for an instant did it leave his mind for the remainder of the day. He took it away with him at night, and thought of it, and dreamt of it—this great idea.

"On the following day he went through all the daily and weekly papers on which he could lay his hands, and every now and again he came across a little paragraph about the Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels. It was evident that these paragraphs, praising the beauty of the stones, estimating their great value, and declaring them to be the sacred heirlooms of an old family, were, one and all, written by one hand, and that hand, a woman's; none other, in fact, than that of the Duchess of Dawsborough herself.

"Having satisfied himself that Her Grace was striving very hard to advertise her jewels, for what purpose she alone knew, and always with his great idea in his mind, the Publisher set about finding out all that he could concerning the stones in question.

"It was not long before he discovered that Her Grace had purchased them from a leading merchant only a few months previously. He also discovered that the Duchess herself was an American heiress, who had followed the fashion of marrying a Duke for his title, and that now that he was dead she was trying her utmost to make her way into English society.

"All this fitted in very well with the plans that the Publisher had devised.

"Having come to this conclusion, he sent again for his friend the Author—for in their mutual lack of money, and their mutual desire to gain it, a kind of friendship had sprung up between them.

"James-James came—in a cab.

"For three hours the two men remained closeted, with their heads together, talking. Then James-James went out and ordered an oyster supper, while the Publisher swung round on his pivot chair, and wrote the smartest business letter that he had ever penned—a letter so forcible, cunning, and clearly put, that it could not fail to carry effect. Having read this through, and satisfied himself that it lacked nothing, he put it in an envelope, and addressed it to 'Her Grace the Duchess of Dawsborough.'

"The reply came by return of post in a scented, heavily-crested letter.

"'Dear Mr. Publisher,' it ran, 'Your letter to hand. What a funny idea! You had better come and have tea, and tell me all about it.—Yours sincerely, Dolly Dawsborough.'

"Accordingly, the Publisher went to tea that afternoon.

"He found the Duchess in a room that seemed literally to teem with silver; every other object seemed plated with gold. He trod on a carpet that sank like a bed of feathers beneath his feet. A large, American-looking hand was held out to him, almost covered with rings. He took it mechanically, and found a pretty, merry face above—a very jolly face for a Duchess.

"The Publisher recovered himself quickly. He immediately let off the compliment with which he had prepared himself on the way.

"'I am delighted to note,' he muttered, bowing low, 'by your letter that I received to-day, that the business qualities of the Duchess of Dawsborough are not less deserving of praise than her beauty.'

"Her Grace laughed merrily, and clapped her hands.

"'Now, that's real nice of you,' she replied, 'for I have always reckoned that I am about as smart a business woman as they make. Didn't I hook the Duke and his title within a fortnight, in spite of all the bets that were made at the clubs? Now he poor fellow, has been carried off by his gout, I am thrown on my own resources to get along as best I may.'

"'I notice,' said the Publisher, 'that your jewels have already become famous.'

"'That's so. When the Duke died I bought all the jewels and trinkets that I could find. That's what you English seem to admire more than anything else. A woman with jewels is bound to succeed. Though somehow,' added her Grace with a sigh, 'your society ladies don't exactly seem to rush to me with open arms.'

"'You must remember,' said the Publisher, 'that, famous as they are, everyone has not yet heard of your jewels.'

"'That's quite true. Say, Mr. Publisher, how am I to get them known?'

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"The Duchess sipped her tea from a priceless little blue china cup, and looked meditatively over the rim at the Publisher.

"'It was for the purpose of telling you how to do that,' replied he, 'that I called this afternoon. If you will leave everything to me I will guarantee that within three weeks the Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels will be more talked about than any other jewels in London.'

"'La,' cried the Duchess, executing a *pas de seul*, 'and how much do you want for doing that?'

"'Only two little things. First, that you will promise not to allow your jewels to be seen by anyone until I tell you you may; second, that you will procure a dummy set before to-morrow.'

"'Done,' cried the Duchess. 'Anything else?'

"'In the afternoon I shall ask you to go for a drive. Before you go I want you to tell your secretary, steward, butler, anyone you like, that you are going to take your jewels to the bankers. Circulate it among your household, so that everyone is talking about it. Do you think you are a good enough actress to do all that without arousing suspicion?'

"'Rather!' The Duchess elevated her toe, and contemplated it. 'First an actress, then a millionairess, then a widow, then a duchess——'

"'Then,' added the Publisher, 'the first lady in English society; second only to the Queen herself.'

"'When will the fun begin?' she asked eagerly.

"'To-morrow evening,' said the other. 'But you must be very careful. How do you think these headings will look in the papers?'

"The Publisher produced some carefully written manuscripts, and laid them before the Duchess. The headlines were startling enough: 'The Duchess of Dawsborough's Jewels—Stolen—Valued at £50,000—The Duchess Inconsolable—Clever Robbery—No Trace of the Thief—Scotland Yard Baffled.' Following these were several striking accounts of the robbery, of the jewels, and the Duchess, sufficiently exciting to produce a flutter among the evening papers, to which they would be dispatched.

"The Duchess was delighted.

"'But what am I to do with my diamonds?' she inquired.

"'Bury them,' said the Publisher, 'or hide them somewhere where no one will find them. If anyone suspects it is a trick we shall be ruined for ever. I implore your Grace to be careful.'

"'You may trust me. Now, is there anything else I can do for you? A thousand or two don't make much odds to me, you know.'

"'Thanks. I certainly have a little scheme on hand that requires financing. I am going to publish my first book very shortly. As I told you in my letter it's all part of my scheme. The book deals entirely with a jewel robbery, and the jewels are supposed to be yours. When all the excitement is over, the book will be published, and everyone will read it. The whole affair, your Grace, is a gigantic boom; first for a duchess, then for an author, and lastly for a publisher. And it all requires financing.'

"'Well, how much do you want?'

"The Publisher named a modest sum. The Duchess promised to forward it, on receiving security that the Publisher would carry out his part of the bargain. After going through the scheme carefully once more he took up his hat and said good-bye.

"On the day following the one on which the Publisher called on the Duchess of Dawsborough, her Grace procured a dummy set of diamonds from a small jeweller.

"Having given her order she returned home, and gradually made it generally known among her household that in the afternoon she would take her jewels to the bankers.

"About one o'clock the imitation stones arrived, and her Grace sat down to as hearty a luncheon as ever a Duchess consumed. She ordered her carriage for half-past two.

"'Tell them to drive to the bank,' she said, as she stood on the steps. 'I am going to leave my jewel-box there.'

"'To the bank,' whispered the butler to the footman.

"'To the bank,' said the footman to the coachman, 'Her Grace is going to lock up her jewels.'

"And the carriage drove away.

"Apparently, however, the Duchess changed her mind, for she gave orders to be driven first to an outlying district, where it was imperative that she should pay some early calls.

"'I will go to the bank on my way home,' said she.

"In the meanwhile an incident had occurred at the Duchess of Dawsborough's residence. It seemed that the carriage had barely turned the corner of the street, when Her Grace discovered that she had left her jewel-box behind. She had apparently sent her footman running back to bring her the precious box, for a man, who, it afterwards transpired, was disguised in every particular as her footman, requested the butler to give him Her Grace's case, which, as he declared, she had left on her dressing-table.

"The butler ran upstairs, and found the box, and hastened with it to the footman, who hurriedly carried it away down the street.

"That, however, was the last that was ever seen of the rascal.

"About four o'clock the Duchess had finished her calls, and ordered: 'Home.'

"She was reminded by her servant that she had wished to call at the bank.

"'Oh, yes, to the bank,' she replied, and then: 'Why, dear me, I must have left my jewel-box behind. How careless! Well, I will take it to-morrow.'

"The Duchess had come out a long way to pay her calls, and it was nearly six before the carriage neared home.

"It was then she heard the newsboys calling her name in the street. 'The Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels,' they cried, 'stolen—valued at £50,000—clever robbery—evening paper!'

"She procured a copy, and the coachman, with a white face, galloped the horses homewards.

"Holding the paper as best she could with the jolting of the carriage, her Grace read the account of the imaginary robbery of her jewels, which, in reality, as she well knew, were snugly stowed away in the family safe. She smiled as she thought how smartly the Publisher had done his work.

"Her secretary met her at the door of the house and hastily began explaining things. A man, disguised as her footman, had discovered—how Heaven alone knew, 'although,' said the secretary, 'suspicion pointed to the butler as having helped him'—that her Grace had left her jewel-box behind her. He had received the box from the butler and had gone off with the stones. Another mystery—an account of the whole affair had appeared in the evening newspapers.

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"Never, even in her ballet-girl days, had the Duchess acted so brilliantly as when she ordered her whole household up before her and questioned them as to the robbery of her jewels. All, however, to no effect. The mystery was as unexplainable as ever, and the Duchess left it to the police and the press to discover what they could.

"The latter took up the matter eagerly. It had come at a time when news was scarce, and the public seemed deeply interested in the jewel robbery. On the next day the papers that claimed to have discovered a clue sold like wild-fire. Some accused the butler, some the footman, others Her Grace's secretary of having stolen the jewels. Their movements were carefully watched by the police, but all with no result. The whole affair was as pretty a mystery as had ever puzzled the public, and the press made the most of it. The Duchess's jewels were being 'boomed' as jewels were never 'boomed' before.

"Three days later public interest was beginning to flag, for nothing new turned up.

"On the evening of the third day the Publisher and the Author met together over a little dinner in the former's rooms.

"Over the wine the Publisher remarked: 'To-morrow, I think I shall arrest you.'

"For a man about to be arrested, however, James-James appeared to take the matter very coolly.

"'You think it is the best time?' he remarked flicking the ash from his cigarette.

"'I think so. Public interest is beginning to flag a little. I will come about twelve, if you will be up by then. I want you to be gazing meditatively down the muzzle of a revolver, and to babble like a baby about a jewel robbery and a confession and suicide. Think you can manage all that?'

"'Easily,' said James-James; 'every author is three-parts actor.'

"'Good. I shall judge whether your arrest causes a sensation or not. If so, I shall leave things for a day or two before I have you released. Or if the magistrates are too sharp for us, and begin to suspect that it is all a put up affair, I shall hurry things on to a crisis. Anyway, you may rest assured that they won't keep you more than a day or two, for it wouldn't be safe to let them. By the way, you might as well copy out this confession now.'

"The publisher took a new book, uncut, and looking as though it had come straight from the press, called 'Stones of Great Value,' by James-James, and, opening it at a certain page, handed it to the author.

"On this page the principal character in the story confessed to having stolen the stones of the fictitious Duchess. 'Dear friend,' ran the confession, 'I can no longer live while another man is suspected of having committed a crime of which I am guilty. I have decided to solve two mysteries by blowing out my brains. For it was I who stole the Duchess's jewels. When this reaches you I shall be dead.' There was much more of the same kind, and at the foot of the confession were the initials 'J. J.,' which, should the page be found lying about loose, might either be taken for the name of the hero of the story or for James-James, the name of the author of the book. It might, indeed, be rather awkward for James-James if the confession of the hero in 'Stones of Great Value,' written in the author's own handwriting, and signed with his initials, should fall into the hands of the police at a time when the genuine Duchess of Dawsborough had really lost her diamonds.

"He began to copy out the confession on a piece of foolscap, so that it began at the top of the page, and ended with his initials at the bottom. When he had finished it he handed it over to the Publisher, who put it safely away.

"'To-morrow,' he cried, 'our plans will be reaching their fulfilment. We have boomed the Duchess' diamonds, and to-morrow you will be boomed, and three days later your book. Let us drink to unqualified success.'

"On the following day a man, dishevelled, waving a paper, rushed wildly into the nearest police-station to James-James' lodgings.

"'See,' he cried, 'here is a confession of the man who stole the Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels. Come and take him, quick, before he blows out his brains. A friend of mine, James-James by name, a bit of an author,' and before the astonished constables had time to realise the state of affairs, they found themselves being hurried along in a cab to James-James' rooms.

"The door was locked. A policeman put his shoulder to it, and burst it open. At a table, muttering incoherently to himself, was the author of 'Stones of Great Value.' To knock away the pistol, and to handcuff him, was the work of a moment.

"That evening the whole report of the thief's arrest appeared in the papers. Public excitement was again roused to its utmost. When the James-James trial came on the court was crowded.

"Nothing could be gained from the prisoner, for he could only mutter senseless words about a book and a confession. This confession was the sole evidence that there was against him. As the magistrates remarked, it seemed much more likely that either the butler or the secretary had done the deed. The magistrates were about to remand the prisoner for a week, in order that the police might make enquiries about the confession, the people were rising from their seats to leave the court, when something happened that drew every eye from the prisoner to the figure of a man who now appeared in the court, and caused a sensation that has not yet been forgotten by the police.

"'Your worships,' said a police inspector, stepping forward, 'I wish to make an important statement. This gentleman, a book publisher, informs me that the confession, on the strength of which the prisoner was arrested, is *merely the stray leaf out of a novel he was writing.* The poor gentleman, thinking, no doubt, that the Publisher had refused his work, had temporarily lost his mind, and this accounts for the reason why he was not able to clear himself from the ridiculous charge of robbery. The book, your worships, deals entirely with a jewel robbery, and is called 'Stones of Great Value.'

"And that," said Hawtree, "is the end of my story. The plot has gradually unfolded itself. The Publisher's great idea has worked itself out to the end. He had boomed the Duchess of Dawsborough's jewels; the Author's name was in every mouth; thousands of copies of the book were sold; Author, Publisher, and Duchess were made famous.

"As I told you, I met James-James to-day on the steps of the Empire, fat and well-fed. And what seems the most remarkable part of the whole affair to me is that this book, 'Stones of Great Value,' was once world famous, and is now almost totally forgotten."

It occurred to me, as I crept out of Hawtree's rooms at the break of day, that even this fact was not so remarkable as Hawtree's imagination.

Marcus Tindal.

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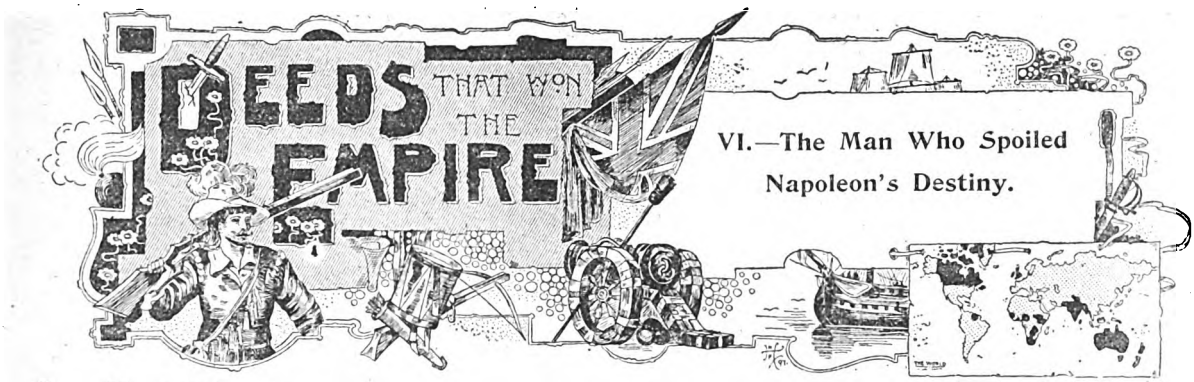

VI.—The Man Who Spoiled Napoleon's Destiny.

From March 18th to May 20th, 1799—for more than sixty days and nights, that is—a little, half-forgotten, and more than half-ruined Syrian town was the scene of one of the fiercest and most dramatic sieges recorded in military history.

And rarely has there been a struggle so apparently one-sided. A handful of British sailors and Turkish irregulars were holding Acre, a town without regular defences against Napoleon, the most brilliant military genius of his generation, with an army of 10,000 war-hardened veterans, the "Army of Italy"—soldiers who had dared the snows of the Alps and conquered Italy, and to whom victory was a familiar experience.

In their ranks military daring had reached, perhaps, its very highest point. And yet the sailors inside that ring of crumbling wall won! At the blood-stained trenches of Acre Napoleon experienced his first defeat; and, years after, at St. Helena, he said of Sir Sidney Smith, the gallant sailor who baffled him: "That man made me miss my destiny."

It is a curious fact that one Englishman thwarted Napoleon's career in the East, and another ended his career in the West, and it may be doubted which of the two Napoleon hated most—Wellington, who finally overthrew him at Waterloo, or Sidney Smith, who, to use Napoleon's own words, made him "miss his destiny," and exchange the empire of the East for a lonely pinnacle of rock in the Atlantic.

Sidney Smith was a sailor of the school of Nelson and of Dundonald—a man, that is, with a spark of that warlike genius which begins where mechanical rules end. He was a man of a singular physical beauty, with a certain magnetism and fire about him which made men willing to die for him, and women who had never spoken to him fall headlong in love with him.

His whole career is curiously picturesque. He became a middy at the tender age of eleven; went through fierce sea-fights, and was actually mate of the watch when fourteen years old. He was a fellow-middy with William IV. in the fight off Cape St. Vincent, became commander when he was eighteen years of age, and captain before he was quite nineteen.

But the British Marine, even in those tumultuous days, scarcely yielded enough of the rapture of fighting to this post-captain in his teens. He took service under the Swedish flag, saw hard fighting against the Russians, became the close personal friend of the King, and was knighted by him.

One of the feats at this period of his life with which tradition, with more or less of plausibility, credits Sidney Smith, is that of swimming by night through the Russian fleet, a distance of two miles, carrying a letter enclosed in a bladder to the Swedish Admiral.

Sidney Smith afterwards entered the Turkish service. When war broke out betwixt France and England in 1790 he purchased a tiny craft at Smyrna, picked up in that port a hybrid crew, and hurried to join Lord Hood, who was then holding Toulon. When the British abandoned the port—and it is curious to recollect that the duel between Sidney Smith and Napoleon, which reached its climax at Acre, began here—Sidney Smith volunteered to burn the French fleet, a task which he performed with an audacity and skill worthy of Dundonald or Nelson, and for which the French never forgave him.

Sidney Smith was given the command of an English frigate, and fought a dozen brilliant fights in the Channel. He carried with his boats a famous French privateer off Havre de Gracel, but during the fight on the deck of the captured ship it drifted into the mouth of the Seine above the forts. The wind dropped, the tide was too strong to be stemmed, and Sidney Smith himself was captured.

He had so harried the French coast that the French refused to treat him as an ordinary prisoner of war, and threw him into that ill-omened prison, the Temple, from whose iron-barred windows the unfortunate sailor watched for two years the horror of the Reign of Terror in its last stages, the tossing crowds, the tumbrils rolling past, crowded with victims for the guillotine.

Sidney Smith escaped at last by a singularly audacious trick. Two confederates, dressed in dashing uniform, one wearing the dress of an adjutant, and the other that of an officer of still higher rank, presented themselves at the Temple with forged orders for the transfer of Sidney Smith.

The governor surrendered his prisoner, but insisted on sending a guard of six men with him. The sham adjutant cheerfully acquiesced, but, after a moment's pause, turned to Sidney Smith, and said if he would give his parole as an officer not to attempt to escape they would dispense with the escort.

Sidney Smith, with due gravity, replied to his confederate:

"Sir, I swear on the faith of an officer to accompany you wherever you choose to conduct me."

The governor was satisfied, and the two sham officers proceeded to "conduct" their friend with the utmost despatch to the French coast.

Another English officer who had escaped—Captain Wright—joined Sidney Smith outside Rouen, and the problem was how to get through the barriers without a passport. Smith sent Wright on first, and he was duly challenged for his passport by the sentinel; whereupon Sidney Smith, with a majestic air of official authority, marched up and said in faultless Parisian French:

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"I answer for this citizen; I know him."

Whereupon the deluded sentinel saluted and allowed them both to pass.

Sidney Smith's escape from the Temple made him a popular hero in England. He was known to have great influence with the Turkish authorities, and he was sent to the East in the double office of Envoy Extraordinary to the Porte and Commander of the Squadron at Alexandria. By one of the curious coincidences which marked Sidney Smith's career, he became acquainted while in the Temple with a French Royal officer named Philippeaux, an engineer of signal ability, and who had been a school-fellow and a close friend of Napoleon himself at Brienne.

Smith took his French chum with him to the East, and he played a great part in the defence of Acre—Napoleon had swept north through the desert to Syria, had captured Gaza and Jaffa, and was about to attack Acre, which lay between him and his ultimate goal, Constantinople. Here Sidney Smith resolved to bar his way, and in his flagship the *Tigre*, with the *Theseus*, under Captain Miller, and two gunboats, he sailed to Acre to assist in its defence.

Philippeaux took charge of the fortifications, and thus, in the breaches of a remote Syrian town, the quondam prisoner of the Temple and the ancient school-friend of Napoleon joined hands to wreck that dream of a great eastern empire which lurked in the cells of Napoleon's masterful intellect.

Acre represents a blunted arrow-head jutting out from a point in the Syrian coast. Napoleon could only attack, so to speak, the *neck* of the arrow, which was protected by a ditch and a weak wall, and flanked by towers; but Sidney Smith, having command of the sea, could sweep the four faces of the town with the fire of his guns, as well as command all the sea-roads in its vicinity.

He guessed, from the delay of the French in opening fire, that they were waiting for their siege-trains to arrive by sea. He kept vigilant watch, pounced on the French flotilla as it rounded the promontory of Mount Carmel, captured nine of the vessels, carried them with their guns and warlike material to Acre, and mounted his thirty-four captured pieces on the batteries of the town. Thus the disgusted French saw the very guns which were intended to batter down the defences of Acre—and which were glorious with the memories of a dozen victories in Italy—frowning at them, loaded with powder and shot, and manned by British sailors!

It is needless to say that a siege directed by Napoleon—the siege of what he looked upon as a contemptible and almost defenceless town, the single barrier betwixt his ambition and its goal—was urged with amazing fire and vehemence. The wall was battered day and night, a breach fifty feet wide made, and more than twelve assaults delivered with all the fire and daring of which French soldiers, gallantly led, are capable. So sustained was the fighting that on one occasion the combat raged in the ditch and on the breach for *twenty-five* successive hours. So close and fierce was it that one half-ruined tower was held by *both* besiegers and besieged for twelve hours in succession, and neither would yield.

At the breach, the two lines of desperately fighting men on repeated occasions clashed bayonets together, and wrestled and stabbed and died, till the survivors were parted by the barrier of the dead which grew beneath their feet.

Sidney Smith, however, fought like a sailor, and with all the cool ingenuity and resourcefulness of a sailor. His ships, drawn up on two faces of the town, smote the French stormers on either flank till they learned to build up a dreadful screen, made up partly of the dead bodies of their comrades.

Smith, too, perched guns in all sorts of unexpected positions—a 24-pounder in the lighthouse, under the command of an exultant middy; two 68-pounders under the charge of "Old Bray," the carpenter of the *Tigre*—and, as Sidney Smith himself reports, "one of the bravest and most intelligent men I ever served with"—and yet a third gun, a French brass 18-pounder, in one of the ravelins, under a master's mate.

Bray dropped his shells with the nicest accuracy in the centre of the French columns as they swept up the breach, and the middy, perched aloft, and the master's mate from the ravelin, smote them on either flank with case shot, while the *Theseus* and the *Tigre* added to the tumult the thunder of their broadsides, and the captured French gunboats contributed the yelp of their lighter pieces.

The great feature of the siege, however, was the fierceness and the number of the sorties. Sidney Smith's sorties actually exceeded in number and vehemence Napoleon's assaults. He broke the strength of Napoleon's attacks by anticipating them. A crowd of Turkish irregulars, with a few naval officers leading them, and a solid mass of Jack Tars in the centre, would break from a sally port, or rush vehemently down through the gap in the wall, and scour the French trenches, overturn the gabions, spike the guns, and slay the guards.

The French reserves hurried fiercely up, always scourged, however, by the flank fire of the ships, and drove back the sortie. But the process was renewed the same night, or the next day, with unlessened fire and daring.

The French engineers, despairing of success on the surface, betook themselves to mining; whereupon the besieged made a desperate sortie and reached the mouth of the mine. Lieutenant Wright, who led them, and who had already received two shots in his sword-arm, leaped down the mine, followed by his sailors, slew the miners, destroyed their work, and safely regained the town.

The British sustained one startling disaster. Captain Miller, of the *Theseus*, whose ammunitions ran short, carefully collected such French shells as fell into the town without exploding, and duly returned them alight and supplied with better fuses to their original senders.

He had collected some seventy shells on the *Theseus*, and was preparing them for use against the French. The carpenter of the ship was endeavouring to get the fuse out of a loaded shell with an augur, and a middy undertook to assist him, in characteristic middy fashion, with a mallet and a spike-nail. A huge shell under his treatment suddenly exploded on the quarter-deck of the *Theseus*, and the other sixty-nine followed suit.

The two ingenious men disappeared into space, forty seamen, with Captain Miller himself, were killed, and forty-seven, including the two lieutenants of the ship, the chaplain, and the surgeon, were seriously wounded.

The whole of the poop was blown to pieces, and the ship was left a wreck, with fire breaking out at half-a-dozen points. The fire was subdued, and the *Theseus* survived in a half-gutted condition, but the disaster was a severe blow to Sir Sidney's resources.

As evening fell on May 7th, the white sails of a fleet became visible over the sea-rim, and all firing ceased, while besiegers and beseiged watched the approaching ships. Was it a French fleet or a Turkish? Did it

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bring succour to the besieged or a triumph to the besiegers?

The approaching ships flew the crescent! It was the Turkish fleet from Rhodes bringing reinforcements! But the wind was sinking, and Napoleon, who had watched the approach of the hostile ships with feelings which may be guessed, calculated that there remained six hours before they could cast anchor in the bay. Eleven assaults had been already made, in which eight French generals and the best officers in every branch of the service had perished. There remained time for a twelfth assault. He might yet pluck victory from the very edge of the defeat.

Lannes' grenadiers were tumbled headlong from the tower.

At ten o clock that night the French artillery was brought up close to the counterscarp to batter down the curtain, and a new breach was made. Lannes led his division against the shot-wrecked tower, and General Rimbaud took his grenadiers with a resistless rush through the new breach.

All night the combat raged, the men fighting desperately hand to hand. When the rays of the level morning sun broke through the pall of smoke which hung sullenly over the combatants, the tricolour flew on the outer angle of the tower, and still the ships bringing reinforcements had not reached the harbour.

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Sidney Smith, at this crisis, landed every man from the English ships, and led them, pike in hand, to the breach, and the shouting and madness of the conflict awoke once more. To use Sidney Smith's own words "the muzzles of the muskets touched each other—the spear-heads were locked together."

But Sidney Smith's sailors, with the brave Turks who rallied to their help, were not to be denied.

Lannes' grenadiers were tumbled headlong from the tower, Lannes himself being wounded, while Rimbaud's brave men, who were actually past the breach, were swept into ruin, their general killed, and the French soldiers within the breach all captured or slain.

One of the dramatic incidents of the siege was the assault made by Kleber's troops. They had not taken part in the siege hitherto, but had won a brilliant victory over the Arabs at Mount Tabor. On reaching the camp, flushed with their triumph, and seeing how slight were the apparent defences of the town, they demanded clamorously to be led to the assault. Napoleon consented. Kleber, who was of gigantic stature, with a head of hair worthy of a German music-master or of a Soudan dervish, led his grenadiers to the edge of the breach, and stood there, while with gesture and voice—a voice even above the fierce and sustained crackle of the musketry—he urged his men on. Napoleon, standing on a gun in the nearest French battery, watched the sight with eager eyes—the French grenadiers running furiously up the breach, the grim line of levelled muskets that barred it, the sudden roar of the English guns, as from every side they smote the staggering French column

Vainly single officers struggled out of the torn mass, ran gesticulating up the breach, and died at the muzzles of the British muskets. The men could not follow, or only died as they leaped forward. The French grenadiers, still fighting, swearing, and screaming, were swept back past the point where Kleber stood, hoarse with shouting, black with gunpowder, furious with rage.

The last assault on Acre had failed! The French infantry, field artillery, and baggage silently defiled that night to the rear. The heavy guns were buried in the sand, and after sixty days of open trenches Napoleon, for the first time in his life, though not for the last, ordered a retreat!

Napoleon buried in the breaches of Acre not merely 3,000 of his bravest troops, but the golden dream of his life. "In that miserable fort," as he said, "lay the fate of the East." Napoleon expected to find in it the Pacha's treasures and arms for 300,000 men!

"When I have captured it," he said to Bourienne, "I shall march upon Damascus and Aleppo. I shall arm the tribes; I shall reach Constantinople; I shall overturn the Turkish Empire; I shall found in the East a new and grand empire. Perhaps I shall return to Paris by Adrianople and Vienna!"

Napoleon was cheerfully willing to pay the price of what religion he had to accomplish this dream. He was willing, that is, to turn Turk. Henry IV. said "Paris was worth a mass," "and was not the East," said Napoleon, "worth a turban and a pair of trousers?"

In his conversations at St. Helena with Las Cases he seriously defended this policy. His army, he added, would have shared his "conversion," and have taken their new creed with a Parisian laugh. "Had I but captured Acre," Napoleon added, "I would have reached Constantinople and the Indies; I would have changed the face of the world. But that man made me miss my destiny."

Las Cases dwells upon the curious correspondence which existed between Philippeaux, who engineered the defence of Acre, and Napoleon, who attacked it. They were, he says, "of the same nation, of the same age, of the same rank, of the same corps, and of the same school."

But if Philippeaux was, in a sense, the brains of the defence, Sidney Smith was the sword. There was, perhaps, it may be regretfully confessed, a streak of the charlatan in him. He shocked the judgment of more sober men. Wellington's stern, sober sense was affronted by him, and he described him as "a mere vaporiser." "Of all the men who I ever knew who have any reputation," Wellington told Croker, "the man who least deserved it is Sir Sidney Smith."

Wellington's temperament made it possible for him to understand Sidney Smith's erratic and dazzling genius. Napoleon's phrase is the best epitaph of the men who defended Acre. It is true Napoleon himself described Sidney Smith afterwards as "a young fool," who was "capable of invading France with 800 men." But such "young fools" are often the makers of history!

("*Great Sea Duels*" *next week.*)

RESULT OF

"STORY WITHOUT WORDS" COMPETITION.

No. 6.

The £2 prize has gone to F. H. Clarke, 36, Bamford Road, Didsbury, Manchester.

To each of the following five a bottle of *Home Notes Bouquet* has been forwarded:

Mrs. C. Purchase, 4, Havelock Terrace, Southampton.

W. L. Thompson, 6, Wendover Crescent, Mount Florida, Glasgow.

E. L. Dysart, Bowness, Windermere, Westmoreland.

W. Shipway, 32, Howard Street, Reading.

John Bell, care of Hudson, Matthews and Co., 32, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.

The following is the winner's attempt:

1.

"Ze lonch, Alphonse, vas *très joli*,
And now bring out ze *eau de vie*.

2.

"Ah! how it sparkles, nothing's wrong;
Now, as they say, ve shan't be long.

3.

"You need, my friend, ze bracing air;
You seem not *assez musculaire*.

4.

"*I* show you now: for mighty poulls
You have ze bit on your friend Jules."

5.

Alphonse his struggling friend assists,
The cork, however, still resists.

6.

Despairing, they the bottle dump,
And quench their thirst with *eau de pump*.

MORAL.

Reader! Should e'er such fate betide,
Knock off the neck (just nick the side),
Nor vanquished be like those poor fools
Brave Alphonse, et son ami Jules

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Short Stories

£50 IN 23 PRIZES. PICTURE PUZZLES. No. 2. First Series.

1st PRIZE	Twenty Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE	A Ten-Pound Note.
3rd PRIZE	A Five-Pound Note.
4th to 13th PRIZES	Ten Sovereigns.
14th to 23rd PRIZES	Ten Half-Sovereigns.

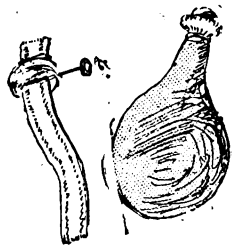
BELOW you will find ten pictures. Each represents the name of a gentleman who, on January 1st, 1897, was a Member of Parliament.

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your list until three other sets have appeared. **DON'T SEND THEM IN UNTIL TUESDAY, APRIL 27, NEXT.** *Each set of five sheets must come to us in one envelope.*

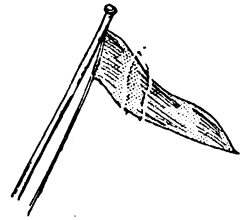
Don't be discouraged if you cannot solve them all. Others may be no more clever than yourself. Send in forty-five, or forty, or even fewer.

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of four must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.

No. 11.....

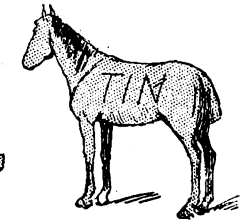


No. 12.....



No. 13.....

No. 14.....



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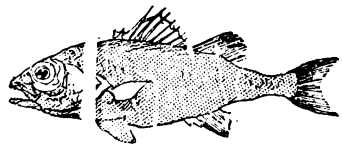
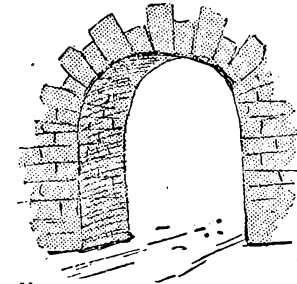


No. 16.....

No. 17.....

No. 18.....

No. 19.....



No. 20.....

Remember these Things. . .

YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the surnames of the people, except in cases where the christian names are depicted.

Name.....

Address.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of M.P.'s.—Whitaker's Almanack, the London Post-Office Directory, Hazell's Annual, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

An Episode of Life

By the Author of "Dunsford," etc.

CHAPTER V.

On the Brink.

The next morning, and a dull, dreary, wet morning it was, Jack Sinclair, in the smoking-room at White's, was making pretence of reading the news. He found the paper more than usually dull and uninteresting. The world was out of gear for him. He knew Roy's obstinacy of old. Easy going, not readily moved in general, willing to let others decide for him as Roy was, he recognised that this time he was in earnest. Roy's parting words on the pavement last night ran through his mind and blurred perception of the print before him.

It was with no surprise that he heard quick, impatient steps behind him, and felt a firm, familiar grip upon his arm.

"Jack, old friend, I was a cad last night! I've come to apologise to you. We have been chums too long to quarrel. Forgive me, Jack!"

He wrote rapidly.

And Jack noticed that Roy looked tired and worn. His face was drawn, and though he laughed as if he expected a ready response, he was not at ease.

"Of course, Roy, let us say no more about it."

"Thanks! Come and sit over here. Join me in a brandy and soda—my head aches. Look here, Jack, this cannot go on! I must find Nelly, if only to say good-bye. I tell you my blood tingles at the thought that she is so near and I cannot see her. It is useless to talk to me of prudence, of duty, and so on. You are right, in a way, to try to keep us apart. I am reckless. You said I was mad. I am. But if I can tell her face to face that I am not the brute she must have thought me, if I can make my peace, I will be prudent. I will remember my wife. Do not drive me to desperation. In trying to find her I shall do more harm, compromise myself more, than by an interview of which no one would know. Put an end to this, tell me her address. Hang it, man, cannot you see how I feel?"

"Yes, I can, and it is just because I fear the consequences that I will not. Think of Mary; you are married."

"No need to remind me of that," sneered Roy, "her voice reminds me of that fact every time she speaks, and that is not seldom. I will only see her once, Jack. If she says 'Go,' go I will. Only once, I promise you."

This was exactly what Sinclair feared she would not do. He remembered Nelly's interest in Roy on the boat, and was certain that she would not be able to say "Go."

"I am stronger than you think," Roy proceeded rapidly, "if I make you a promise I will keep it. I must see her, but only to explain. That curt announcement in the *Morning Post* was so infernally cruel. I explained, in a way, by letter, but I never could write letters, and she must think me a brute, and everything low. If I could see her and get forgiveness I should be content."

"Roy, I cannot. She is out of your life; she leaves town to-day and will travel abroad"—he invented the lie. "Much better so. Write to her, and I will forward the letter."

"No, no; you take me to her. Be present all the time if you like."

"Nonsense! Don't mix me up in this; I will have no part in the comedy—or tragedy, for tragedy it will be. For Mary's sake, Roy, think! It will not be one interview. If it would end there—— But do not be a child."

"It shall be one meeting only, I swear! If she says 'Go,' I have already said it is finished."

"But," Sinclair interrupted, "if she does not say 'Go'?"

A light flashed in Roy's eyes. It was an incautious question in that it showed what Jack feared her purpose.

Roy answered quickly: "There can be no doubt about that; her love for me must be dead. I only want to clear myself."

The tone of his voice belied the words, and Sinclair, who was near to surrender, hardened.

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"No, it is impossible," he said.

Roy Arbuthnot rose from the chair. He frowned angrily as he said coldly: "We have been friends for many years; I thought you would have helped me now. I will find her without you, and when I do, blame yourself for what may happen. I meant what I said. I would have seen Nelly once only; now I will go my own way. I will not quarrel with you, nor repeat the folly of last night, but you will not understand. It is useless to say more."

He turned and left the room.

Sinclair uneasily watched him as he went. Had he in attempting to do good done harm? Could he prevent this meeting? He would try. He would write to Nelly to warn her, to ask her, for the sake of all, to leave town for the present, and as quickly as possible.

He wrote rapidly, describing Roy's excitement, his evident love for her, of late dormant, but now awakened into full flame, and conjured her to keep out of his way. He pointed out the trouble which must ensue if they should meet. Perhaps, not an altogether wise letter, but, at any rate, written with good motives. He rang the bell, and then, not waiting for an answer to his summons, impatiently strode into the hall and gave the letter to the porter, telling him to call a District Messenger, and instruct him to deliver the letter at once.

As Sinclair passed through the doors into the street, Arbuthnot crossed the hall in time to hear the last words of the message he had given the porter.

He guessed at once that it was a letter to Nelly, probably to warn her, and to ask her to go away.

He must see the address. He told the porter to call a cab and to put up the large umbrella which was kept by him for the purpose. The rain beat down in fierce gusts, the porter, to enable him better to manage the unwieldy umbrella, placed the letter upon a small table which stood within the portico. Arbuthnot read the address on the envelope and sprang into the hansom, ignoring in his haste the shelter of the umbrella, which the porter held with difficulty. Leaning back as the window was lowered, he gave the cabman the address. He had triumphed so far, and more easily than he had expected.

On the way he wondered whether she still was known as Mrs. Denison. He had paid more attention to the address than the name. The impression was there that he had seen on the envelope: "Mrs. Denison, Hotel Dieu Donnée." Yes, he felt sure of it.

"Is a Mrs. Denison staying here?" he asked the porter. "Send up to ask if she will see me—Mr. Sinclair."

"Yes, sir," as the man departed on his errand.

Presently he was requested to follow a waiter, and mounted to the first floor.

As the door opened she came forward with both hands extended. "Jack! This is—Roy!" then mastering her surprise as the waiter lingered, she said with heightened colour and acted ease: "How do you do?"

Roy turned to the man, saying shortly: "You may go."

The waiter chuckled as he closed the door: "It ain't Jack, anyway."

"Roy, what does this mean? I ought to call you Mr. Arbuthnot, but I can't. Roy, is it kind?"

"Nelly, my darling—nay, do not look like that. I love you—I am wretched! I come to beg your forgiveness. Sinclair told me last night he had seen you, but would not give me your address. However, I found it out, I wanted you to know that I was not responsible for the cruelty of the past. To tell you how I had been forced into this thing. I asked Jack to let you know that. I could not write, I hadn't the pluck. I felt such a fool."

"He told me."

"I was driven, Nelly. I had no option. I have tried to live it down, tried to be cynical, to think, to persuade myself you would not care."

"Roy!"

"Yes, I know. I wanted to be a brute, to stifle thought,

Holding out her hands in protestation.

remembrance. You were away, I hoped—no, I didn't. I thought—I don't mean that, I tried to forget you, anyway. But I could not. Your image was always before me, your voice always in my ears. When I heard you were in London, all other ideas, all prudence went like the wind. I must see you, and here I am, Nelly. Will you forgive? I cannot live without you."

He tried to take her in his arms, but she shrank from him, holding out her hands in protestation.

He covered them with kisses, called her his love, his darling, vowing the world held for him but one woman. He begged her pity, if not her love. She had loved him once, could she not forgive?

"Roy! how hard you make it for me. Do you imagine I have no heart? I loved you, I shall never love another. You broke my heart. I schooled myself to be callous, and when I thought the lesson was learned—you come."

"What can I say? I loved you—I love you! Oh, yes, I know what you would say. If you could understand how I am punished, you would pity. Nelly, I appeal to you, forgive me!"

She sank into a chair and covered her face with her hands. Short, dry sobs shook her. It was a great temptation. She had told Sinclair she would set aside all ideas of a reconciliation, and here was a trial forced upon her on the morrow of her promise—a trial for which she was not prepared. Roy, standing by her side, passed his arm round her shoulders and drew her to him. She could not resist, and he kissed her. She started guiltily.

"No, Roy, not that. Give me time; let me think. Go now, please."

"May I come again?"

"No; better not. Let this be good-bye. It is too trying; it hurts us both. For my sake, Roy, go!"

"If I may come again. Only once, Nelly; I cannot go like this."

"Better not, Roy; much better not. I am wretched, spiritless, and, oh! so lonely. I cannot think; my head whirls. Leave me, leave me!" she pleaded piteously.

"This afternoon?" he whispered, as again he drew her to him. "This afternoon?" he repeated, as she remained silent, breathing quickly, and looking straight before her, where the meaningless pattern on the wall bewildered her with its confusion.

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She had no strength of will to longer refuse. It had come so suddenly. If there had been warning, time to reflect, to consider, she would have steeled her heart, controlled herself, but as it was, although she murmured "No, no," he turned to leave, well content.

The door opened in his face and, there stood Mary. As he stopped dismayed, she looked him up and down with anger and jealousy contending. Her eyes blazed as she turned sharply to where Nelly stood, surprised at the intrusion. The two women faced each other, ready for war. Instinctively Nelly knew who this was, knew she was face to face with Roy's wife. But she was with her back to the wall; hers was not the nature to cringe and give way. All

The two women faced each other.

her combative instinct was aroused. She looked straight into Mary's eyes unflinchingly as the latter sneeringly said:

"So this is Nelly! I overheard you last night and followed you here, Roy. I never thought I need spy upon you, but this must be settled here on the spot. Who is this woman? What is she to you? You must choose between her and me."

Roy, not without difficulty, rose to the occasion. "This lady was a—friend—of mine before our marriage, I came here merely to wish her good-bye, she is going abroad."

"Choose, choose between us," answered Mary bitterly, "now, before it is too late."

Of course he answered that he would go with her. He had, he repeated, only come to the hotel to say good-bye.

"Then come with me," Mary answered drily as she swept to the door. And he went. Nelly had said no word. But a few minutes had elapsed between Mary's entrance and exit, and there had been no need.

The door had but just closed behind them when the waiter entered bearing a letter. It was that which Sinclair had dispatched from the club. Nelly took it mechanically. Her thoughts were far away. Where could this lead to? She had been weak when firm resolve would have saved them. She blamed herself for yielding. His handsome presence, the well-loved voice, pathetic in remorse, had carried her away. And for what? Pain and regret, nothing more. She had excused his conduct months ago, she had forgiven, and now she loved again. And how he loved her. It was pleasing to know that. Every word, every gesture, had betrayed his love; it was not necessary, but he had avowed it; she knew it was true.

And all in vain. One more meeting and they must part for all time. Roy would come to her again, she felt that he would come at all hazard now Mary had asserted herself, but it must be for the last time. Fate dealt hardly with her. Could she bid him go? Yes, she had pr[illegible]sed. She would keep her word, but how hard it was. With a shrug of impatience she opened Sinclair's letter, turning first to the signature, then, seeing from whom it came, she rapidly read the hurried lines.

It angered her, she dared not ask herself why. His advice was so evidently good, his warnings so clearly necessary, and, since Roy's wife had been there, more so than before. She felt she ought to do as he suggested, he was absolutely right. But! Ah! that *but!* *There* was sense, and just then she hated sense.

Inclination, love, pointed one way, and he said take the other, and she saw he feared her resolve, her power of will, and that was vexing, because, again, he had reason for doubt. How tiresome that he should advise as she did not wish. She could not hide from herself that she did wish differently. It was useless to attempt that. Blind animal instinct drew her one way; reason, cultivated reason, to the exactly opposite direction.

As she still sat twisting Sinclair's note in nervous hands, mentally discussing the problem, the door again opened and Sinclair entered.

Nelly met him half way. "I wanted to see you," she said eagerly.

"Jack, this time," the waiter muttered as he closed the door.

"I sent you a few lines, have you got them Nelly? Yes! Then I thought it best to come in person. I met Roy this morning as I told you, he swears he will find you."

"He has just left."

"Here? How did he find you out?"

"He didn't. He found me in."

"Oh! don't be flippant. This is serious."

"Yes, I know it is. Forgive my feeble joke, I am nervous, hysterical, and don't know whether to laugh or cry. Roy came before your note, and his wife followed. Yes, you may well start. She overheard something last night, and suspected. He wants me to see him again, too, Jack! what am I to do? She and he have just left, but he will come again, I know. It would be foolish to try to deceive you. I love him, he loves me. You say we must not meet again. I feel, I know you are right, but, oh! it is maddening."

"You know what I would say, Nelly, be brave. Cold, cold, you may call it, but refuse. You ruin him if you yield. His wife is not the woman to submit to slight. It is worse now that she knows. It is ruin, Nelly, to her, as well as to him; you do not wish that, I am sure. You see, I put you aside."

"Quite," she interrupted bitterly.

"I only do so to appeal to your generosity. I know you like Roy."

"Like!" she again broke in. "It is torture to me to hear you speak so coldly. Of course, you are worldly wise in treating me as of no account. I suppose—yes, I know—to the world I am beneath consideration. But I have feelings, even I, and something of a heart. You ignore,

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that. I am to suffer. You accept that as a foregone conclusion. I was brushed aside before. Do you think it does not hurt?"

"The pain will be more intense when the crash comes in the end, as come it will. It must be, Nelly. Face it now—it is a wrench, but get it over. Pack up your luggage and go. I can say no more."

"You mean well, Jack," she said more gently. "I thank you for unpalatable, but good advice. I must think. Good-bye!"

He felt he had not succeeded, but could say no more.

When he had gone, Nelly sat down to think.

The position seemed hopeless. Memory rushed back to their separation. How then she had tried to detain him by her side and failed. The scene in the tiny dining-room at the villa was a picture vividly impressed upon her brain. How she had believed the victory won. His reckless action in throwing the roses into the grate. She could hear the crash of the breaking glass now. His loving words, his delight at the prospect of a flight to the other side of the world. The whole scene stood out in sharp contrast to what followed. That was the pleasant side of the picture, that was the dream. How painful the awakening! She tried to put it aside, to think. What was to be her decision? It must be made to-day.

Roy's future rested with her; she had only to say "Come," and he would be ruined. The word startled her—it came unbidden. Ruin! Ruin! It seemed to blaze in fire before her eyes. She had merely toyed with the question so far, had allowed full play to memory, that pleasant memory of the villa; but now reason, cold, hard, cruel reason, said but one word—ruin. If to stay with her before meant ruin to Roy, doubly so would it be now. She tried hard to escape that truth—to say to herself that no one would know.

What was to be her decision?

Impetuously she sprang to her feet, and, pressing her hands upon her aching brows, exclaimed: "It must not be! I love him so, I cannot! Oh, God, if God there be, give me strength! Let me stifle feelings, love, everything. In mercy make me hard, cold, calculating. Yes, that is it—I must be calculating," she laughed bitterly; "calculating, *I!*" and left the sentence unfinished.

"I will plead to him for my sake," she mused. "Yes, that must be my line. Tell him it can only end in unhappiness for me—appeal to his generosity. How foolish of me to talk so! He was forced into a parting before, and would be again. Oh, what am I to say? Jack is right, of course; but it is hard. Ah, well, it is finished, and I must remain a waif and stray. My head aches; I must lie down, or when Roy comes he will think I have grown old and ugly."

As the short November day drew to its close, Nelly dressed with more than usual care, and waited nervously Roy's return. She was to be cold, unbending, but could not resist the pleasure of being pleasing to his eyes. He should see her at her best. It was to be for the last time. Standing before the mirror with brilliant electric lights on either side and above, she surveyed herself critically, and, after a pause, complacently. She was beautiful, and knew it. They were never to meet again; for the last time let him see her to advantage.

And as Roy entered, he exclaimed involuntarily: "How lovely you look, Nelly. More beautiful than ever. I am not really to lose you, am I? Don't break my heart, Nelly."

"It must be, Roy. For your sake, for mine, we must not meet."

"Nelly, I implore you. In thought I am with you always. Cannot you have some pity?"

"Roy! how you tempt me! but you should not. Your duty to your wife, your family."

"Yes, yes, I know. I will consider all that, I will take every care. No one shall know that I see you. Nelly, if you send me away now I shall do something foolish. I am desperate, childish, anything you like to call me. My dear, I swear I love you, but you know that. You are the only woman the world holds; if I lose you again I care for nothing. Nelly, dearest, do not be cruel," and he took her in his arms, crushing her to him as he kissed her passionately.

Now she no longer resisted. Her resolve to be firm and cold was swept away by his impetuous pleading. It had been at best but a make-belief, and shivered into atoms before his passion.

She had said she would appeal for her sake to his manhood—his consideration. Now the thought never crossed her mind. Reason had decreed that this would ruin him, now reason was thrust into the background.

Happy in the moment, returning love for love, the future, like the past, forgotten, the die was cast, prudence was ignored.

(To be concluded.)

Result of Watch Competition.

No. 3.

The correct time was 6hr. 33min. 20sec., and the winner's time was 6hr. 33min. 30sec. The winner is Mr. Oliver Howil, 10, Station Road, Newsham Blyth, Northumberland.

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THE GREEN MOROCCO PURSE.

A DARK-HAIRED girl in a white jersey, with a red ribbon round her neck, sat at the window of a small cottage situated in the village of Twyford. The street on which the cottage faced was narrow and dark, and the room in which the girl sat was clean, but poorly furnished.

She was very sweet and pretty, and looked as much out of place in her dingy, mean surroundings as a moss rose in a London garden. Her brown eyes were clouded, and she spoke in a weary tone to a patient-looking old lady, who sat in an armchair by the fire—for there was a small fire, although it was a hot afternoon in September.

"It's no use, mother," said Nita with a sigh. "We have not got the money, and we are not likely to get it either."

"I wonder, my dear, if you were to go to Reading with a letter to old Mr. Davis, perhaps he would give me the money."

"I don't believe it, and I don't want to go to Reading, and I hate old Davis!" cried the girl petulantly. "I'll go on the river instead; Mr. Barnes will lend me a boat."

She rose and began looking behind the coal-scuttle for her hat. It was the place she usually threw it when she came in. Mrs. Hastings sighed heavily. The sum wanted was only £20, but to these two lone women it was as unobtainable as two millions.

It was owed for rent long overdue, and Nita had been to the landlord with tears in her pretty brown eyes, and begged for time, but now they were unavailing, and the money had to be found within fourteen days.

"*Dear* Mr. Barnes, let me go for a row," she said some few minutes later, sidling up to the boat owner.

He had a great weakness for pretty Miss Hastings, and his wife declared he would give her his pony and traps and all his business if she but asked for it.

"Let me have the *Elfie*—may I?" she continued, indicating a lovely little boat fresh from the painter's hands.

"Not that one, missy," replied Mr. Barnes. "She 'ave just come from Lonnon this day mornin', she 'ave—you take *'er*, missy—she's good, she is," and he helped her into another boat of somewhat less charming exterior.

If she looked pretty on shore, the girl in the white jersey looked ten times more so on the water. But it was not of her appearance she was thinking. The fact of their wanting £20, and there being only 1s. 6d. for the next day's dinner, occupied her mind much more; and the sun was declining when she turned the boat homeward, still undecided as to whether it should be stewed steak or "a little fish to make up."

Suddenly coming towards her round the bend of the river, she saw another boat with a single occupant—and that occupant a man. As it came closer she recognised the boat as the *Elfie*, with her freshly-varnished sides bravely glittering in the sunlight.

"Pah!" said Nita in disgust. "Some horrid tourist down for a couple of hours, who can afford 9d. an hour." But when he came closer she altered her opinion. The man in the boat was Theodore Clements, whose father, the rich diamond merchant, had taken the Grange for the season.

As the boats passed, Mr. Clements bestowed a stare of hearty admiration on the girl in the white jersey, and she looked down and blushed, and hated herself for so doing.

Some hours later he passed her again. It was in the narrow village street, while she was out thoughtfully expending her 1s. 6d. She had dropped her handkerchief, and he ran after her and gave it back, and raised his hat and asked if he might help her carry her parcels home as they lived almost next door, but she curtly thanked him, and hurried home, uncertain as to whether he had not first taken her handkerchief from her pocket and then given it to her!

The next day Mrs. Hastings was firm. Nita must go to Reading with a letter to Mr. Davis. She put it off as late as she could, and finally departed, very much out of temper.

"It *is* a shame," she grumbled, "wasting a beautiful day like this hunting about for a horrid old man, and I know that I am no more likely to get the money from him than I am of seeing it opposite to me in this carriage."

Just at that moment she caught sight of a glitter between the opposite seat and the stuffed back of the carriage. She was alone in the compartment, so bending forward, she put out her hand to feel what it was.

The next moment she had drawn out a heavy green morocco purse!

For quite a minute she stared in stupefaction at the sight, and then with a beating heart she undid the clasp.

There lay before her £25 in gold and a lot of loose silver. If the skies had fallen, Nita would not have been more astonished. She rubbed her eyes and stared at the money, and then rubbed her eyes again. For fully three minutes she sat thus holding the money in her hands, and then came the queston: "What to do with it?"

Should she give it to the guard when the train stopped and have it taken to the lost property office, and perhaps never be claimed? or, perchance, had Heaven sent it to pay the rent; therefore, should she keep it? Nobody being present to answer her self-put questions, she arrived in Reading station, and straightway she put the money in her pocket and walked swiftly away, resolved at present to keep it and see what happened. Mr. Davis was out, and was not expected back; so, heavy hearted and with a guilty sensation of theft upon her, Nita journeyed home, expecting every moment someone to put his hand on her shoulder, and ask her where she got the money from. She *knew* she ought to give the purse up, but she was very poor, and she yielded to temptation, as so many have done. The next few days were those of the keenest agony to the poor girl. Every step that

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passed the house she expected to belong to the constable, and every knock at the door sounded like a summons from Reading Police Court.

She stayed indoors as much as she could, for she was afraid to meet the eyes of the townspeople, and was also afraid of hearing something about the purse, for common-sense told her nobody would be likely to lose a large sum like that and make no inquiries.

At last, a week later, came a curt and cold refusal from Mr. Davis, together with a peremptory notice from the landlord to pay the rent the next day. Mrs. Hastings alternately wept and prayed for the money, and at last Nita set her little teeth, and said to herself: "Very well, I *will* take the money; I am a thief, I suppose, but I shall not be alone in the world. I'll take him that money to-night, and then—and then! What?"

Her thoughts took her no further, how she was to account for the sudden accession to wealth she could not fathom, so, woman-like, she left it alone, hoping for Luck to help her out when the time should come.

Having decided upon her course of action, she felt easier, and sallied forth to buy some small household requisites, humming to herself.

Having made a tour of the village and made her purchases, she went home again.

The little house was silent. Poor Mrs. Hastings had gone out, to see if a friend would help her to find the money. Nita put away her parcels and sat down, and having nothing better to do, idly read the stale country news out of the paper that the candles had been wrapped in.

All at once a small paragraph caught her eyes, and the print danced madly before her! She held on to the table for support, and after a moment managed to read the following:

"Yesterday, Mrs. Maria Higgins charged a young man of gentlemanly appearance with the theft of her purse. Her case was, that she and the accused were the sole occupants of the carriage from H—— to Reading. The purse, which contained the sum of £25 in gold besides some silver, was in her hand as she entered the carriage, because she took her ticket from it.

"On the arrival of the train at Reading she found the door too stiff to open, and asked the accused if he would open it. This he did, and also helped her to alight, and it was then that she found her purse was gone. The accused is a gentleman of high social standing in the county, and the case is exciting a good deal of interest, as although he stoutly denies the theft it is understood he has been losing a good deal lately over horse racing. He stands remanded until next Tuesday."

Next Tuesday? Nita raised her eyes to the ceiling and counted the days over. Heavens, "next Tuesday" was to-day; and perhaps even then, while she sat there, some innocent man was being tried for the theft of the purse that *she*—Nita Hastings—had got in her possession!

Like one possessed she dashed upstairs, and, throwing on her hat and jacket, fled down the street to the railway station, the green morocco purse tight in her hand. The Reading train (there were but three a day) was just starting as she ran over the bridge and called loudly to the guard to wait for her.

He opened a smoking third, threw her in, and the train started. Nita sank exhausted upon a seat, and gazed helplessly at the purse. "Poor man! perhaps he has been convicted and sent to prison, and if he is married, the disgrace may kill his wife! Merciful Heaven! I shall then be a murderess as well as a thief!"

Poor Nita, this last thought nearly distracted her. The train had scarcely time to draw up ere she sprang from the carriage, and was away across the station and down the street towards the Court-house. A large number of idlers were outside.

Clasping the purse tightly against her beating heart, Nita wedged her small figure through the people into the crowded court room.

A loud humming sounded in her ears and she but indistinctly heard someone speak ng: "Now it only remains to decide if the prisoner is the thief——"

"He is not—he is not!" cried Nita, stepping forward and holding the purse high in the air, at sight of which an old woman in green glasses and a blue bonnet shrieked out: "My purse! My purse! Oh, the hussy!"

What a scene there was, and what a noise!

It was not until they threatened to clear the court that Nita's story could be heard.

The poor girl, so excited and so nervous, could hardly speak, and when the magistrate asked her why she had not given the purse up before, she could not answer at first, but on being pressed, she raised her pretty little head proudly, and said:

"Because I am poor, and my mother is poor, and we wanted the money. I did not steal it, I found it, and was tempted to keep it. I only knew an hour ago that an innocent man" (she waved her hand vaguely towards the dock where she saw a man standing) "was accused of taking the money, so—so I have brought it back, although to-morrow my mother and I will be turned into the street without a home, for want of it!" and she burst into tears.

Then someone took her out of the court and into the open air. She sat down on a seat to recover, and curious knots of people gathered round to look at her, especially two rough-looking men, who said they would like to see what a woman was like who would bring £25 back to oblige an unknown person! It was wasting the gifts of providence, according to them!

Then someone gave her his arm and assisted her into a beautiful carriage, wherein was an old gentleman. At sight of her he seized her hand and shook it fervently before everybody and said: "God bless you, my child, you have saved my life and the honour of my family, for had my son been convicted the disgrace would have killed me!"

Nita, still dazed, looked at the old gentleman, and wondered when she had seen him before?

A young man jumped into the carriage, and, raising his hat to the people who gave a cheer at sight of him, the carriage started.

Nita turned round. The young man was Theodore Clements!

"*You* here?" she said involuntarily.

"Rather!" he said with a laugh. "If it hadn't been for you, there's no knowing where I should have been."

"Why?" she said, looking mystified. "I don't understand; were you in there?" indicating the Court-house.

"Was I *there?* Don't you know it was I who was accused of stealing that purse?"

* * * * *

And the villagers even now say that the wedding between Mr. Clements' only son and Miss Nita Hastings was the prettiest that has ever been seen.

Erroll Stanhope.

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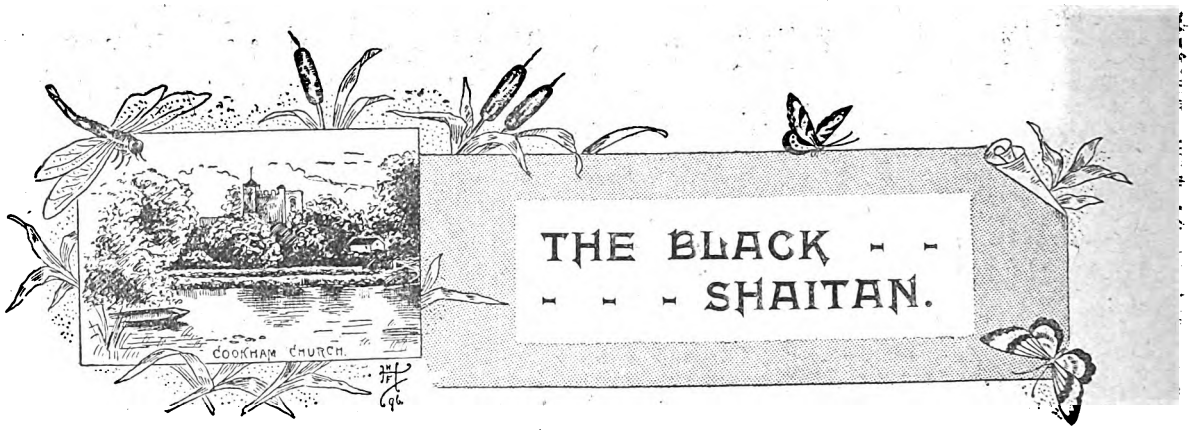

THE BLACK SHAITAN.

Calmly and swiftly the huge *Empress of India* clove her way through the glassy Red Sea. The sun beat down with a relentless intensity, defying every attempt to keep the decks cool, even by the aid of elaborate awnings.

The air literally quivered as though on the verge of combustion; the ship's sides were burning hot, for the fierce rays, pouring down from the pitilessly blue sky, were reflected back by the still surface of the salt sea. Passengers were prostrate in their cabins, seeking shelter, and longing for rain, wind, or sudden death.

Invalids from the scorched-up plains of India, young mothers with their little children, all homeward bound, lay smitten by the fiery darts, gasping for air, wondering whether it would not have been better to have succumbed to fever before they had embarked.

Only one individual seemed utterly indifferent to the heat, though perhaps Captain Jack Clanton, as he reclined in a hammock-chair on deck right through the frightful day, dreamily gazing ahead, was the most affected by it.

He sat thus for hours, until the sun had dipped low on the horizon, inducing some of the more energetic passengers to venture a move from their cabins. Clanton brightened when he heard a joyous childish voice in the saloon, and when he saw the slender, white-clad form of a small maiden emerge on deck, he clapped his hands and called out to her quite gaily.

She was a delicate little thing, with a pale face and rather sunken blue eyes, and a wealth of golden hair. She ran to her friend, and seating herself at his feet, began a merry conversation, plentifully dotted with exclamations and endless questions.

Presently, groups of men and ladies came and installed themselves in lounging chairs under the awning, awaiting their afternoon tea. Three ladies passed Captain Clanton.

The little girl rushed up to one of them, calling out "Mamma." The mother bent down to kiss the uplifted bright face, and then said a few kind words to the Captain, who, however, answered but gruffly.

"What a bear that man is, Mrs. Mordant," said one of the ladies, as they passed on. "You ought not to let little Muriel be so much with him; she is sure to pick up such dreadful manners."

"I think he must be a little mad," added the third lady. "My husband told me many funny stories of his eccentricities."

"Well, it is a very sad story. We have known Captain Clanton for years; in fact, my husband knew him as quite a lad."

"Wasn't there some romantic story about a flirtation, and a girl in the hills who jilted him?"

"No, no; you must not talk like that! It is quite true that he was engaged to his cousin; you know General Cavendish's charming daughter, whom all the men raved about. The girl was much younger than Captain Clanton, who had seen her grow up under his uncle's roof. But she died, and the poor fellow felt the shock terribly. He says Muriel is just as Mary Cavendish was. That is why the child can manage him so well, I suppose."

"Yes, dear; but surely there was some tale going about Miss Cavendish having treated him badly?"

"The poor girl died of cholera."

The answer was slightly inconsequential, but Mrs. Mordant looked as though she wished to change the conversation. Her friends equally plainly showed that they were very far from being satisfied, so presently she spoke again:

"You see, poor Jack was always terribly jealous, and he believes his jealousy killed the girl he loved. Mary was a very lovely girl, who attracted attention wherever she went; and though she was thoroughly loyal to Captain Clanton, yet she could not help showing how much she appreciated admiration. As a rule, Jack's fits of jealousy were soon over, for Mary was really indifferent to all her admirers save her cousin. But last year an Imperial Russian prince came touring through India, and spent some time with General Cavendish. Among the Prince's staff was a very handsome, dark-visaged Khan from Asia, who held a post in the Russian army, and was made much of by his master. The Khan was a young man, partly civilised, having acquired a little of the veneer of Petersburg society. He quickly evinced a deep infatuation for Mary, who, on her part, merely treated him as one of her father's special guests.

"The first real quarrel between the two lovers was about this Khan. Jack hated his handsome face, his graceful horsemanship, and his Russian veneer of sneering, insincere politeness. He resented his admiration for Mary, and let her see it. Mary was greatly offended. She looked upon the Khan as a mere 'black man'—a being inferior to herself and friends—and felt Jack's jealousy as an insult. That Jack should be jealous of his fellow-officers, or even a simple civilian, was pardonable, but to be jealous of a 'black man' was

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quite different. At the same time he was her father's guest, and so she owed him some attention. Perhaps Jack's behaviour made her unconsciously more gracious to the Khan, and an estrangement grew up between the young people.

"It had been arranged that the General should take the Prince and his retinue on a hunting expedition, and that Mary was to remain behind with the Colonel's wife. But the quarrel with Jack made her alter her mind. She determined that she would go with her father, inducing several of the officers' wives to join the expedition. This only enraged Jack, and the more he showed his anger, the more determinedly did she overcome her father's objections and insist on carrying out her new plans.

"The party started for the hills, and soon after news reached us that there was illness among the General's party. We next heard that it was cholera, that several people had died of it, and that the Prince had bolted with his staff. Jack at once obtained leave and rode off to the hills. But he arrived too late. Mary had been seized with the dreadful malady and been carried off in a few hours. When Jack arrived the funeral was over.

"Whether it was the terrible shock or the long ride under the burning sun, Jack fell down in a kind of fit, and for days he was raving in bed. He kept calling Mary, talking of her as though she were still a little child. Then he would heap curses on the head of the 'Black Shaitan,' as he called the Khan. When Jack got better he volunteered for active service in one of our little frontier campaigns.

"But Captain Clanton has never been the same man since his illness. At times he has acted very strangely. He used to be kind to the natives, but he suddenly grew quite cruel and vindictive. Then he drank heavily, and at last had to get invalided home. We all hope that the change will set him up again. Certainly Muriel seems to have a good influence over him."

"But, my dear Mrs. Mordant, he is mad! I certainly should be afraid to leave a child of mine with such a man. Why the doctor told me that the other day Captain Clanton knocked down the ship's barber, poor inoffensive fellow, who was doing nothing, and called him a black devil, and all kinds of dreadful names."

"Yes. I told you he has contracted an unreasoning hatred for the natives."

Then the three friends chatted eagerly about Anglo-Indian ways, and the odd notions of certain generals and commissioners and their wives, until it was time for dinner, when they trooped back into the saloon.

Meanwhile, Captain Jack and little Muriel remained on deck. The Captain did not care for dinner, so he called for brandy and soda. By the doctor's orders Captain Clanton was only served by the stewards with a very little whisky in a great deal of mineral water, but on this night one of the under stewards either forgot his instructions, or wishing to avoid dancing attendance on the Captain, brought him a decanter of strong brandy and placed it on a table by his side.

Jack tasted the fiery liquor, and his craving for alcohol came back to him. He poured out the brandy, diluted it but slightly, and drank it off in great glassfuls. His companion's artless prattle seemed to move him deeply.

Poor Captain Jack had all his wits about him then; the misery of his loss, the dread of the long, dreary future, appalled him. How hard fate had been! His was to have been a life of endless joy with the girl he loved so well, and then his own accursed temper had wrecked everything. The past was full of woe, the future full of terrors.

Men called him mad. Well, yes, undoubtedly he was mad; that dull pain in the head, his cruel hate of every being who seemed capable of joy, his long hours of darkness, when there was no thought left, only a swift-recurring change of blood red with pitch-black before his eyes—that was madness, or the beginning of it.

And Jack's trembling hand poured out yet another glass and he drained it. Poor little Muriel, he thought; was her end to be the same as Mary's? Was a cruel fate, a "Black Shaitan," to cross her path, too? Thoughts crowded on his brain which nerved him to fresh visits to the brandy bottle, and to forget the presence of Muriel. His sufferings were far too intense for outward incidents to arrest his attention.

Neglected Muriel stole quietly away from her moody friend, and presently she encountered one of the Indian servants, the ship's barber, who was arranging chairs and cushions close beside the companion ladder; the little lady began to chat with him. The gentle Hindoo was only too delighted to grin and talk with this beautiful daughter of a great Mem Sahib.

Captain Jack had finished his brandy, his misery had fled, but his brain was on fire. Muriel had vanished, and he went in search of her. Presently he saw her little white figure and walked unsteadily towards her.

As he did so, the barber, perhaps with sore recollections of former *rencontres*, got up from his haunches and moved stealthily away. With a yell of "Black Shaitan!" Captain Jack darted forward, caught Muriel in his left arm, and with his right, jerking out from the shoulder, caught the black barber under the jaw, sending him headlong down the companion ladder. There was a vast hubbub all at once.

The Captain was surrounded by his friends and forcibly taken below to his cabin. He was raving in the paroxysms of *delirium tremens*. The doctor came, shook his head, and declared that all would be over before morning—the Captain's hours were numbered. He could do nothing there, but his services were urgently needed elsewhere, and so he went.

As the night advanced, Jack became calmer, and some of his friends went off, leaving two of the youngest subs to watch him. Then Jack regained his senses a bit, and kept moaning for a drop of brandy. His comrades tried to soothe him, but the moan: "Brandy! brandy!" went on without remission.

"Fetch the doctor, do, old chap," said one of the watchers; "I know plenty of 'Pills' say that a fellow who is bad ought to have a drop to keep him up."

Jack kept up his moan: "Brandy! brandy!"

"Poor devil, he's only an hour or two to live; seems beastly hard to torture him like this."

One of the young fellows went out in search of the doctor, but that worthy could not come, and merely said that no alcohol was to be given.

"Brandy! brandy! brandy!" came from the parched lips of their fever-tossed comrade.

"Go to the steward."

But the steward had grown alarmed at his previous indiscretion, and he refused. The moaning was piteous, and at last one of the subs went out on a raiding expedition. Everyone refused him the spirits he asked for, and he could find none in the cabins. As he was passing by one of the state-rooms Mrs. Mordant came out, and she asked after her poor friend. While he was answering her the young fellow caught sight of a bottle of eau-de-Cologne. He begged her to let him have it.

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"I've tried to get a drop of liquor for the poor chap everywhere, and can't. Let me have that. It'll be a mercy to the poor beggar, and can't do him any harm, for the doctor said he couldn't last till morning."

After much persuasion Mrs. Mordant gave the bottle, which was carried off triumphantly. They gave the patient a few drops in a glass of water. It seemed to refresh the dying man. He lay back with a gasp as though he were going to sleep. One of the watchers said he would take a turn on deck, seeing that all was quiet, and would come back and relieve his friend. But Jack did not go to sleep.

He watched his opportunity, and when he saw he could safely do so, he stretched out his arm, took hold of the bottle of eau-de-Cologne, and emptied it down his throat. Then he leaned back, exhausted. The stillness misled the inexperienced nurse, who, seating himself on a chair, dozed off.

By this time the spirituous essence was burning Jack up. He felt on fire, his brain was in a horrible whirl, ten million demons surrounded him, mocking and insulting, while they dug their burning claws into his living flesh, and tore him into ribbons. He could not do battle with them, for they were so much stronger, more cunning than he; but he would try to get away.

Slowly and painfully he rose, trying to brush aside the demons and their attendant imps with his feverish hands. Stealthily he crept to the cabin door, despairingly pressing forward to escape the infernal crew, and made his way on deck.

It was a moonless but starlit night, black masses of deck houses and rigging cast dense shadows on the snowy p anks. Suddenly the demons left him, all but one, who perched on his head, digging great claws into his temples, for there before him stood his guardian angel, his little white-clad Mary, with a glowing radiance about her tossing curls.

She seemed to beckon to him, and he went. Then he stood still and frantically tried to clutch the fiend on his head, for between him and his angel came the grinning Black Shaitan. As he hesitated, the legion of devils swarmed about him again, tearing him to pieces, while the chief, the Black Shaitan, advanced towards the angel Mary, gibbering and salaaming. With a yell that awakened every soul on board, Captain Jack dashed forward, upsetting the mild Hindoo barber, and seizing terrified little Muriel in his strong arms, plunged overboard.

Cries and hurried orders were heard on all sides. The engines were reversed and the ship stopped. Boats were lowered, and search-lights flashed over the phosphorescent waters, but poor demon-tormented Captain Jack, and his guardian angel, Muriel, were never seen again of man.

Cadogan Rothery.

Amongst the Killed.

A man of method was old Mr. Staples. He always came down to breakfast at the same time, and always expected to find his daughter at the table before him, so that he could begin his meal without any preliminary skirmishing.

Breakfast over he would produce a battered old briar, and sit down for half-an-hour or so over the *Standard*.

He was a widower. His daughter Janet looked after him, though, truth to tell, he did not want much looking after, for a more independent old gentleman it would have been hard to find.

It was a fine spring morning. Mr. Staples finished his breakfast, produced his pipe, got out his paper—all according to rule.

"The situation in the East—murder in Yorkshire—speech by the Premier—ah-um, yes. Dear! dear! Janet my dear, there's some more fighting in South Africa; I wonder if Roger—Good Heavens!" The old gentleman suddenly dropped the paper as though it had been a living coal, and springing to his feet, gazed at his daughter with a face almost piteous in the intensity of its horror.

In an instant Janet had caught his alarm. Her face paled.

"Father, father!" she cried, "what is it?"

The old man pulled himself together. He put his arm round his daughter: "My dear, my dear," he said "the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away, ble——" but he got no further, for in a moment Janet had broken loose from his grasp, and snatched up the fallen newspaper. "Roger!" she cried; "Roger, he is hurt! Oh, father, where is it?"

But as she spoke, her quick eyes caught the passage that had caused her father's cry of anguish, those few simple words that meant so much to her:

A Brush With The Matabele.

. . . . Amongst the killed are George Smith, Roger Furneaux—

The words danced before her eyes. Another moment she had fainted.

* * * * *

Roger Furneaux sat in his comfortable office in Johannesburg. He felt particularly happy that morning. Things were going exceptionally well with him, so well indeed, that at the present rate it would be a case of good-bye to the Cape in a few months or so, and then hurrah for home and Janet.

He leaned back in his seat and gazed out through the window at the steel-blue sky. He wondered what Janet was doing at that moment. An idea suddenly came to him. He would go home and surprise her as soon as ever he had finished his "money grubbing." He had as yet told her no word of his unexpected good fortune, how he had so miraculously "made his pile." He pictured her joy. At that moment came a knock at the door.

"Come in," he cried.

The door opened and a man entered, a big, brawny, bearded fellow, with a battered straw hat upon his head, clad for the rest in garments which a scarecrow would have felt ashamed to wear.

Furneaux regarded his strange visitor with evident surprise; the man hesitated a moment. A mirthless laugh escaped him.

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"Furnie!" he said.

Roger sprang to his feet. "Furnie" had been his nickname at school: "who——"

Again the man uttered his mirthless laugh. "You don't know me?" he said bitterly. "I'm Jack Playfair!"

"Jack Playfair!" In an instant Furneaux had hold of the big man's hand. "Jack! Jack!" he cried, "what are you doing here?"

"What many another ne'er-do-weel is," answered the other recklessly, "nothing! I am off to the veld to-morrow, and I looked in to see you for auld lang syne's sake, and also——" he hesitated, "to beg an old suit of clothes, if you have such a thing."

"Why, of course, man," answered Furneaux, "but you must stay here a bit with me. Why must you go off into the wilds?"

But the other stopped him.

"No, no, Furneaux. I am a failure. I am beyond all that sort of thing. Let the past be the past. I shouldn't have looked in to worry you now, only"—his voice broke— "I wanted to see an old face. I've come a cropper. So say no more."

Neither could Furneaux shake him from his purpose. All Playfair would allow his old schoolfellow to do was to fit him out from his wardrobe. He would have no pecuniary help. The next day they parted for ever.

* * * *

Six months had gone by since that morning when Janet Staples learned that she had lost her lover, and in that short time the colour had died down from her cheeks, and dark shadows had formed round her sad blue eyes.

It had never occurred to her to doubt the truth of that meagre statement in *The Standard*. Why should it have? There could not be two Roger Furneauxes in South Africa. Besides, she had had no letter from him since that date. He would surely have written to her had he been alive. Poor child, how could she know of his plan to take her by surprise?

But one evening came a ring at the bell, a furious, impatient peal. Then a man's voice asking for her. The colour rushed to her cheeks.

Who could it be? She heard the front door open. That voice!

The door of the sitting-room was flung open. The next moment she was in Roger's arms, neither did she swoon away, as is fashionable in novels on such occasions, or shrink back in alarm for fear that it was a ghost. She said nothing. It was only after the joy of the first embrace that she ventured to speak.

"I thought you were dead, Roger," she said, and then her lover had to kiss the tears away—tears of utter joy.

The truth soon came out.

Poor Jack Playfair had gone out into the veld, there to fall a victim to a Matabele assegai. There had been nothing to identify him—nothing save the marking upon his clothes, so that in the hastily-dug grave, far away on the South African veld, the supposed remains of Roger Furneaux still lay in their last rest.

There was but one other explanation. Roger's silence. Why had he not written?

"I wanted to surprise you, darling," he said. "I knew you didn't expect me to make my fortune so soon. So I said nothing. I only worked on, and looked forward to the time when I should be able to come home and claim you. How I wish now that I had let you know my plans!"

The door of the sitting-room was flung open.

There was no need for them to wait longer. They were married. At the present they are living in London. And old Mr. Staples lives with them.

Over Roger's writing-table hangs a newspaper cutting, framed in black oak, the brief record of that Matabele skirmish. In full it runs as follows:

A Brush with the Matabele.

Danver's Horse were surprised this morning by a body of Matabele, who were repulsed after a severe engagement, with heavy loss, though, unfortunately, not before several of the whites were killed and wounded. Among the killed are Troopers Brown and Morrison; George Smith, Roger Furneaux . . . .

E. Le Breton Martin.

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The Shadow-Hand

By Louis Tracy.

CHAPTER XX.

Wheeler *v.* Hawke.

Dr. Lemaitre stalked home from the Rue Morcelle in a thundering rage. He found Hawke at his mansion in the Rue de Rome in a somewhat maudlin state. A large sum of money was in Mr. Hawke's pocket. He had been drinking.

"What is it you want here?" asked Lemaitre furiously.

"Nothing, mate. A friend's a friend, I suppose?"

"Drunken ass! Make haste, before I kick you down the stairs!"

"Why, what's the matter? I am in luck's way; so are you. We're all in luck's way!"

"You are a vile idiot, Hawke! She is gone, I tell you—flown! We might just as well never have found her! The money I have crammed your pockets with, you dog, was *for nothing*. If you do not find her by this time to-morrow——"

"Gone?" said Hawke in tipsy surprise. "More fool you to *let* her go!"

"Very well, sir. Will you leave my house at once, and do not dare to show your face here until you come with news that you have found her again. You understand me?"

"All very fine, mate, but——" said Mr. Hawke, lifting himself heavily from his seat and backing away, observing danger in Lemaitre's eye and flushed face.

In a deep corner of his heart he had a secret dread of Lemaitre's rage. The next day he refrained from drink, and began his search for Edith.

Cécile had already been in Paris for about two weeks She had called at 17, Rue de Printemps, on Dr. Danton, and found the house locked up. A neighbour of No. 17 informed her that a Dr. Lemaitre had lived there for some years.

"And also a Dr. Danton?" she asked.

"No—at least I never saw him."

Cécile said to herself: "Did he live there secretly, then? Or were his letters only addressed from there?" She added aloud:

"Dr. Lemaitre was married, I think?"

"Oh, yes! His wife was supposed to be rather afraid of him, though violent-tempered herself. One could sometimes hear his powerful voice calling 'Julie!' half down the length of the street."

If Danton's letters were addressed to Lemaitre's house, Cécile decided that their intimacy must have been even greater than if they had lived together.

"I must find Lemaitre," she said; "he is the clue to Danton, as Danton is the clue to Edith."

One day she ran across Inspector Wheeler in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré.

"Well, now, miss, this *is* a meeting, now," said Mr. Wheeler, shaking her hand with beaming face; "I did not expect this pleasure——"

"Nor I," said Cécile. "What are you doing here?"

"Hawke, miss, Hawke; Hawke's in Paris as sure as you see that sun shining there, and before another two days are over, this hand's going to pat him on the shoulder."

"I hope so, Inspector, if it will give you pleasure. This is my address, and you may call upon me for a chat, if you have time. I may tell you meantime that I have discovered that the Thorgill Beck murder was most likely committed by a man—a doctor—called Lemaitre, a tall, pale man, who wears coloured waistcoats. Leave Hawke to go, Inspector, and find *him*. If you search his things, and find a travelling rug with blood-red hairs, you will guess that he is the right; if you find a mauve-coloured overcoat as well, you will be convinced that he is the right; but suppose you find two or three of the red hairs still sticking to the back of the mauve coat? Then, Inspector, you will be absolutely certain that he is the right."

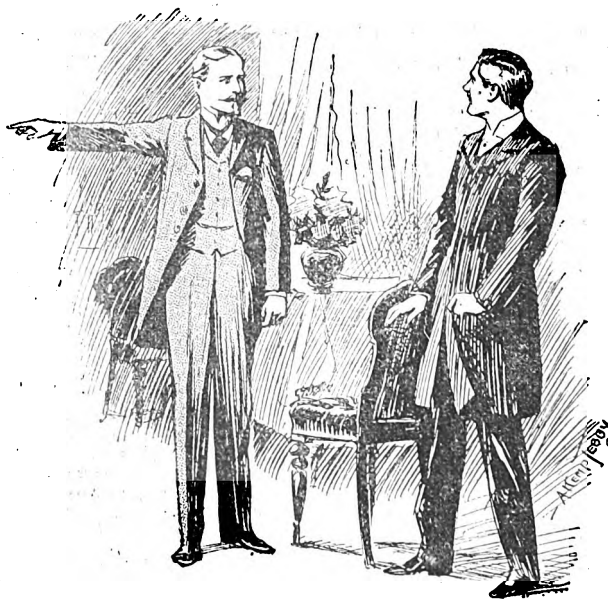
She tripped away. The Inspector, with wide, wondering eyes, looked after her.

"Well, if she isn't the queerest fish—and she's plenty of brains, that's quite certain. But Hawke's the man to get hold of. Hawke first, the rest after. Hawke's at the bottom of a good deal of the mischief done in this world."

"The poor Inspector!" Cécile was saying to herself. "He is joined to his idols. He will never do or find anything or anybody until he gets Hawke off his mind."

Hawke, meanwhile, in mortal dread of the scourge of Lemaitre's anger, was putting all his wits and energy to work in order to find Edith.

He made a list of all the *modistes* of Paris. He reasoned shrewdly that Edith would not, in her inexperience, think of a new



He had a secret dread of Lemaitre's rage.

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The two cabs dashed . . . through the streets.

mode of making a living, but would seek it in the old way at a new point. In the purlieus of these shops he loitered whole days, eating out his stale heart with *ennui*, pining for the wine-bottle and gaming-table.

One evening, as he was about to move away from one of these establishments, he lifted up his eyes and saw Wheeler quietly watching him.

Hawke's heart gave one bound, and his bronzed, hard-skinned face went a dirty yellow. But only for an instant. In the next he was himself again, coolly calculating his chances of escape.

Like lightning a series of thoughts passed through the rascal's world-wise brain.

"He sees that I am well-dressed" (Hawke had on a frock coat over his broad round bulk, and over the abyss of his paunch hung a watch-chain), "he knows that I am up to something, and whether he has proof or not, he feels justified in arresting me. He means to do it. But he mustn't. I've got too much money on me. Here's for it! There's ten yards between Wheeler and me. He don't know Paris, I shouldn't think. Only pity is, I am getting so jolly heavy."

But Mr. Wheeler still had some lightness in the legs which had already served him many a good turn. Hawke bolted. Wheeler, a much younger man, a much taller, but heavy too, was after him. In less than a minute Hawke had sprawled and dived into a passing *fiacre*, and bidden the driver fly his hardest. He knew the world too well to imagine that he could escape in that way; he knew that there were more *fiacres* than one in Paris, and that Wheeler would follow him in another. But he had his plan, his head was cool. "I always *could* outwit Wheeler," he said to himself, "except just that once when he nabbed me."

His aim in getting into the cab was to gain time. Wheeler was after him, and the two cabs dashed, rattling at a mad gallop through the streets, both occupants looking out and spurring their drivers to still wilder efforts.

Hawke had given as a direction to his Jehu the Rue de l'Enfer, in the Marais. It is a narrow, winding alley, without pavements, dark and filthy. One night, during his six weeks' spree in Paris, he had been taken to an old house in this Rue de l'Enfer by an English fellow-hater of the police, who had long lived in Paris, an old pal of Hawke's, a man of the same crimes and class, perhaps even more desperate than Mr. Hawke. The old house, totally unoccupied, was falling to pieces in a courtyard of broken slabs, and stood back a little way from the street. Its black and damp interior was bare of furniture; but in a small kitchen at the back stood a rotting table on three legs against the wall; and here Hawke and his companion had drunk in wicked friendship, and slept till morning. It was on waking on the floor late in the day that Mr. Hawke had discovered a secret of the room, of which he made a note for future use.

While the cab was still in motion he paid his man, and pelted from it into the doorless front of the old building.

Wheeler was close behind him.

"Stop, Hawke, or I fire!" rang the voice of the Inspector through the echoing desolation of the almost floorless house.

But on rushed Hawke, dodging, slamming the remains of doors in the Inspector's face, his short legs racing at their widest angle of urgency.

He had the almost complete darkness of the bat-haunted old building in his favour, but his dull, heavy tramp, sounding on the wet boards, guided his pursuer.

Every here and there, the flooring yawned black where a piece was missing, and they were both every moment in imminent danger of snapping their legs short off as they ran. At last, Hawke went crashing ponderously down. And the next moment Wheeler tumbled over him.

"Got you, Hawke!" panted Wheeler, instantly slipping on a pair of handcuffs.

"Well, Wheeler, you have," said Hawke, picking himself up. "Fair's fair—you have. I admit it, Wheeler."

Mr. Hawke's hands rested, riveted together, upon his frock-coated paunch. Wheeler had him by the sleeve, panting through his open mouth.

"Game's up, Hawke, my boy!"

"Not *too* soon, Wheeler!" shouted Hawke in a roaring voice, and at the same time, with a violent wrench, twisted his arm free.

The mad race recommenced through the ancient, black, and echoing halls. Hawke was handcuffed, but a man does

"Stop, Hawke, or I fire!"

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He disappeared —suddenly and utterly.

not run with his hands. The old fellow, as he flew, felt once more the joy of his wild, bad youth, the old forgotten devilries caroling in his blood.

He reached the kitchen where he had had the carouse with his pal. It was at the end of the house, on the side farthest from the Rue de l'Enfer. A beam of moonlight shone in through the broken roof and the floorless rafters of the two upper floors.

Hawke ran, and laid his back against the wall at the farthest end, opposite the door by which he had entered. Immediately afterwards Wheeler rushed in, and drew up near the door, pointing his revolver.

"Hawke," he said, "if you move again, I shoot."

"Well, Wheeler, you see, I can't run any further," panted Hawke; "if you want me, come and take me."

The Inspector with rapid stalk moved towards him; but midway across the room he disappeared—suddenly and utterly. There was a cry of horror, and a loud splash of water from beneath.

He had walked over a doorless opening in the flooring, and fallen through the trap into a puddle below.

Here it was utterly dark. He found himself in a small, deep cellar with rough, damp walls, from which he could discover no egress.

As Hawke walked away, he said to himself, with a merry laugh:

"Well, poor old Wheeler! he ain't a bad sort, is Wheeler. But I always said I could out-wit him. I must send somebody in the morning to git him out of that there hole."

He himself waited in the ruins till the streets were perfectly empty; then he stole his way with many a pause and ...ar, towards Lemaitre's house in the Rue de Rome.

CHAPTER XXI.

Evil Devices.

...re, lost as Edith was to him, had an infallible ...unicating with her.

...lo was to insert whatever he wished to say in the paper in which her eyes had met the advertisement of Cécile. He, too, had seen the advertisement later on, and recognised it as the cause of her flight, and he knew that ever after she would be sure to search the columns of that particular paper for messages from Cécile to her.

He therefore used it as the medium of a series of *avertissements* directed to her, praying her to reveal her whereabouts, not to believe the evil spoken of him. All these he signed with his name, but received no token from her.

At last, when nearly mad with longing, he had a thought. He put into the paper this message:

To Edith.—Everything has been cleared up satisfactorily. Stay away no longer from us. Lady H—— is very ill. So am I. To-morrow, at three, shall be at No. 11, Rue Taitbout, waiting for you.—Arthur.

No. 11, Rue Taitbout, was a large, unoccupied, and empty house, purchased by Lemaitre a day or two previously.

To his joy, Edith replied to this message in the same newspaper. She said:

I mistrust. What is cleared up? Must see Arthur's signature and crest reproduced.—Edith.

In order to pay for the insertion of these words she had gone to bed supperless that night.

Lemaitre frowned. Arthur's signature and crest? She had, then, faith in the word of this brainless soldier and not in *him?* A dark flash of anger, of cruel jealousy, overspread his face.

The signature and crest were easily obtained. Arthur had written to him a letter mentioning the breach of his word after the duel. Lemaitre simply cut off the name and the crest at the top, and sent it to the paper to be reproduced with the following words:

Edith,—To-morrow at 11, Rue Taitbout. Do not fail. Your obstinacy is dreadful. Herewith crest and signature.—Arthur Musgrave.

On the morrow Edith did not come. All day Danton walked from end to end of a long corridor of the empty house in mad haste, like a man tormented with furies.

On the third day Edith answered, not having the necessary money before:

Still mistrust. What were the last words that passed between us in the lane? Answer at once.—Edith.

She was shrewd enough to know that the advertisements might not come from Arthur at all, but from Hawke, Lemaitre, anybody. But if the advertiser could give the last words spoken between Arthur and her in the lane on the night of Arthur's tipsy outbreak of passion, brought about by Cécile's cunning—words which none but they two had heard—that would be fully convincing, and in view of his assertion that something or other had been "cleared up satisfactorily," she would then consider the advisability of emerging again into the light of day.

It may be supposed that, at this message of Edith's, Dr. Lemaitre was utterly non-plussed. How could he possibly know what these "last words" were? But the man, now in a state bordering on frenzy, did not for a moment despair or doubt. Impossibilities seemed easy to him; a thousand difficulties, a thousand lives that came between him and her he would sweep away. He immediately set about the discovery of those last words.

He would see Captain Musgrave at once. He would tear the words from the officer's throat. He sent on his trunk to the *Gare du Nord*. That night he would start for Calais.

But fortune favoured him singularly. In the afternoon, as he drove in his stately *equipage à quatre*, leaning back wearily in the brougham, through the Bois de Boulogne, his keen eye caught sight of Arthur standing in the well-dressed crowd a little way from the carriage-path. Lemaitre at once pulled the check-rein and got out.

Arthur, within a few days, was to leave Europe for Egypt. The —th Hussars had been ordered to the front.

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He had come to Paris, during a short leisure, to bid a sick-hearted farewell to civilisation, guessing that he would be in the same city as his love, and knowing that Cécile was here. Cécile's presence had somehow lately come to mean for Arthur a strange consolation and solace. It was only when near her that he now found the least assuagement from the despair which made all life bitter to him. If he had a hope left it was a hope in Egypt and the peace-giving bullets of the Mamalukes.

A little distance away, unknown to him, stood his servant and shadow, Tom Wilson.

"Captain Musgrave—I am delighted to see you," said Lemaitre, standing before him.

Arthur stared up into the pasty face, grown hideously sallow of late, with a stare which few men could have borne.

"Do not any longer play the child," said Lemaitre; "we are not children; we are men of the world. I have business of the utmost seriousness with you. You think, no doubt, that Miss Wentworth is with me—in my house——"

"Frightful ruffian," sighed Arthur faintly.

"Yes, I say, you are playing the child. Listen to me, sir, and be a man! How dare you act with this flippancy when matters of such moment are involved? It now depends entirely upon you whether Miss Wentworth be restored to her friends or not. At present I pledge you my honour that I do not know where she is."

"Danton, you have no honour. You are most certainly a great rascal. And as for Miss Wentworth, she is entirely at liberty to dispose of her actions. I do not care a straw where she is."

"You do! You do!" cried Danton. "Englishmen of your class despise a certain kind of lying—lying which is serviceable, and results in some practical advantage; but you will yourselves tell any number of foolish lies, like the one *you* have just told, for the sake of keeping up a shallow pretence of silly *nonchalance*. I am astonished that you should persist in such conduct!"

It was like a father rating his son.

"I shall certainly have you locked up in some sort of gaol, if you do not go away," drawled Arthur.

"You *do* persist in it, then?" cried Danton. "But you shall not. In kindness to yourself, I will not let you. See here—I will show you the means by which our friend may be recovered, if you are not too great a child to refuse to see it," he drew from a pocket some newspapers, and pointed one by one to his advertisements, and the answer from Edith.

Arthur had suddenly dropped from his high horse of disdain. His hands trembled a little. He read the passages.

"You cannot mean to confess that you have used my name in this way to Miss Wentworth?" he said.

Arthur stared up into the pasty face.

"Yes—I *do* mean to confess it! Do you not see that all this is not fun—not child's play—but dreadfully earnest? Miss Wentworth, I have reason to think, is suffering acute poverty and anguish in her hiding-place. Is it likely that I would hesitate to use whatever was the readiest means to hand to induce her to come back to happiness?"

"I see," said Arthur, "you do not stick at a sort of crime whenever it will assist your purposes?"

"No more of that, sir! The question is, are you prepared to insert in the paper the 'last words' spoken between you and Miss Wentworth in whatever 'lane' it is she refers to; and so induce her to meet us?"

"Yes," said Arthur; "I will do so; but she will not meet *us*, Danton; she will meet *me*."

"You speak just like a child," said Danton pityingly; "what do you mean?"

"I mean that I shall put another address in my advertisement, not the Rue Taitbout; an address at which you will not be—for you will not know it."

Danton smiled.

"But do you think," he said, "that I will not see your message to her in the paper, and the address you give? Do you suppose I shall not be there? I cannot think that you are serious. If you put your message in another paper, it is fifty to one that she will not see it. And if you alter the address of the Rue Taitbout, you probably rouse her suspicion, and cause her to keep away. She is at present shyer than a bird, you know. And it would serve no useful purpose. *You* will be at the Rue Taitbout with me when she arrives. Everything will be fair and open. Her subsequent conduct must be left to her own will. Do I not speak reasonably?"

Arthur did not answer.

"It only remains that you put your message in the paper to-morrow; or tell me the words, and I will insert them for both of us."

"Very well, Danton—since I am doomed, it seems, to be associated with a creature of your kind. The 'last words' in question were: 'Good-bye. I shall write later.' You may be sure, meanwhile, in case you be tempted to play any trick with the address in the way of alteration, that I shall keep my eye on every edition of the paper; and I shall be at the spot in good time."

Dr. Danton, with a slight glance of contempt, turned, mounted his brougham, which leaned and creaked to his weight, and drove away. The next evening there appeared in the Courier de Soir this advertisement:

Edith,—How mistrustful! The last words were: "Good-bye. I shall write later." The day after to-morrow (Friday) at three, No. 11, Rue Taitbout. Do not fail.—Arthur.

When Lemaitre read this notice he threw himself backward in his chair, looked upward, and said:

"*Now*, Captain Musgrave, I think I have you safe in my hands! and you, too, Edith—my love! my life! never more, for ever, to lose you!"

Musgrave, reading the same notice, said: "But why the day *after* to-morrow? Why not to-morrow? I have little time to lose on account of this Egyptian mess."

The day "*after* to-morrow" was chosen by Dr. Lemaitre because he needed time; he had certain preparations to make. He was a very learned man. His knowledge of subtle and obscure poisons was far more wide and profound than that of most medical men. He had made the subject of *poisons* his special study for years.

Arthur had promised to see Cécile on the next day. But having to visit the Embassy in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, and to provide himself an outfit of tropical clothes, he found himself too busy.

"To-morrow," he said, late at night, "after I have seen Edith, will be the best time. I will take her with me to Miss Delisle's hotel."

To-morrow! What it will bring forth is wrapped in a darkness blacker than the blackest midnight.

(*To be continued.*)

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LITTLE CORA.

I.

The little model looked charming in her Directoir hat, with her pretty, close-fitting dress of striped pink, and disordered frizzy black hair, while the painter gradually and tenderly developed on the canvas the outline of her supple little form—her youthful figure dimly showing beneath the gauze-like material of her old-fashioned costume.

"Ah! Monsieur Georges, this dress is pretty, very pretty, but it isn't what I should choose to be painted in!" She spoke with a soft Creole accent, very tenderly, with her face upturned—the copper-coloured pale face of an Arabian child—and opening wide her big, melancholy black eyes.

"And how would you like to be painted then, Mademoiselle Cora?"

The little model became enthusiastic all at once as a thought flashed through her mind, and she answered with trembling voice:

"What do I wish? As a Sister of Mercy I should like to see myself!"

"A Sister of Mercy?"

"Yes, with those great white wings which flap at each side of the face. They are beautiful, and it is so good to be a Sister of Mercy. I should like to be one. I a Sister of Mercy instead of——"

She stopped, and her black eyes filled with tears.

"If you cry, little Cora, your costume won't suit you."

It was in the studio of my young friend Georges, two doors from the church of St. Vincent de Paul, the towers of wh ch stood out against the sky, grey against the blue—the blue of a sky in May.

The little model was far away from the picture in which she figured. Her look, full of a melancholy despair, became fixed on the church towers.

"Sister of Mercy."

Her lips, of a deep vivid red, repeated under her breath the words that she had just spoken so regretfully, "Sister of Mercy."

"And how are you now?" asked the artist, still continuing his picture while Cora posed at a little distance from him in the light.

"How am I, M. Georges? Very well—I am quite well! I—I think I shall go out! The doctor has given me a draught with ether in it which has done me good. I sleep better——"

She coughed a little, adding quickly as if to excuse—or was it to deceive?—herself.

"I have still a cough, but such a little! Oh, it is going away, M. Georges. I am quite well. What does not go——"

She stopped and tried to smile, her childish face, the tiny nose, the delicate little ears, all expressing with terrible sadness her vain effort to appear cheerful.

"What does not go is the headache!"

"Or the heart-ache. You still think of him always?"

"Always, yes, always! And I always will think of him," repeated the poor Creole.

Ah! The romance of little Cora! In the heart of this woman-child there was a vision of suffering. Life had dealt hardly with her, and had brought this melancholy look to her face. The breath of love had whispered amongst her curly locks, and had saddened her full lips, which were only made for kisses and smiles.

Yes, there was in the whole world a someone who for her was *the* someone to whom her thoughts would always turn; someone who had forgotten her, doubtless, who thought no more of her; someone of whom she only knew the first name, "Pierre," a name repeated thousands of times, as sweet to her as a caress. She loved this name. It was all that remained of her past, not very far back either, for how old was little Cora? Eighteen years!

"But," said she sadly, "one is old at eighteen in my country, especially"— and she tried to drown with her laugh the sorrow her words expressed—"when one hasn't had good luck."

II.

"Who was M. Pierre?" She still called him that just as when she had first addressed him, down there in Réunion.

"Who was he? Lieutenant in the Marine Infantry, and so noble, so good! Little, like me, very fair, with a small moustache turned up at the ends, which I loved to curl with my finger tips, when he would let me."

"We loved each other at once, as the way is. Why not when one is free, and knows that one can please oneself? My parents were dead. I lived there with an old aunt, who wished to make me a milliner. It was a good idea. The hats that were made in the island, they were pretty! And Pierre, he was so good. I used to say to myself: 'Seeing that he loves me, he will make me his wife. I love him only. I will always love him only. I am an honest girl, as he is an honest man, and I love him, with all my power, with all my heart.' When he held me in his arms and I leaned against the officer's stripes on his uniform, I felt prouder than if they had made President of the Republic!

"There are Marine Infantry barracks in the suburb of Poissonière. When I pass them, on my way to the Rue Lafayette, I stop, M. Georges, and gaze at the men, their uniforms, their yellow epaulettes, and I say to myself, 'Perhaps I will see him!' He may not be in Paris, but I hope always, and when I have looked for a moment at them, my eyes fill with tears—all the past is before me.

"I see the island, the sea, the ship 'down there,' our sky, our trees. All these pass before me like a dream. They haven't the white uniform of the tropics here, but there they are nevertheless, the same as at my home. Then I remember and say to myself: 'You are stupid, my poor Cora; all that is done with; you are no longer in Réunion—you are in Paris'—Paris is melancholy, and hard to live in!

"I think longingly of the time when I acted as interpreter for him. I have been on a campaign, you know! I went with the Marine Infantry to Madagascar. I liked it—the swamp, the fatigue. He had under his command the volunteers of Réunion. I marched with them, yes, I. I was not afraid, I assure you. I was amused by the cannonading at Majunja, and also when we were attacked on board the *Bonnemary*. We heard the whistling of the balls—pss! pss!—but what did that matter to me? I was with him!

"His men adored him as I did. The lieutenant! When they said 'The Lieutenant' you would think they were speaking of a god. And when he said to them 'Go,' they went. When we made a dash through the

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jungle he went first. He took great strides, and I with my small steps walked beside him. We nearly disappeared in the grass. Sometimes we hid there, and I kissed him while the shots were flying all around. I had a charm given me by a native sorcerer that preserved us.

"The captain, who had authorised me to go as interpreter with the column, died of lock-jaw one night. He had received a wound which he neglected and continued the march. Pierre nursed him better than any doctor, but he died saying: 'This is terrible! I wished to die facing the Germans. Ah! This dog of a country! Lieutenant, I give over my men to you. Take back as many as you can to France, the brave boys!' I still hear his voice. His cry 'Die here! Die here!'

"I think of it all, and say to myself: 'In spite of the fatigue, the firing, the scarcity of water, the swamp where death lurked, the nights when the enemy was ready to take us by surprise, it was a good time. I would live through every hour again!' But it is all over now, alas, and one beautiful day the column returned to Tamatave.

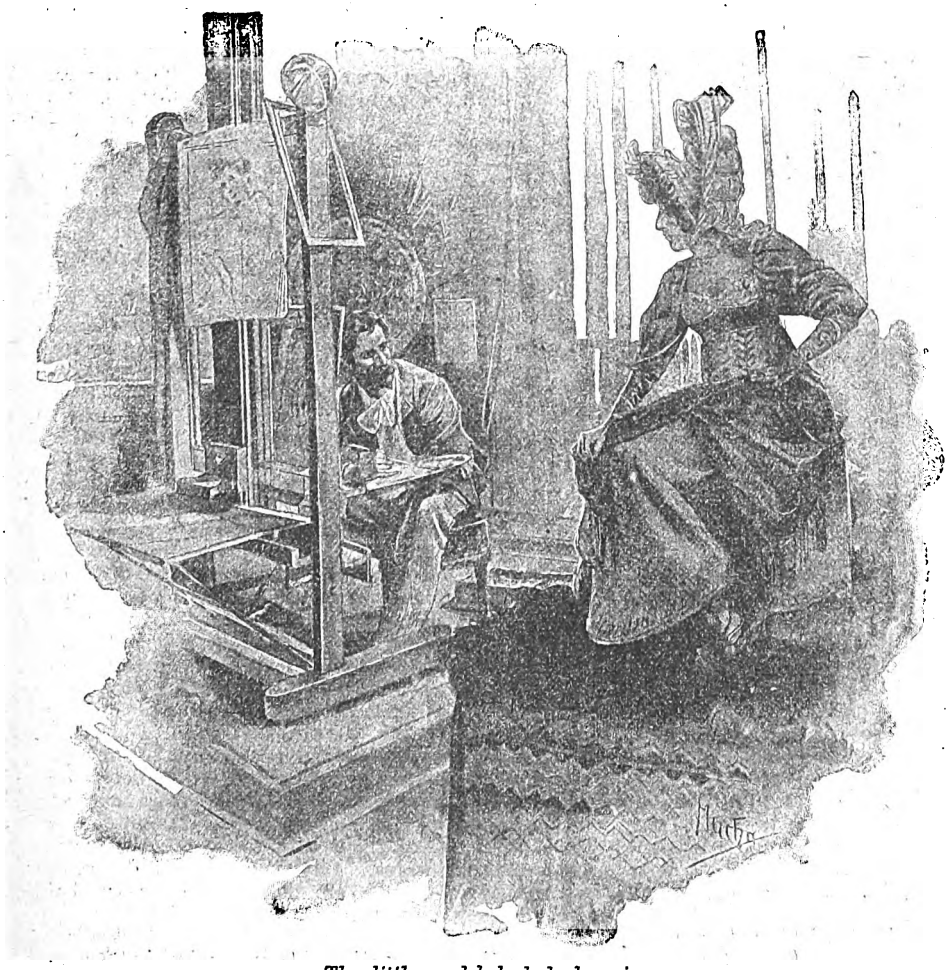
"We had buried the captain in a hole with many others far away. Pierre was in command, and returned in triumph, burnt by the sun as black as I. The governor complimented him. Ah! those compliments! I was wild with joy at his success. I said to him, 'They will make you a Colonel, at least!' 'A Captain, you are quite silly, my little Cora.' He was right, I was very foolish, but if they had made him a General right away I would have thought it only just.

"If I had only guessed that that campaign was going to separate us—that he would be recalled to France, to Paris, because of his advancement! Nevertheless, that was what happened. He told it me joyously one morning, not noticing that it made me sad. He was leaving for France, and he seemed astonished to see tears in my eyes.

"'Probably,' he said, 'he would find on arrival his nomination for promotion.' I was content because he was, but I was also grieved, yes, grieved, because he did not understand the pain I felt in spite of his joy—or because of his joy—who knows?

"He couldn't take me with him, it seemed. It was impossible. A government vessel wasn't like the swamp; one couldn't hide in it. But, at least, if he couldn't take me with him he could write to me. Oh, yes, he promised me that. Has he forgotten Cora, his little Cora?

"Then he said. 'You would make a pretty picture.' I was fated to be a model, M. Georges, you see. That gave him heart to leave me, I knew. It was in vain I pleaded, 'Hide me somewhere, take me away. You take your treasure, why not me? I will make myself so small, no one will see me!' No. Always the same answer. 'You are silly,' or 'You are foolish.' Yes, one is often so when one loves much.



The little model looked charming.

"And then the day came when the ship was to sail. The farewell was said, the last kiss given, and the last prayer whispered in his ear. 'You will write to me, you will write to me?'

"The last caress of his fair moustache was on my lips. 'Yes, little Cora, I will write.'

"Then the boat took him away. He waved his hand, went on board the ship, and disappeared, as if a great shark had swallowed him. The ship sailed further and further away and became so small that the smoke was all one could see. Then that became a mere speck, which grew smaller and smaller until—there was nothing. Nothing! No more Pierre, no more

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love! Little Cora alone in the world, with no one to care for.

"At first I said: 'He will come back,' or again, 'I'll forget, one always forgets in time,' but the days passed, I didn't forget, and he didn't come. You can understand how sad I was, I cared for nothing — a great weariness and longing to die came over me.

"To die, yes! I thought of that more than once! because life wasn't worth living without him. Then an idea came to me, foolish but settled, if he wouldn't come to me I would go to him. I would find him. I must go to France—to Paris—as he was there. Then sou by sou, working as hard as I could at the hats, I saved the passage in the mail boat to Marseilles, third class. You will laugh when I tell you that I used to say to myself, 'I will easily find him there.' And do you know where I expected to find him? In the Great Square. I pictured Paris as a big village, as at my home, with a great square, where there was music and where the market was held, and which was a general rendezvous for everybody.

"I can still hear all M. Castelbiel said."

"When I told the people on the boat, 'I'm going to look for someone in the Great Square in Paris,' they laughed at me, thinking I was joking. But I let them laugh. I had an idea that I would see Pierre there, walking along with his broad sword by his side, and with his pretty helmet of white cloth.

"With that idea I came to Paris. I did not even stay a day at Marseilles, but came straight on and asked at the little hotel where I stopped, 'The Great Square; please where is the Great Square?' You can imagine how the landlady and the boys opened their eyes. 'The Great Square,' they said, 'there were many great squares, la Place de la Concorde, la Place Royal, la Place de la Madeleine, la Place de la Republique, and others. Many houses, and many squares.' And all these streets and boulevards, they frighten me even now. I felt bewildered. Where had I come to? How could I find Pierre in this village, which was a world? I went here and there, I looked, I asked, I saw that people thought me mad.

"At the Government Office they asked me, 'Have you the name, the Christian name, and the rank of this Pierre?' No, I had nothing. I called him Pierre and I loved him, that was all I knew. I went to the office at the barracks but they were so rude to me there and treated me like a tramp, so that I dared not go again. The wearers of the yellow epaulettes, when I asked them in the street, laughed at me, or tried to laugh with me, which was worse. Then I said to myself, 'Wait; trust to chance, little Cora!' That was silly and foolish, wasn't it?

"I came to Paris knowing nothing, and with only sixty-five francs in my pocket, which soon melted away. When I returned at night to my bare little room in the Rue de Lyon, I often longed for Réunion and Tamatave. I cried then, drying my eyes, I said to myself: 'No matter, little Cora, you were quite right to come. You will find him. Among all these men who pass you will see him one day or other. Courage, my child!' I was brave. Among all these people I knew no one. I felt like a pebble in the sea. Then, how would I live when I had spent my last sou? Hats? I didn't know how to make any like those I saw in the shop windows. I was afraid when I thought of it.

"Without having found him, either in the 'Great Square,' you understand, or anywhere else, I came to such a pass that I hadn't money to pay for my room, and had to ask myself what I was going to eat the next day and whether I would drown myself that evening! It is true, M. Georges, I had come to that! And I said so to the landlady. I went to all the milliners, I was so anxious to get work. After all, I was clever with my fingers. She was a good woman, the landlady. She said she would get me a situation. It was she who saved me from dying from starvation.

"Among her lodgers was a former manager of a theatre in Algiers. He had come to Paris with a whole cargo of Arabian costumes, dresses of gauze, silk handkerchiefs, sequins, a quantity of Turkish slippers, and two big Algerian Jewesses, sisters, I believe, whom he had induced to come to Paris telling them that he was going to get up an Algerian entertainment like the one at the music-hall of Tunis in the Rue du Cairo. M. Castelbiel was looking for premises and a company. The former he found in Saint Martin. They put on the door a board with a gold crescent and Arabian characters announcing 'Algerian Theatre of Varieties. Drinks and dances of the choicest.' And the two Jewesses, in native costume, sang Algerian songs. But they couldn't dance, these big massive people, or they danced very badly. 'Too clumsy,' said M. Castelbiel himself, 'much too clumsy!'

"Then the manager thought of me and spoke to Madame Souveraine, the landlady, who took me to him. Would

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I not join him? A hundred sous a day, choice costumes, and for that I had only to dance. 'You don't know how to dance? Quite a mistake. All women can dance, as all ducks can swim. Dancing is part of a woman's charm. You have never done this dance? Ah, well, you look like a dancer. There are many less pretty to look at in the performance at the music hall in the Rue de Cairo, and you will have such a lovely costume of gauze, with a sash of gold, and pink slippers. You want to find someone whom you love in Paris? This is the way to find him, the best way. He is certain to love art, your unknown. When he sees the advertisement of the Algerian Music Hall he will be sure to come to Saint Martin's.'

"I can still hear all M. Castelbiel said. Honeyed words. The idea that I could by having my name on a poster, find Pierre, attract his attention, and see him again, carried the point.

"I put sequins in my hat, and showed my arms through my gauze sleeves, and I danced. M. Castelbiel evidently was right, all women dance well, and at least I didn't dance badly. That dance in the clouds of smoke, with the applause accompanied by the clinking of spoons against the glasses, I shall never forget. Every evening, in the hot air full of tobacco smoke, which got into my throat and made me cough—every evening I anxiously scanned the crowd from the stage, through the mist, to see if he were there attracted by the huge bill where my name appeared in large type, and if in that sea of unknown faces I could not discover Pierre's.

"I searched one face after another, but never saw him. If he had been there I wouldn't have needed the evidence of my eyes to know it. My heart, my eyes, all of me was his. The dance, the tambourines struck by Fatma and Midja, the Algerian songs, accompanying my movements, that was all, but no Pierre. I returned each night to the little room I had taken in Saint Martin, sadder than I used to be in the hotel in the Rue de Lyon.

"I wasn't happy; it bored me, this profession of a mountebank. But what could one do? It was necessary to live.

"Days passed, then months, like a dream. It was so long, and yet it passed so quickly. The Algerian Music Hall wasn't a success. It was closed. M. Castelbiel went away, no one knew where, leaving the two Jewesses to shift for themselves. And then we were asked, Midja, Fatma, and myself, to dance at the Red Mill, the same dance in the interior of a gigantic elephant bought at an establishment which hadn't succeeded during the Exhibition. It was there that you saw me, M. Georges, always dancing, in the body of an elephant this time, and always looking to see if '*he*' were there. I was in despair when I met you, besides being ill with a cough which I caught at the Algerian Hall. There I was worn out with continual dancing to the sound of the tambourine played by those stupid Jewesses.

"When you asked me to sit for you, you saw what pleasure it gave me. It changed me. I breathed another atmosphere. I felt stifled there, and I had a pain in my chest which seemed to burn me. I don't like winter, nor these Paris fogs; I need the sun, you know. The heat from your stove is lovely. I wish the winter were over."

Then a childish smile suddenly came to the pale, fragile face of the little Creole.

"Oh! what I should love above everything else is to have a picture of myself as a Sister of Mercy. I should love to be one."

"You shall have your picture, little Cora, with the white flaps."

"Really?"

She clapped her hands joyously, like a child to whom one had promised a toy.

"Yes, you'll have it."

"All the same it is funny," she said, suddenly becoming sad. "I will never see Pierre again. I will never find him, that is certain! Ah, well, the idea of seeing myself as a Sister of Mercy consoles me. There were Sisters of Mercy 'down there' who nursed the wounded soldiers."

III.

I had carried away a touching remembrance of the little Creole, of her slender and exquisite figure, her

Clothed as an Egyptian dancer.

deep, melancholy eyes, her sweet voice, her tender ways, the resignation in the pretty child, who, to find her lost love had left her native country full of trust, and now was thrown in the hurly-burly, the bustle of this great Paris, saying:

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"Do you know a fair, brave officer called Pierre? and where is the Great Square of the village that I may find him there?"

Poor child! a Sister of Mercy!

Then I lost sight of her, though I sometimes thought with a smile of the childlike trust which had possessed her to cross the sea to follow her lover.

gold ornaments on her brow, her wrists, and in her hair.

Cora, little Cora, the little model whose great desire was to be painted as a Sister of Mercy! She seemed to me transformed, her dark complexion lighted up by the pale glimmer of the footlights, and the contortions of the lithe body of the Creole really gave an idea of Egypt to

A Sister of Mercy.

One evening at the Porte Saint Martin in "Cleopatra," among the slaves grouped round the Queen on her throne, stretched out like a serpent in the sunshine, I thought I recognised the little model of my friend's studio, and, looking through my opera glasses, I found Cora, no longer in the striped silk costume of the affected lady, but clothed as an Egyptian dancer, with the public assembled, who little knew the romance which saddened the pretty girl with her childlike heart under the gauze draperies. And I said to myself:

"Bah! lost in the turmoil of the gay life in Paris, a favourite on the boards of the theatre, she will forget the past, and adieu to her friend Pierre!"

She was no longer the little ignorant girl arriving in the

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big village to find her lover; she was the much applauded dancer in "Cleopatra," with her photographs for sale in the shop windows. Some months passed, and I had forgotten the little dancer, when a letter recalled her to me—a touching letter, written by her in a piteous and pleading tone. She asked me to back a petition she was sending to the Minister of Marine.

Ill, consumptive, she said, she was afraid to die in Paris. She wanted to return to Réunion, to see the country, the sky, and the sun of former times. She had had enough of this Paris; it was killing her. She longed more to get away even than she had to come to look for Pierre. But to do so it was needful to have money. She trembled lest she should find herself on the ship with this hacking cough and this "ill all over" feeling, of being stifled between decks, and she was begging the Consul to be good enough not to send her steerage, but to let her breathe freely the sea air, and to look at the stars at night.

The mail-boat would leave Marseilles on the third of April, and Cora made her request in January—doubtless she knew that the official reply would be long in coming.

The request of the poor girl was never looked at by the Minister of Marine; but so the formal official reply ran: "She was entered for this matter, in the department of M. the Under-secretary of State of the Colonies, who in turn, had transmitted her, etc., etc."

And coughing in that dreary room, little Cora waited, living as she best could on her savings from the Porte Saint Martin. Her strength, poor child, was fast waning when April came, and the beginning of the spring. She no longer desired to sit for her picture in the white head-dress, as a Sister of Mercy!

"So tired and so thin, I would be so plain. No, no," she said, "I will leave you my photograph taken when I could believe I was pretty. You will paint me from memory with the white head-dress of the Sisters of Mercy. You will see me 'down there.'"

She had gone away by the end of April, the little Cora, gone to the country where her dream was born. The phantom of love which she cherished so long she will find "down there." She will find it more surely than in the crowded streets of the "big village." I often think of her—the beautiful head of the child, her dreaming eyes, the soft, caressing Creole voice, the entreaty of the little model, "Oh, M. Georges, I should like to be painted as a Sister of Mercy; it is so pretty!"

And I say to myself that perhaps over the white pillow where the little Creole had let her brown head fall, some Sister of Mercy's head-dress is already bending "down there," the head-dress which she thought so pretty, like the wings of a white butterfly—and that a woman's voice as sweet as hers, a voice murmuring between the white wings, will have said softly to the little model, the little Cora, so tired, and shutting her eyes for ever:

"Sleep, little Cora, sleep well," and she will be lulled to sleep, under the white wings of a Sister of Mercy's head-dress, to dream of her good friend Pierre, for whom she will look again in the "Great Square" of a bigger village of that other world, vaster and more incomprehensible than ours—the Infinite!

Dream always, little Cora.

* * * * *

Just one week after her departure the news reached Paris of the stranding of a mail steamer running from Réunion to Marseilles. In the list of passengers whose lives were lost was the name of Colonel Pierre de Rivass, who, it appeared, was returning from a flying visit to Réunion after a long absence from Paris on foreign service!

JULES CLARETTE.

The Old Woman's Money.

We sat in the verandah of a hotel at Seaborough one warm July night. There were half-a-dozen of us, mostly travelled men, and we had met by chance during the holiday season.

One of our number was an old man who, in his earlier days, had acted as scout in the Western States of America. He had joined our circle while Dickson was thrilling us with some train outrage, and when this was finished we taxed him for a story. It was some time before he would speak, at length he began:

"As far as I know, the smoothest trick, prompted by a desire to save money, ever played upon stage robbers occurred near Miles City, U.S.A., in '79. A load of passengers were almost within sight of the town. They had been travelling all day, and were worn out, for the roads were awfully bad in those days, and all coaches bounced and swayed very much. Having come near their journey's end, they were congratulating themselves. Hold-ups had been frequent. Two heavily-armed messengers accompanied each coach, with orders to fire on any person acting suspiciously.

"'Dear me,' said an elderly man near the door, 'I'm glad we are safe. I have all my money with me, and if I lost it, I don't know where I could get more.'

"Two miners and a prospector, each with large rolls, expressed their satisfaction at passing dangerous points safely. The next speaker was a little woman, kind and motherly in her ways.

"'My boy has started a restaurant in town, and is doing well. He wanted me to come and help, so here I am, goodness knows how far away from dear old Ohio. I thought he would need his mother, for these mining towns are wild, I hear, and full of temptations. I have got all the cash I have in the world with me. Fearing robbers, I have put it in a place where no one would think of looking. You cannot guess where.'

"Of course the guesses were all wrong.

"'Well, I have four notes against the sole of my foot inside my left shoe.'

"'Capital!' said the elderly gentleman. 'No one would ever think of looking for money in your shoes.'

"In the far corner at the front sat a small slender, black-haired man. He kept between his feet a little black valise. No one spoke to him during the journey,

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and he made no sound save occasionally to cough in a peculiar manner. Some of the passengers thought him to be a consumptive. Even when general good fellowship prevailed he took no part in the conversation.

"'And you; what would you do if we were held up?'

"A hollow cough and a shrug of his shoulders was all his reply.

"'What a mean fellow!' thought the old gentleman.

"At this instant the coach lurched violently to one side, and bang, bang, bang, came the sudden reports of guns. One messenger was shot, the other compelled to throw up his hands before time for resistance, and consternation and terror prevailed within the coach.

"'Lord, Lord!' prayed the elderly man.

"'Oh dear, oh dear!' cried the woman.

"'Hustle up here, git out,' and one of the robbers held the door open with his left hand; while he covered the passengers with the revolver in his right.

"Of course, they all filed out, and were stood up in a row. There was much trembling on the part of the men, and the poor old woman wept audibly. It only took a few moments to go through the pockets of the line, and to investigate the messenger's small safe. Probably the road-agents would have taken to the hills at this moment had not one of them beheld the frail figure within the coach.

"'Hold on, boys; here's one we forgot?' and he started in with an oath to drag forth the consumptive. As he entered, a most plaintive, cough-interrupted voice greeted him, and, tough as he was, he paused.

"'Please don't make me get out. I am very ill. I will die, I know. If you will only let me be, I will tell you where you can get a lot of cash which you have overlooked. I have no money myself.'

"The robbers outside, having heard the shrill, penetrating voice, glanced at each other. The leader called out to his fellow within the coach:

"'All right, Bill; find out where that money is, and let the pore devil alone. We got to be skipping out.'

"The piping voice took courage. 'Gentlemen, if you will ask that old lady to remove her left shoe, you will find the money.'

"The men began to mutter and scowl. The commercial traveller even found courage enough to say it was a shame to rob a poor old woman, and no one but the most depraved sort of a road-agent would be guilty of such an act. The leader walked up to the speaker, slapped his face, and tickled the end of his nose with the muzzle of his six-shooter. The grumbler discreetly held his tongue until the thieves were gone.

"It was with sighs and sobs that the old lady seated herself on the ground, took the shoe from that fat foot, and handed over her hard-earned savings. In a twinkling it was pocketed, and the outlaws jumped for their horses and were gone.

"What a hubbub broke out when the people found themselves alone once more! With one accord they assailed the man within the coach.

"'Oh, you villain, you wretch, to tell them of my money!' cried the woman as she shook him by the shoulders.

"The commercial entered at this moment. He had been talking to the other men of the party in low tones.

"'Just step out, madam; we want to talk with him,' he said.

"She obeyed, and several entered. It was noticed that the driver had his reins in his hands, and one end of them looked suspiciously like a noose.

"'You rascal,' said the driver, 'to have deliberately given this woman's money over to those outlaws. We'll make short shift of you;' and he threw the noose over the man's head.

"There was a desperate struggle for a moment, and then the noose fell down clean cut through. It was seen that the little man had a knife in his hand. He spoke in a different voice this time.

"'For Heaven's sake, don't bother me here. You can hang me at Miles City as well as here. It's only a little way; I shall not escape. When we get there, I will have something to tell you, which will explain my action. A man always has a right to have a fair hearing before he is hanged, and I claim that privilege.'

"Someone helped the driver with the body of the messenger, and the coach started for town. The others watched the little man intently, but he made no movement, nor did he speak until the coach lumbered up in front of the post-office and hotel; then he said, in a quiet voice:

"'I have £8,000 in this bag. The only way to save it was by telling the robbers of the old woman's money. I am glad to return it to her, and a bit extra for the worry I caused her. As for the rest of you, I have nothing to do with your losses. We all ran the same risk. I wish you good-evening;' and he stepped quickly from his seat to the door, and into the street, dropping a bundle of notes into the lady's lap as he passed."

The old gentleman rose and sauntered down to the pier, and as we looked at one another we realised that he was the hero of the story he had told.

L. T. Gresham.

£90 in Prizes.

£50 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in HOME NOTES as follows:*

1st PRIZE - Twenty Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE - A Ten-Pound Bank of England Note.
3rd PRIZE - A Five-Pound Bank of England Note.
4th to 13th PRIZES - Ten Sovereigns.
14th to 23rd PRIZES - Ten Half-Sovereigns.

The sketches, of which the first ten appear in **Home Notes** dated April 10th, represent the Christian names of men and women, and the prizes will go to those who correctly solve the greatest number.

£40 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in THE SUNDAY READER, as follows:*

1st PRIZE - Ten Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE - A Five-Pound Bank of England Note.
3rd PRIZE - One Sovereign.
4th to 9th PRIZES - Five Half-Sovereigns.
And One Hundred Magnificent Five Shilling Books.

The sketches, the first ten of which appear in the number dated February 27th, represent the names of Biblical characters, and the prizes will go to those who correctly solve the greatest number.

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EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS IN THE TREATMENT OF OBESITY.

Our corpulent readers will be glad to learn how to positively lose two stone in about a month with the greatest possible benefit in health, strength and muscle, by a comparatively new system. It is a singular paradox that the patient, returning quickly to a healthy state, with increased activity of brain, digestive and other organs, naturally requires more food than hitherto, yet, notwithstanding this, he absolutely loses in weight 1lb. to 2lb. daily, as the weighing-machine will prove. Thus there is no suggestion of starvation. It is an undoubted success, and the author, who has devoted years of study to the subject, guarantees a noticeable reduction within twenty-four hours of commencing the treatment. This is different with other diseases, for the patient in some cases may go for weeks without being able to test whether the physician has rightly treated him, and may have derived no real or apparent improvement in health. Here, we repeat, the author guarantees it in twenty-four hours, the scale to be the unerring recorder. The treatment aims at the actual root of obesity, so that the superfluous fat does not return when discontinuing the treatment. It is perfectly harmless. We advise our readers to call the attention of stout friends to this, because, sincerely, we think they ought to know. For their information we may say that on sending two penny stamps, a book entitled "Corpulency, and the Cure" (256 pages), containing a reprint of press notices from some hundreds of medical and other journals (British and Foreign) and other interesting particulars, including the "recipe," can be had, post free, from a Mr. F. C. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.—*Belfast News Letter.*

CYCLING FOR CORPULENT LADIES.

Cyclists of the fair sex have become so numerous lately, that a special journal to represent and advocate their interests has recently made its appearance. One of the stock subjects discussed by the expert lady contributors is the question of cycle costume for corpulent ladies. This and kindred questions are, however, disposed of by the practical consideration that any lady whose weight is more than proportionate to her height becomes an object of ridicule on a cycle. There are many ladies who have yet scarcely passed their first youth, and who are, nevertheless, so stout that they find themselves debarred from joining in an amusement which has much to recommend it beyond the fact that it is certainly the fashion of the hour. There is, however, no reason for their suffering this deprivation, as any overstout lady may learn by glancing through the pages of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's "Corpulency and the Cure," a copy of the just issued 18th edition of which we have received. This little book of 256 pages is sent post free to any address on receipt of two penny stamps, forwarded to the author's offices, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. From the evidence of the innumerable letters which Mr. Russell has received, it is certain that many ladies belonging to the highest social circles, who are now cycling daily, owe their ability to do so to the success which has attended their submission to Mr. Russell's course of treatment. His method recommends itself in a special manner to those who are anxious to take a sufficiency of physical exercise. With the rapid reduction of the weight effected by Mr. Russell's preparation, and the consequent rejuvenation and ability to cycle or otherwise utilise the limbs, naturally comes an increase of appetite. "Do not give way to it," the old-fashioned obesity authorities would say, "or else you will get fat again." "Nonsense!" the author of "Corpulency," etc., says in effect: "I have removed the cause of obesity by enabling the proper organs to perform their natural function of getting rid of unnecessary fat. You can eat and drink anything in reason;" and the evidence which Mr. Russell adduces shows that he is justified in making this bold statement. He is, unquestionably, a successful revolutionist in the cure of Corpulency.—*Leeds Saturday Journal.*

CORPULENCY: INCREASING POPULARITY OF AN EFFECTUAL CURE.

Many persons are doubtless familiar with the nature of the extraordinary revolution in the cure of obesity which, within recent years, has been wrought by the original researches of that now eminent expert, Mr. F. Cecil Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. It is evident that the certainty, the rapidity, and the agreeable surroundings of his curative process have been recognised in a very large degree among ladies and gentlemen belonging to the highest social circles. Keen observers who have an opportunity of judging affirm, in the pages of Society papers and otherwise, that owing to the general employment of Mr. Russell's treatment, extreme obesity is becoming as much a thing of the past at fashionable gatherings as intoxication; and, no doubt, it will soon be regarded as nearly as disgraceful. The issue of an 18th edition of the author's singularly convincing little text-book, "Corpulency and the Cure," however, serves to indicate that the popularity of the system has now reached spheres far remote from those of West-end fashion. The book of 256 pages may be had, post free, by sending two penny stamps to Mr. Russell's offices as above; and it is worth the careful attention of those who wish to free themselves of a burden of fat, because extreme obesity terribly interferes with the energy necessary, in these days of competition, to make one's way in the world, or even to earn a very modest competency. A large proportion of the letters of Mr. Russell's grateful correspondents refer to their delight at being enabled—within a very brief period and without any irksome conditions implying semi-starvation—to attack their accustomed tasks with pleasure instead of wearied disgust, through being reduced to their normal weight. The popularity of the system is also largely due, doubtless, to the English hatred of mystery, which is utterly swept aside by Mr. Russell. He fully explains his *modus operandi*, and supplies the recipe for his preparation.—*Bicester Herald.*

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Answers to Correspondents.

In our issue of March 13th there appeared a story, "A Little Fisher Maiden." This we find is the copyright of the proprietors of *Household Words*. The Editor begs to express his regret that it should have appeared without permission.

H. T.—Columbus, I should say. More than seven hundred of his biographies have been written in various languages.

John.—No, Captain Webb was not the only person who attempted to swim Niagara Falls. There are over thirty men now living who have tried it.

Rainy Day puts the following question to me: "If you see an unknown lady unprotected in a heavy shower, ought you to offer her the loan of your umbrella?"———— It would be rather dangerous, wouldn't it? People are so very unscrupulous about umbrellas. Besides which, it would be (I am assuming that the little scene takes place in a big town) rather indiscreet. No lady would accept the offer, and consequently to make it would hardly be in the best of form. But who is to lay down the law? What could only be regarded as an act of courtly generosity coming from, we will say, an elderly clergyman would be regarded in a very different light if a young man were forcing the attention upon a girl.

Charlie.—British young gentlemen refer to their fathers as "dad," "the boss," or "the old man." In heathen countries they say "father," but then, of course, they are a long way behind the times.

Miss D. B.—"Chicken gloves" are gloves made in Limerick from the skins of very young calves. Each pair are packed inside a walnut shell, and fastened with a little silk riband.

D. D.—I am glad to hear you appreciate *Short Stories* so highly. Yes, the Picture Puzzle Competitions will be continued for some time yet.

Amateur Gardener.—The simplest way to make a hot-house is to leave a box of matches where the baby can get at them.

H. J. wants to know how far the average eye travels in a year's reading? ————It has been calculated, I believe, that in reading a million letters of the ordinary newspaper type the human eye travels a mile, and that the average man in an average lifetime goes through 2,300 miles of reading matter.

W. P.—The clouds are full of meaning as to the kind of weather we may expect. If their forms are soft, undefined, and feathery, it will be fine. If their edges are hard, and sharply defined, rain may be expected.

D. G.—Yes. The Mint is only able to coin one kind of metal at a time. If, for instance, there is a great demand for bronze coin, all coining of gold and silver must be suspended for the time being. Your story will receive the best consideration.

D. C.—Modern English dictionaries contain, I should think, between one and two hundred thousand words, but nine-tenths of these are seldom used.

B. B.—The elephant "Jumbo," of world-wide renown, was between three and four years of age when he was brought from the Jardin des Plantes, Paris, and installed in the Zoological Gardens at Regent's Park. He originally came from Africa.

I. M. T.—The deaf and dumb branch of the Salvation Army of which you speak is in Sweden.

R. T.—A great deal of the flowers we see offered for sale in the London streets during the winter come from the Scilly Islands, as well as from the South of France. Large farms are to be found in the Isles entirely devoted to the cultivation of flowers for export.

H. H.—Your case is not an exception. Some people have double rows of natural teeth.

I hope that you have not entirely ignored the article on the Fresh Air Fund which appeared in a recent issue of *S.S.* Remember that if you cannot afford a shilling or more send ninepence, which will cover the expenses of a day's outing for a child. The towns which will benefit by the scheme for this year are Aberdeen, Belfast, Birmingham, Blackburn, Bolton, Bradford, Bristol, Cardiff, Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Hull, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Oldham, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Sunderland. I hope that every reader living in any one of these big centres will do his or her level best to get together sufficient money to help at least half-a-dozen little ones, for it is within their reach to become personally acquainted with the sordid misery which they are asked to alleviate. Subscription forms may be obtained from these offices by anybody who is sufficiently kindly disposed to render assistance, and I would ask ladies who care to help in the Fresh Air Fund street collection on May 22nd by taking a table to communicate with the secretary of the F.A.F., Pearson's, Henrietta Street, Strand, W.C.

F. S.—A wet silk handkerchief tied without folding over the face is a very good preventative of suffocation from the effects of smoke. It permits free breathing, and, at the same time, excludes the smoke from the lungs. Thanks for your kind wishes.

B.—China, I should say. There are more ducks there than in all the world outside of it. They are kept by the Celestials on every farm, on the public roads, on streets of cities, and on all lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and brooks in the country.

T. P.—Your poetry is not of such a high order of excellence as you seem to imagine. I do not wish to offend you, but you ask for my candid opinion—and there it is.

G. F.—There are, broadly speaking, about 13,000 different kinds of postage stamps in the world. I am afraid you would find it rather difficult to get a specimen of each kind. But you may be a millionaire, for all I know.

E. B.—The custom of writing letters on black-edged paper during the period of mourning is about 130 years old, and originally came from Italy. No; it is certainly not used to the extent it was a few years ago, and probably this may be owing to the prevailing opinion nowadays as to the uselessness of large expenditure in mourning requisites.

C. C.—Water does not contract when freezing, but expands.

A good many ideas in boot protectors have been produced from time to time. One of the best of these is a new rubber flange grip stud, easily affixed to the soles and heels of all kinds of foot-gear. The studs are made up of a piece of rubber, over which is a layer of leather, on top of which a round-shaped rubber stud is fixed. Messrs. Joseph Dawson & Sons, of London Wall, E.C., and Northampton, are the manufacturers.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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Bretton West, near Wakefield.—"Miss L. LANGFIELD has taken a box of tablets, and is already 7lb. lighter."

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EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 433. FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 17TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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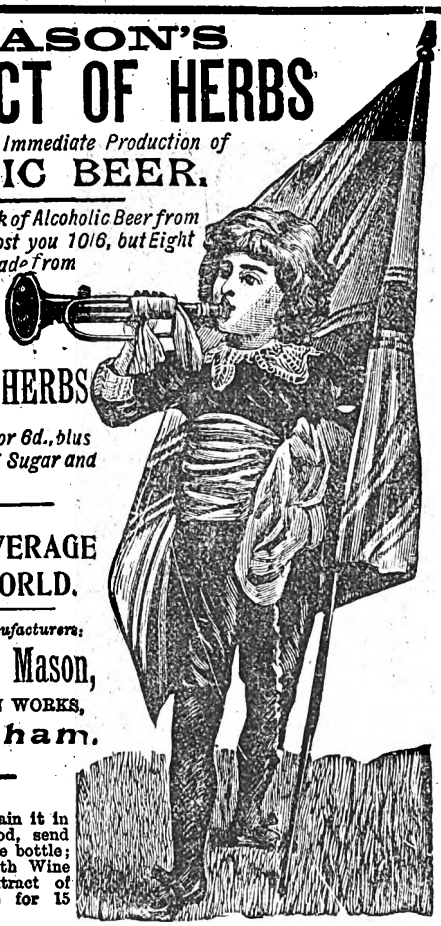

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SHORT STORIES

No. 433. ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending April 17th, 1897.

A LEGEND OF KNOTT MILL FAIR.

EVERYBODY has heard of Knot Mill Fair, once on a time the saturnalia of the northern counties; and every lover of quaint streets knows that Deansgate, Manchester, was in the same days one of the most irresponsible thoroughfares in England. The Fair has gone, and the street has been groomed, educated, and civilised out of recognition long since. Ergo, as my story opens at that time when the showmen were in full possession of the open space around St. John's Church, just off the dirty old street still in all its ragamuffin glories, with its half-gross of low public-houses, doing even a brisker trade than usual, it is evident that it is a tale of half a century or so ago.

At that time, not far from the fair ground, and in the direction of the Liverpool Road, there existed a short blind alley well-named Welter Lane, which was stopped up at the dark end with a public-house known to all and sundry as the "'Op Pole." It is true that the sign depicted a gentleman in the attire of Hans Breitmann's mermaid, striking (in addition to an attitude) an instrument with five strings, each the thickness of a kitchen poker, whence antiquaries have concluded that the real intentions of the tavern's sponsors was to name it "The Apollo."

A rickety old piano in the principal room and a long established reputation for its Saturday free-an-easy bore out in this opinion, but, nevertheless, we bow to the voice of the multitude, and speak of the tavern as the "'Op Pole."

John Scroggs, the owner thereof, had not a musical name, and he hardly looked a musical man. The alley was *so* blind and the "'Op Pole" *so* secluded (not to say shady) that his customers were "a rum lot," as the police put it, and Scroggs might have had some trouble to keep his license had he not been on remarkably good terms with the force. Many a little secret divulged in the expansiveness of beer in his frowsy bar-parlour had been edited and revised at the police station and presented to the courts as "information received." Some of the fame of more than one of the Manchester detectives might very fairly have been claimed by the innkeeper. John was a modest man,

Edited By C. Arthur Pearson

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however, and pocketed the shekels of the police without bragging about it.

It happened one day, when the great fair was in full blast, that Mr. Scroggs had a visitor in his bar-parlour whom he regarded with much curiosity and some suspicion. Not that this visitor was a suspicious-looking character in the ordinary sense of the phrase; he was a good-looking young fellow, and well-dressed enough. But he had made his appearance with the early rum and hot coffee customers, and with the morning wearing away he was still in the gloomiest corner mooning over a beer-stained sporting paper, with a bottle of the landlord's best tincture of logwood almost untouched before him. He was palpably perturbed in spirit, moreover, and threw a startled glance towards the door each time a newcomer entered.

"Swells don't dodge in here to swipe port at five in the morning," muttered John to himself, "and if that young chap ain't got something on his mind, I'm a cherrabim!"

As the landlord sat quietly behind the screen of his bar windows watching his customer and thinking the problem over, a fat little man in the loudest possible check suit bustled noisily into the room. There was nothing suspicious about *him* at any rate. From his smooth chubby face, *viâ* the ponderous gold chain and massive bunch of seals reclining on his greasy waistcoat, to his wonderfully square-toed boots, every inch of the little man shouted "showman."

"Tom Maber!" exclaimed the young fellow in the corner dropping the paper from before his face.

"Why, Mr. Frank Burton!" said the little man, crossing the room towards him. "What on earth——"

"Hush, no names!" said the other. "What's your drink?"

"Rum 'ot," said the little man promptly, dropping into the chair opposite Frank. "I've got the bloomin' 'ump. And there's nothing like rum 'ot for that as I ever heard tell of."

"I thought you were in the States," said Frank, as the landlord retired to his coign of vantage after filling the order.

"So I have been," acknowledged the showman; "picking up ideas and freaks. Only you don't catch me missing Knot Mill. Tell you what, Master Frank, they do know something about the business over there, and no mistake! I've got my show fixed right up in Yankee style you'd better believe. No keeping the public a-waiting half an hour to see one ugly fat woman or a sickly human skellington. You pays your dime—leastways it's threepence—and there they are all on gorgis thrones ready for you. A baker's dozen of extra quality freaks; all warranted genuine, and shown by the littlest dwarf with the biggest gift of the gab in creation—dash his eyes for a spiteful little toad! 'Maber's Meteoric Marvels' is knocking them this time, I can tell you."

"Then wherefore the hump?"

"It's the dwarf," explained Maber. "He's set the whole lot snarling at each other. There's the Tattooed Prince in the Iron Mask so rampageously jea ous of the gentleman wot prefers broken glass to pickled onions, that he won't show, and it's all along of that dwarf! And there was four-and-threepence that wanted its money back this very morning!"

"And got it?"

"Not likely," said Maber simply. "But it's saying it's been swindled all round the fair."

"That's bad," acknowledged Frank, sighing. "But, by George, it's not a circumstance to the mess I'm in."

"I knowed it!" exclaimed the showman almost triumphantly. "I said to myself as soon as I'd seen you: 'Here's the young medical what's the pride of your own village in a pickle, and you've got to get him out of it, Tom Maber.' Now, what's the trouble, Master Frank?"

"Haven't you seen the morning papers?"

"Don't read 'em in show time," said Maber shortly.

"You could have seen it on the contents bills," said Frank bitterly. "It's big enough: 'Medical Students Again.' 'Riot at a Theatre.' 'Attendant Injured.' 'Disappearance of the Ringleader.' I'm the ringleader, if you please."

The little showman whistled.

"That's a bit thicker than I should have thought," said he. "What the dickens does old Dr. Burton's son want with rioting at theatres?"

"Oh, I'm a complete ass," acknowledged Frank impatiently. "But I don't see how they make me out the ringleader, and I certainly didn't drop the stool on the fellow's head. It's this way. You know they played *George Barnwell* at the Queen's last night?"

"A rattling good drammer," said the showman approvingly. "I only know one better, and that's *Jack Long of Texas*."

"Fustian!" continued the medical student. "Filthy fustian! Anyway the Manchester medicals always have protested and always will protest against *George Barnwell*."*

"Think their morals don't want any improving?"

"Possibly," went on the other. "Myself, I object to it because it's such stilted rubbish. However, as usual we marched down to the theatre in military order, and, I suppose because we're the dashest fools, I and long Jack Stevenson marched in front. He took one half into the pit and the rest followed me up into the gallery. Then we started guying—legitimately, I give you my word. Nothing worse than an occasional orange passed between us and the stage. Then they put the big lights out and somebody dropped a stool into the pit. I wasn't near it that I know of."

"Then how can they make out it was you?"

"I'd been chaffing a bobby who was supposed to be keeping order," explained Frank, "and the second the man in the pit got the stool on his head the bobby went for me. Knew my name, too and yelled to all creation to stop me. I got out of the theatre with a rush of the other fellows, and scudded over the Old Bailey Bridge into the wilds of Salford. All of a sudden I remembered that the show folks would be busy fixing up things for the fair, and I dodged round there, and spent the night in an empty waggon."

"Lor' bless you," said the showman, "why didn't you think of me? I could have put you up beautiful. You could have dossed comfortable with the Cannibal King from Woora-Woora. But why on earth are you running away? Why don't you go and face the music, if it wasn't you?"

"That bobby will swear he saw me do it," said Frank gloomily. "But I'd give myself up at once but for one thing. I want to see my old dad. He's getting very weak, and I've got a presentiment that if they send me to quod, it will just bowl him over."

"That," remarked the little showman gravely, "is a good sort of thing to think of beforehand."

* A historic fact. It was at one time invariably played at the Queen's Theatre, Manchester, on Shrove Tuesday, and the medical students invariably turned the playhouse into a bear garden.

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"I know, I know," agreed the student, "I've been the very largest size of idiot, I allow. But, anyway, I want to see the old boy, and tell him that nine-tenths of it is a lie."

"Well," said Maber soothingly, "if that bloke didn't get the stool too hard it'll only be a fine. Still, if you must go home I'll help you if I can. What's your plan?"

"I daren't go near the railway station. I was thinking of tramping it after nightfall."

"Just the way to be pulled up certain, let alone that it's a tidy step to Budworth. I tell you what, Mr. Frank. You come and lie purdoo in Maber's Meteoric—that's the ticket! There's a little fair at Knutsford on Saturday, and I can easy send a van down without anybody twigging nothing. From there it's my lady's ta-ta to Budworth, and there you are!"

"You're a good little chap," said the medical student, grasping the other's hand. "But what about your people? Won't they talk?"

"They don't get much chance," said the showman coolly. "Freaks is very like nuns in their off-time. Why, it would burst up the business if the public could see 'em for nix! All except the Tattooed Prince, and he goes about like a blooming lord when he's got his coat on. Which shows the ingratitood of the chap. But, my stars, I've an idea! I'll sack him, and you shall have his shop until Saturday!"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, we'll make you up into a lovely tattooed nobleman! It *is* done at times in the profession. Just your back and arms nicely painted and a beautiful velvet half mask with 'oles for your eyes all complete and lovely. And I'm blessed if you shall show except when the public 'owls. What do you say?"

Frank laughed.

"That's 'arty," continued the showman. "Now, what do you say?"

"Oh, I'm on," said Frank, still laughing; "lead ahead. Let's go out of this hole at once."

"We'll jump into a cab and drive to the back of the show," said Maber, rising. "They'll think it's a freak arriving. Come along."

As the two left the tavern the landlord of the "'Op Pole" watched them to the end of the lane, whistling softly to himself. "And now," said he, rubbing his nose meditatively, "I'll just step down to the Albert Street Police Station and see if Detective Tampling is to be found. It ought to be a fiver at any rate."

* * * * *

Detective Tampling was in a complacent mood and in no particular hurry when he entered the fair ground that afternoon. He revolved in his mind a brilliant capture with the slight touch of the dramatic art in it that his soul rejoiced in. There was another plain-clothes man with him, but he was of the lower order of creation, merely a representative of the brute force of the law. Detective Tampling personified the intelligence thereof.

As he strolled leisurely through the mob he gazed with an indulgent eye on the humours of the fair. And certainly to the student of human nature the showman busily engaged in his eternal operation of quickly securing an audience and getting rid of it quicker still is a man to linger with. Foghorns, watchman's rattles, and cymbals; big drums and pistols, the most German of German bands, and the wheeziest of steam organs were all going together, and the gentlemen of the profession, every man jack of them with voices as hoarse and as foggy as the fifth of November, were all competing with the rest of the row at the top of their stentorian lungs.

Maber's Meteoric Marvels were planted well in the centre of this pandemonium, and the large and handsome stand which held them was adorned with numerous highly-coloured pictures, principally of a gory nature, which could not well have had any connection with anything inside the show. Maber himself was on "the parade" of his establishment, busily working a foghorn with one hand and a rattle with the other. Anon he would seize a drum-stick and bang vigorously into a huge gong hung conveniently behind him, and anon he would pause in the assault to shriek: "Hi! Hi! Hi! We ain't just a-going to begin, becos we allays have begun. On'y show in the fair allays ready and piping hot! Ree-member there—is—NO waiting. All THE marvels of the universe, as shown before the crowned heads of Europe, Asia, Africa and Wigan! Walk up! walk up! walk up!" and the little man had dodged down the steps, captured a hesitating couple, and was back again banging the big gong before you could have said "Jack Robinson."

Detective Tampling and his companion edged through the crowd to the front, and as two or three country folks were ascending the steps they quietly followed them, depositing their coppers in the pigeon-hole of the pay office like ordinary mortals. As the little group entered, a tiny dwarf with a weirdly malicious face beckoned them to come forward.

"Step right here ladies and gentlemen," he said, his words pouring out in a constant flow, without change of intonation, and with the smallest possible amount of punctuation. "You takes us where we've got to and has the privilege of stopping till we've got all round the blooming thirteen marvels every one of them unique without counting me which is the smallest and best-looking dwarf wot ever wos;" and he rambled on till he arrived at the tattooed man. "Now we come to the unfortunate young Prince from Cream Tartary wot wos wrecked on a raft in the Andaman Islands and was tortured by the Kalmuck Tartars till he confessed that he was born at 4 p.m. on a Sunday morning when he was at once too-tood with all the regular astronomical signs of his constellations on his back all quite correck according to the Herald's College as you may see for yourselves and the hireogriffiths signerfying his melancholy fate all down his arms which everything has come entirely true so far ladies and gentlemen as argues that Old Moore and Mother Shipton ain't in it with some of those furriners and all done with the tooth of a cuttle-fish and the juice of a deadly poisonous tree indignant to the island."

As the dwarf paused for breath the detectives pushed their way to the front.

"I arrest this man," said Tampling, putting his hand on the shoulder of the Prince. "Warrant in my pocket, if you want to see it."

"What for?" shrieked the little dwarf. "Here, boss! boss!"

Maber came quickly into the interior of his show, and took in the situation at once.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he remarked. "Wot's up, sergeant?"

"This chap knows well enough," said the detective, and indeed his prisoner was making no show of resistance and offering no remonstrances. "Now the only thing you can do is to get us out as quietly as possible for your own sake."

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"Certainly," said the little showman, bustling to the back door of the tent, "right you are, inspector. We'll have a cab at the back here in no time, and I do hope these ladies and gentlemen won't go and talk and ruin my show."

The small crowd, congratulating itself upon having its money's worth for once in a way, gathered excitedly round the door, and the energetic little showman, calling repeatedly on his audience to witness that he was giving the police every assistance, got a cab and bundled the three in at once. As it drove off the people rushed out, each to give his own version of the affair, and as in their imaginations the prisoner ranged from a bank forger to an early edition of Jack the Ripper, Maber's Meteoric Marvels did more business in the next hour than they had done in any previous day of their existence.

Meanwhile the cab had pulled up at the Albert Street Police Station, and Detective Tampling presented his prisoner to the inspector sitting in solitary state at the desk.

"This is our chap, Mr. Inspector," said he, dexterously removing the half mask, and disclosing the features of a fair-haired young fellow with a cowed look in his eyes.

"That's him, is it?" said the inspector gravely, opening his charge book.

"And if you believe me," went on the detective grinning, "he's painted like a Trojan."

"Pynted!" cried the prisoner, speaking for the first time. "Here, guv'nor, wot are you giving us?"

"Come, none of your gammon," insisted Tampling. "You're painted all over like a Mede and Parthian, Mr. Frank Burton."

"'Arry Jackson's my nyme," answered the Prince, beginning to get virtuously indignant. "And if you've run me in for being a pynted fraud you're blooming well mistook. Blimy, guv'nor, have a go at this!" and he bared his capacious breast with such energy that a couple of buttons flew off his waistcoat.

"Are you sure you've made no mistake, Tampling?" asked the inspector uneasily.

The detective smiled sarcastically, and, dipping his handkerchief into the office water-bottle, began to dab viciously at the head of Orion the Hunter, the feather in whose cap was tickling the toes of the Twins high up on the right shoulder blade of the Prince. Nothing stained the immaculate white of the handkerchief, nothing whatever, for absolute cleanliness is an irksome and melancholy necessity in the profession which the Prince adorned. As the detective paused, with a bewildered look on his face, a policeman entered the office, and the inspector appealed to him at once.

"Bates," said he, pointing to the prisoner, "who is this man?"

"Don't know him from Adam," answered X 54, "except by the tattooing."

"Then he isn't the medical student, Burton?"

"Not a bit like," said the policeman derisively.

"Then what I want to know," put in Detective Tampling desperately, turning to the Prince: "Why didn't you open your blessed mouth? You've got a tongue, haven't you?"

"'Ow did I know what yer were lagging me for?" asked the Prince indignantly.

"Oh, I see," put in the inspector, "you've done a step or two in your time, eh, my man?"

"Onect or twict, guv'nor," acknowledged the Prince, "but I ain't done nothink in this blooming tawn that I knows on."

"Well, we don't want you," said the inspector genially. "You can sling your hook when you've told us a bit. Our information was that Maber had given you the push this morning, and that a man we *do* want had got your job. Now give us the rights of it."

"Ho, I see!" exclaimed the Prince. "Myber *did* come in with a toff abate noon, but I wus O.K. in my plyce, and he giv me some lip, that wus all. I cawn't tell for dead sure, but I think the toff was shoved into the money-box. Noice arryngement, too, 'cos ony 'is 'ands 'ud show."

"I can get him still," said Tampling, starting for the door.

"You needn't trouble," began the last comer. "That's just what I've come about. It was a gallery boy that caught Phillips on the head with the stool, Phillips saw him do it. And he's as right as a trivet already, moreover. Burton is to be summoned with half-a-dozen other names we've got, and it'll be forty shillings and costs for *him*, as near as I can fix it."

"Ain't I to 'ave somethink for this 'ere wrongful copping?" whined the injured Prince.

"Be off," said the inspector sharply. "Stay, here's a couple of bob for your cab fare. Tell Mr. Burton, if he's there still, not to make a fool of himself, but to go back to Owen's right away. Now mizzle!"

The Prince took the coin thrown him, spat on it, and dropped it into his pocket, winked at the abashed detective, and departed. When he reached Maber's, the student was certainly not there, but Tom nevertheless relieved his mind within the next ten minutes, and the Prince added a golden coin to the florin which he had *not* frivelled away in cab-fare.

When the story spread round the fair-ground, with such slight exaggerations as that the Prince had been held down in a bath and scrubbed by four of the strongest members of the force, the money poured so fast into the Meteoric pay-office that the price went up to sixpence, "to pervent the loss of life consekwent on crushing, as by lor commanded," as the dwarf put it.

Within half-an-hour Maber had an enormous new placard out, stating that by order of Her Majesty, the Prince had been duly authenticated by the High Court of Justice and that all others *therefore* were impostors! At the end of the week the little man could have forsworn freaks for the rest of his life if he had been so minded, and he insisted on paying Frank's fine which, be it stated to the credit of the perspicacity of the force, was exactly forty shillings and costs.

Arthur Morris.

PICK-ME-UP

is quite the most delightfully illustrated, the most excellently printed, and the most smartly written penny weekly of its class. It can be got for a penny from any newsagent.

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Even if Philip had not taken the trouble to point him out to me beforehand, I should have noticed the new trooper at dress parade.

He sat his steed like a born horseman, his figure erect, his clear blue eyes lacking the squint peculiar to the new-comer under the glaring vault of the brassy Mexican sky, his comely lips closed into a precise line that bespoke a character in which self-control was the chief factor, his entire person breathing a suggestion of foreignness to time, place and people.

As still as a statue he sat amid the commonplace hordes, his red-brown hair giving forth from every wave a glint as purely golden as those thrown by the beams of the fiery southern sun itself, and forming a sort of aureole of light about the handsome face backgrounded against the intense blue of the arching heavens.

It was years ago, when Baby and I were, literally as well as figuratively, following Captain Philip about from pillar to post, and had, several weeks before, joined him at this post on the Rio Grande. I was as glad as Baby (our son of four years) to settle down under the grateful shadow of the old Mission of *Santa Madonna del Norte*, and revel in the warmth and sunshine that prevailed when the place was not visited by that dreadful "Northers" that swept from the upper localities I had left, as if to warn a deserter of the continued existence of a home she might otherwise have too easily forgotten.

The garden of the convent belonging to the Mission was a thing of such beauty that I immediately cultivated the acquaintance of the Sisters, who seemed glad to have me and Baby spend some of our leisure time with them.

Among the nuns was one who especially charmed me, so lovely was she, so gentle and sad. I grew to singling out the beautiful Sister Dolorosa from among the others, and talked to her about the fine needlework she did so well. I engaged her services for a set of d'oylies, to be given to a pet cousin as a wedding gift, and cajoled myself into believing that I, thereafter, had an excuse to call often at the convent, and see how the work was progressing.

Sister Ursula, who was Sister Superior of the Convent, smiled indulgently upon us as we sat upon a bench together in the shadowy mimosa-hedged garden, her pious austerity melted by Baby's smiles, which were, each and all, magnets strong enough to attract the women down the sandy paths between the rows of tall Ascension lilies.

How my heart ached for those defrauded Sisters—how I squeezed Baby and hugged Phil after every visit to those saintly souls robbed of the heaven of *home*, and how Baby always grunted and Phil laughed, saying Barracks was a *home*, wasn't it, and how much, compared to the dwellers in tents and shanties, those poor dears had missed!

When Baby fell ill of a fever, both Sister Ursula and Sister Dolorosa came and nursed him until he was strong and well again; it was then that I enshrined them in my heart of hearts for ever. He was just over that fearful attack when Phil was called away with his command to chase some smugglers who had crossed with dutiable merchandise to the Texas side of the "Rio Bravo."

Until he came back I was in a tremor of anxiety, for the desperadoes held life cheaply, and when cornered and fighting for booty had killed many a brave man.

He came with clanging sword, keeping time to the cheery whistle he sent on before him, just as the moon began to peer into the shallow, restless *arroyo* near our quarters, and after my cry of welcome, said:

"Well, little woman, he's a dandy!"

"Who is, Phil?"

"The trooper I pointed out to you."

"*What* is he, Phil?"

"Taffy was a Welshman," began my husband, unbuckling his sword-belt; "but the other lines won't apply. I never saw such daring, such bravery, such nerve! Candidly, little woman, if Taffy hadn't been the man he was, I'd have fared ill—there, don't cry—I'm all right! I'd call you a goose if I didn't consider you a—duck! There, that's better!"

"Oh, Phil!"

"No, dear, you don't 'owe Phil'—it's the Welshman, if anybody, to whom you are indebted. I mean to send that evil-visaged Jorge out of my service, and take Taffy——"

"What's his name, Phil?"

"Comyn Gower."

"I'm so glad."

"That his name's Gower? Why?"

"No—that you are at last going to give that ugly Jorge Mejos his walking papers. I always feared him!"

"Oh, intuition of woman! *I've* mistrusted him ever since I saw him confabbing with old Pedro Querido—he's a sleek scoundrel is Pedro!—and have positive proof that his own brother, Miguel, is a regular smuggler. He was one of the gang we captured to-day."

"Oh, I wish you were anything but a soldier, Phil, just *anything!*" I said.

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"Come, now—ah, there's Taffy—excuse me just a moment, dear."

The next morning saw Comyn Gower installed at our quarters. I confessed that it hurt me to see him polishing up his—Phil's—boots, and putting his military accoutrements in trim. My husband laughed, and called me a "Mystery-maker," accusing me of weaving romances about even old McCulhane in the kitchen. I pleaded guilty to the charge, and joined in the laugh that never hurt anyone and did the laugher a world of good.

Baby took to Trooper Gower from the first, climbing to his broad shoulders, and being carried about in royal state. One day the little fellow hurt his finger, cutting it with the blade of papa's unsheathed sword, and when I ran out at his cry, I found Gower tearing his own kerchief into ribbons, and binding the slight wound.

"There, Baby, now it's all right," I cried, kneeling to comfort my unheroic son. In doing so I came quite near to where the Welshman sat, and as I reached out to pat Baby reassuringly, one great, hot tear splashed upon my wrist. With a start I looked up at the man. The sun-bronzed face bent over the dimpled hand was wet with tears, and I had much ado to restrain the impulsive hand that started up to lay a comforting touch upon his shoulder.

"Te little moster haf hurt his hond. I wass in fault—I should haf watched te poy petter, mattam."

I heartily excused him, and took Baby myself until the shining harness was duly cleansed and ready for use.

After that I managed, without apparent effort, to draw Comyn Gower to talk of himself. One day, when military duties were over for a time, and Phil lay stretched in the hammock in the shade, Baby crept into Gower's arms and fell asleep. I sat in a rocker near by, listening to the low, rich voice of the Welshman singing a lullaby so sweet and soft and crooning that Phil soon gave audible evidence of its efficacy, and followed Baby to dreamland.

"You sing well, Gower," I said, as he paused to shift Baby to an easier position.

"In Wales, mattam, all sing," said the man softly. "T'at wass te national air of my country, ant it wass callt 'Poor Mary Anne.' At home, mattam, I wass a harper."

"Did you earn your living so?"

"Oh, no. Many play harps in Wales. I wass carrier of te mail, mattam, petween Gower and Swansea."

That explained the reason of his excellent horsemanship, I mused, as I threaded my needle against the sunlighted glare of a waxen cactus bloom.

"Is Wales a beautiful country, Gower?"

"Oh—ay; most peautiful, wit lofty hills ant lufly falleys."

"And yet you left it willingly?" Giving another little dexterous tap to the wedge of curiosity.

"Neffer willingly, mattam. One toes not go from Paradise willingly. But if Efe leafs Atam tere iss no longer a place of pliss."

Baby stirred, and the gentle voice sang again Silence reigned once more, and I ventured a remark that set him to talking to me of himself. He was so frank, lacking in all self-consciousness as he spoke, seeming so much more a disinterested historian of some third person's fortunes, that I listened, inspired with an almost personal concern and sympathy, to the story of his lonely life.

After going back to the hard, unlovely childhood he had known, he hurried on to the time when he, a youth, left the valley farm, and accepted the proffered position of mail-carrier.

"Te riffer sometimes flooded te whole falley—little Tawy Riffer, it is callt, ant it wass tangerous to cross it at te forts. Put I have neffer hat accitent of any kint, mattam, ant wass so happy to always see in te great shatow of Craig-y-nos—just where a hut mate a white spot on te hill—te figure of my peautiful Nesta Glenellen stanting in te toorway wafing to me.

"To hear Nesta sing—tat wass to hear peforehand te angels of Heafen singing praises to te Creator. It wass set when we sang together, Nesta ant myself, tat te music of te spheres fount echo in our harmony. I know not of tat; put I know I wass always in Heafen when her voice soart wit my own to te chorts of my harp. Yet it was her voice, mattam, tat afterwarts mate for me tiss purgatory in which I now lif."

I looked at the face of the soldier, who, with gently swaying body, kept my little one hushed in slumber, and read therein signs of a patience bereft of all bitterness.

I was about to break the silence, when the sound of music was borne to us upon the waves of the warm, sunny air. It was the voice of the nuns singing in the little oratory, whose windows opened towards our quarters. The sounds that reached us first were subdued and indistinct; then grew in volume, until one at last could distinguish above all others a powerful, insistant soprano, clear as the note of a lark, sweet as the chiming of a silver bell, tender as the cadence of love itself, yet, for all that tenderness, as cold as crystal waters falling from a mountain's height.

With a bound, Comyn Gower started to his feet; but at Baby's startled cry he sank back again upon the box that was doing duty for a chair, soothing the child with endearments in unpronounceable Welsh.

"Nesta sang like te foice you now hear, mattam—tat foice above te otters. Te same timper, full, lout, sweet—put tiss lacks in glatness. It iss a fine foice, foteffer, ant iss mucht te same as Nesta's."

A long silence followed, during which we both listened to the Sisters' singing. At its end, I said:

"What is it all about, Gower?"

"It is tat of which I neffer speak; put I should like to tell you, mattam, if you pe pleast to hear."

"Thank you, Gower; my sympathy is yours, believe me."

"It is goot of you, mattam. I shall feel petter when you know. Nesta liffet quite near Craig-y-nos castle, where dwelt Mattam Nicolini, te great singer——"

"Do you mean Patti, Gower—our Adelina Patti?" I interrupted eagerly.

"I to, mattam. She came to Wales, pecause she knew te air of my natif country wass pest for toes tat sing, as iss provet py the singers we poast in our own homes. She spent much money to improfe te castle, and liffet in splendour."

This I had every reason to believe was true.

"When Nesta came home as my pride, yes, mattam, we were marriet—I tought te gates of Heafen itself were opening pefore me. I still rote wit te mails, put came home for ofer Suntay, upon which happy tay we sang togetter in te little chapel in te falley.

"Once one of Mattam Nicolini's house party—a man—came to te chapel, ant, hearing Nesta, sought her out, ant wass fery praiseful ant friendly. I tit not tisagree when she talt me, a week after, tat he swore to her tat her foice wass superior to te 'teeva's,' as he callt his hostess; put when she sat he offert a pig sum of money to go wit him ant sing in great cities, I set, 'No; Nesta

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tat will not to.' Te light went out of her prown eyes, ant she set no more.

"Put te serpent had enteret my Eten. One tay I rote home to fint my house—wass empty." The head of the speaker fell upon his breast, and the voice grew still. Baby stirred, reaching up a little fat hand until it touched the quivering lips of the man who held him in tender embrace.

"I was more guilty tan she," he added hoarsely, "for I tit not seek to safe her."

That was all Comyn Gower told me of his past, but it sufficed.

Every day Philip had some new praise to sing of him, and every day Baby lorded it over what he soon came to look upon as his own personal property.

Why do all days of the year's calender seem, as we glance them over, so all alike, their black figures bespeaking no hint of the joy, the terror, the delight, or the despair they are to bring to us?

Slowly the time drew on, a fatal number of a day burdened with woe for me creeping nearer and nearer, until the symbol that should have been printed in blood-red characters—fit presage of a direful doing—stood dumbly and dully to represent the resplendent breaking of a glorious April day.

Phil had gone about his duties as officer of the day, and Gower was in attendance upon him. I gave Baby his breakfast, then bade him wait for mamma outside, and we would go "bye-bye" to see Sister Dolorosa. He vouchsafed me his usual grunt of acquiescence, and went out into the open air. I wished to carry with me a certain length of linen I had gone purposely to purchase at Laredo the day before, but having mislaid the little flat bundle, was forced to make a lengthy search for it. When, at last, I found it, I called to Baby as I emerged into the hot, sunny air, glad to be off and away to the cool cloisters of the convent.

But no Baby answered.

In vain I searched for him, expecting to come upon him at every turn. Growing alarmed, I sought Philip, who, I was informed, was not then to be interrupted.

In his stead Gower came to me, and when I told him of my terrible anxiety, dashed past me with a face as white as death, and disappeared in the direction of the stables.

Very soon—ages it seemed to me—Philip came, and, in a twinkling "Boots and Saddles" was signalled, and half the command, following Philip, left the post.

Time goes by heart-throbs. I lived several long lives before that afternoon, when the men came galloping in, cheering like mad. I knew, then, that Baby was safe, and ran to clasp him in my arms before the awful mist I felt closing round me should swallow my failing senses.

Comyn Gower had tracked Jorge Mejos to a mezquite grove some miles away, and, after a savage struggle, had rescued Baby from his abductor. But the gentle saviour of my son was mortally wounded, and lay across his horse an inert mass of senseless flesh.

I moaned in anguish as, by Philip's orders, they brought the dying man into our quarters, and cried aloud that he should not die—alas! alas!

All night he lay as one asleep; but at dawn the fierce fever the surgeon dreaded set in, and I, overwrought by the long and terrible strain to which Fate added this cruel sorrow, gave up the consciousness I was battling hard to keep, and swooned away.

When again I opened my eyes, Phil was standing beside me, bathing my forehead.

"Now, little woman, go to sleep and rest you. Gower is much easier, and you are about used up. I have sent for Sister Ursula and Sister Dolorosa to watch beside the—dear—soul,"—the tears in Philip's voice shook me to the foundation of my being—"and if he grows worse, I'll wake you. Come, close your eyes—that's right—that's right!"

I did sleep and the slumber was a heavy, dreamless lethargy that rested and soothed me. Many hours passed, and at their end I started to my feet.

It was dark. In the next apartment I could hear a soft voice saying:

"Yes, Nesta, it is Easter day, and you must sing te song of te Ressurection. Ant te mattam, whose foice iss like your own, will gif you lilies for te chapel. She has many in te glass house py te castle, and she iss generous. Put you must not talk to him—you hear me, Nesta?"

I softly approached the door. Sister Dolorosa knelt, saying prayers for the dying man, whose eyes roved ever to the light of the taper on the further side of the bed. Sister Ursula had disappeared. Before I could move nearer, the voice began again, but oh, so faintly—so faintly!

"Yes, Nesta, te Easter lilies are like yourself—so pure! Tat is a pig armful you carry, ant I like to see tem apout you. Sing wit me, put first kiss me, my wife—my pride!"

With sudden start, Sister Dolorosa sprang to her feet, and, leaning above the whitening face, laid her beautiful lips upon his own. I looked on as one looks at the performance of some divine miracle. I could not move as again and again she kissed the brow, the eyes, the mouth of the dying man. No sound escaped her, and when the noise of an approach assailed her ears, she fell again upon her knees and murmured Latin prayers.

Comyn Gower died at dawn. In the afternoon of the same day two shadows darkened the door of the room where the wan house of a freed soul lay untenanted, and Sister Ursula, followed by Sister Dolorosa, entered the presence of death.

The elder woman soon passed out again, but the younger, approaching the bier, let fall upon the still, cold form the great bouquet of Easter lilies she had brought, and wrung her hands above them.

It was more than I could bear. My heart, filled with its own personal sorrow, overflowed at the profound pitifulness of this futile meeting of the two erring, hungry souls, and reaching out my arms to the woman, I wept aloud.

At my cry she turned to me, and, throwing her slender arms round my neck, held me close while her whole being shook convulsively.

Then, without one look at the still face whiter than the lilies lying about us, the black-robed nun loosed her close hold upon me, and as she went out into the hot glare of the April sunshine, I called softly after her:

"God's peace go with you, Nesta Gower!"

Cora Best.

Result of Watch Competition.

No. 4.

The correct time in the Watch Competition, No. 4, was 1hr. 23min. 35sec.

The winner was Mr. Sam B. Jones, 12, Aquarium Street, Rhyl.

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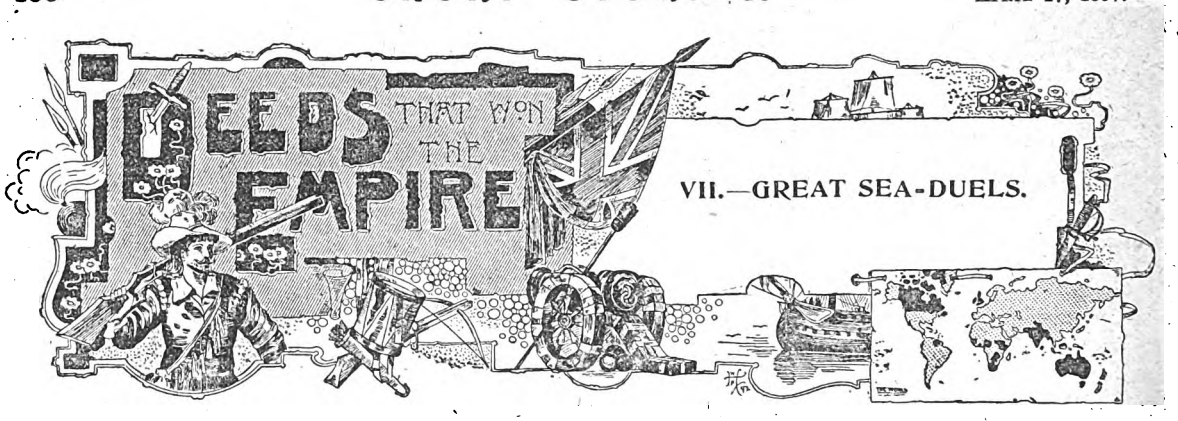

British naval history is rich in the records of what may be called great sea-duels—combats of single ship against single ship, waged often with extraordinary fierceness and daring. They resemble the combat of knight against knight, with flash of cannon instead of thrust of lance, and the floor of the lonely sea for the trampled lists.

He must have a very slow-beating imagination who cannot realise the picturesqueness of these ancient sea-duels. Two frigates, cruising for prey, catch the far-off gleam of each other's topsails over the rim of the horizon. They approach each other warily—two high-sniffing sea-mastiffs. A glimpse of fluttering colour—the red flag and the *drapeau blanc*, or the Union Jack and the tricolour—reveals to each ship its foe. The men stand grimly at quarters, the captain, with perhaps a solitary lieutenant, and a middy as aide-de-camp, is on his quarter-deck.

There is the manœuvring for the weather gauge, the thunder of the sudden broadside, the hurtle and crash of the shot, the stern, quick word of command, as the clumsy guns are run in to be reloaded and fired again and again with furious haste. The ships drift into closer wrestle. Masts and yards come tumbling on to the blood-splashed decks.

There is the grinding shocks of the great wooden hulls as they meet, the wild leap of the boarders, the clash of cutlass on cutlass, the shout of victory, the sight of the fluttering flag as it sinks reluctantly from the mizzen of the beaten ship. Then the smoke drifts away, and, on the tossing sea-floor, lie, little better than dismantled wrecks, victor and vanquished.

No great issue perhaps ever hung upon these lonely sea combats, but as object-lessons in the qualities by which the Empire has been won, and by which it must be maintained, these ancient sea-fights have real and permanent value. What better examples of cool hardihood, of chivalrous loyalty to the flag, of self-reliant energy, need be imagined or desired? The generation that carries the heavy burden of the Empire to-day cannot afford to forget the tale of such exploits.

One of the most famous frigate fights in British history is that between the *Arethusa* and *La Belle Poule*, fought off Brest on June 17th, 1778. Who is not familiar with the name and fame of "the saucy *Arethusa*"? Yet there is a curious absence of detail as to the fight. The combat, indeed, owes its enduring fame to two somewhat irrelevant circumstances—first, that it was fought when France and England were not actually at war, but were trembling on the verge of it. The sound of the *Arethusa's* guns, indeed, was the signal of war between the two nations.

The other fact is that an ingenious rhymster—scarcely a poet—crystallised the fight into a set of verses in which there is something of the true smack of the sea, and an echo, if not of the cannon's roar, yet of the rough-voiced mirth of the fo'castle; and the sea-fight lies embalmed, so to speak, and made immortal in the sea-song.

The *Arethusa* was a stumpy little frigate, scanty in crew, light in guns, attached to the fleet of Admiral Keppel, then cruising off Brest. Keppel had as perplexed and delicate a charge as was ever intrusted to a British Admiral. Great Britain was at war with her American colonies, and there was every sign that France intended to add herself to the fight. No fewer than thirty-two sails of the line and twelve frigates were gathered in Brest roads, and another fleet of almost equal strength in Toulon.

Spain, too, was slowly collecting a mighty armament. What would happen to England if the Toulon and Brest fleets united, were joined by a third fleet from Spain, and the mighty array of ships thus collected swept up the British Channel? On June 13th, 1778, Keppel, with twenty-one ships of the line and three frigates, was dispatched to keep watch over the Brest fleet. War had not been proclaimed, but Keppel was to prevent a junction of the Brest and Toulon fleets, by persuasion if he could, but by gunpowder in the last resort!

Keppel's force was much inferior to that of the Brest fleet, and as soon as the topsails of the British ships were visible from the French Coast two French frigates—the *Licorne*, and *La Belle Poule*—with two lighter craft bore down upon them to reconnoitre. But Keppel could not afford to let the French Admiral know his exact force, and signalled to his own outlying ships to bring the French frigates under his lee.

At nine o'clock at night the *Licorne* was overtaken by the *Milford*, and with some rough sailorly persuasion, and a hint of broadsides, her head was turned towards the British fleet. The next morning, in the grey dawn, the Frenchman, having meditated on affairs during the night, made a wild dash for freedom. The *America*, an English 64-double—that is, the *Licorne's* size—overtook her and fired a shot across her bow to bring her to.

Longford, the captain of the *America*, stood on the gunwale of his own ship politely urging the captain of the *Licorne* to return with him. With a burst of Celtic passion the French captain fired his whole broadside into the big Englishman and then—instantly hauled down his flag so as to escape any answering broadside.

Meanwhile the *Arethusa* was in eager pursuit of the *Belle Poule*—a fox-terrier chasing a mastiff! The *Belle*

Poule was a splendid ship, with heavy metal, and a crew more than twice as numerous as that of the tiny *Arethusa*. But Marshall, its captain, was a singularly good sailor, and not the man to count odds. The song tells the story of the fight in an amusing fashion:

Come all ye jolly sailors bold,
Whose hearts are cast in honour's mould,
While England's glory I unfold.
Huzza to the *Arethusa*.
She is a frigate tight and brave,
As ever stemmed the dashing wave;
Her men are staunch
To their fav'rite launch,
And when the foe shall meet our fire,
Sooner than strike we'll all expire
On board the *Arethusa*.
On deck five hundred men did dance,
The stoutest they could find in France.
We, with two hundred, did advance
On board the *Arethusa*.
Our captain hailed the Frenchman, "Ho!"
The Frenchman he cry'd out, "Hallo!"
"Bear down, d'ye see
To our Admiral's lee."
"No, no," says the Frenchman, "that can't be."
"Then I must lug you along with me,"
Says the saucy *Arethusa!*

As a matter of fact Marshall hung doggedly on the Frenchman's quarter for two long hours, fighting a ship twice as big as his own. The *Belle Poule* was eager to escape; Marshall was resolute that it should not escape; and, try as he might, the Frenchman, during that fierce two hours' wrestle, failed to shake off his tiny but dogged antagonist.

The *Arethusa's* masts were shot away, its jib-boom hung a tangled wreck over its bows, its bulwarks were shattered, its decks were splashed red with blood, half its guns were dismounted, and nearly every third man in its crew struck down. But still it hung, with quenchless and obstinate courage, on the *Belle Poule's* quarter, and, by its perfect seamanship, and the quickness and the deadly precision with which its lighter guns worked, reduced its towering foe to a condition of wreck almost as complete as its own. The terrier, in fact, was proving too much for the mastiff.

Suddenly the wind fell. With topmasts hanging over the side, and canvas torn to ribbons, the *Arethusa* lay shattered and motionless on the sea. The shot-torn but loftier sails of the *Belle Poule*, however, yet held wind enough to drift her out of the reach of the *Arethusa's* fire. Both ships were close under the French cliffs, but the *Belle Poule*, like a broken-winged bird, struggled into a tiny cove in the rocks, and nothing remained for the *Arethusa* but to cut away her wreckage, hoist what sail she could, and drag herself sullenly back under jury masts to the British fleet.

But the story of the two hours' heroic fight, maintained against such odds, sent a thrill of grim exultation through Great Britain. Menaced by the combination of so many mighty states, while her sea-dogs were of this fighting temper, what had great Britain to fear? In the streets of many a British seaport, and in many a British fo'castle, the story of how the *Arethusa* fought was sung in deep-throated chorus:

The fight was off the Frenchman's land;
We forced them back upon their strand;
For we fought till not a stick would stand
Of the gallant *Arethusa!*

A fight even more dramatic in its character is that fought on August 10th, 1805, between the *Phœnix* and the *Didon*. The *Didon* was one of the finest and fastest French frigates afloat, armed with guns of special calibre, and manned by a crew which formed perhaps the very *élite* of the French Navy. The men had been especially picked to form the crew of the only French ship which was commanded by a Bonaparte, the *Pomone*, selected for the command of Captain Jerome Bonaparte.

Captain Jerome Bonaparte, however, was not just now afloat, and the *Didon* had been selected, on account of its great speed and heavy armament, for a service of great importance. She was manned by the crew chosen for the *Pomone*, placed under an officer of special skill and daring—Captain Milias—and dispatched with orders for carrying out one or more of those naval "combinations" which Napoleon often attempted, but never quite accomplished.

The *Didon*, in a word, was to bring up the Rochefort squadron to join the Franco-Spanish fleet under Villeneuve.

On that fatal August 10th, however, it seemed to Captain Milias that fortune had thrust into his hands a golden opportunity of snapping up a British sloop of war, and carrying her as a trophy into Rochefort. An American merchantman fell in with him, and its master reported that he had been brought to on the previous day by a British man-of-war, and compelled to produce his papers.

The American told the French captain that he had been allowed to go round the Englishman's decks and count his guns, omitting, no doubt, to add that he was half-drunk while doing it. Contemplated through an American's prejudices, inflamed with grog, the British ship seemed a very poor thing indeed. She carried, the American told the captain of the *Didon*, only twenty guns of light calibre, and her captain and officers were "so cocky" that, if they had a chance they would probably lay themselves alongside even the *Didon*, and become an easy prey.

The American pointed out to the eagerly-listening Frenchman the top-gallant sails of the ship he was describing showing above the sky-line to windward. Captain Milias thought he saw glory and cheap victory beckoning him, and he put his helm down, and stood under easy sail towards the fast-rising top-sails of the Englishman.

Now, the *Phœnix* was, perhaps, the smallest frigate in the British navy; a stocky little craft, scarcely above the rating of a sloop; and its captain, Baker, a man with something of Dundonald's gift for ruse, had disguised his ship so as to look as much as possible like a sloop. Baker, too, who believed that light guns quickly handled were capable of more effective mischief than the slow fire of heavier guns, had changed his heavier metal for 18-pounders.

The two ships, therefore, were very unequal in fighting force. The broadside of the *Didon* was nearly 50 per cent. heavier than that of the *Phœnix*; her crew was nearly 50 per cent. more numerous, and she was splendidly equipped at every point.

The yellow sides and royal yards rigged aloft told the "cocky" *Phœnix* that the big ship to leeward was a Frenchman, and, with all sails spread, she bore down in the chase. Baker was eager to engage his enemy to leeward, that she might not escape, and he held his fire till he could reach the desired position.

The *Didon*, however, a quick and weatherly ship, was able to keep ahead of the *Phœnix*, and thrice poured in a heavy broadside upon the grimly silent British ship without receiving a shot in reply. Baker's men were falling fast at their quarters, and, impatient at being both foiled and raked, he at last ran fiercely at his enemy

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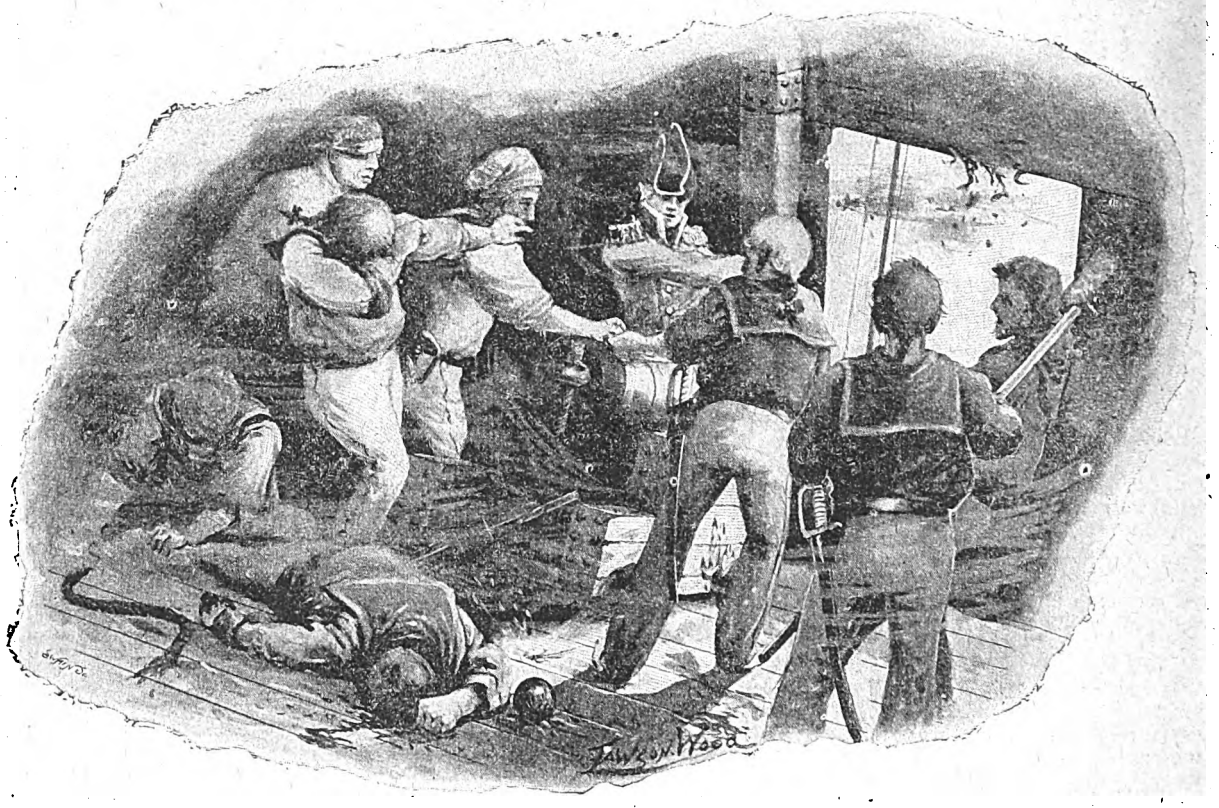
to windward. The heads of both ships swung parallel, and at pistol-distance broadside furiously answered broadside. In order to come up with her opponent, however, the *Phœnix* had all sail spread, and she gradually forged ahead. As soon as the two ships were clear, the *Didon*, by a fine stroke of seamanship, hauled up, crossed the stern of the *Phœnix* and raked her, and then repeated the pleasant operation.

The rigging of the *Phœnix* was so shattered that for a few minutes she was out of hand. Baker, however, was a fine seaman, and his crew were in a high state of discipline; and when carronade; this commanded the whole of the British ship, and with it the French opened a most destructive fire. The British ship, as it happened, could not bring a single gun to bear in return.

Baker, however, had fitted the cabin window on either quarter of his ship to serve as a port, in preparation for exactly such a contingency as this; and the after-most main deck was dragged into the cabin, the improvised port thrown open, and Baker himself, with a cluster of officers and men, was eagerly employed in fitting tackles to enable the gun to be worked. As the sides of the two ships were actually grinding together the Frenchmen



The men dropped in clusters.

the *Didon* once more bore up to rake her antagonist, the British ship, with her sails thrown back, evaded the Frenchman's fire. But the stem of the *Didon* smote with a crash on the starboard quarter of the *Phœnix*; the ships were lying parallel; the broadside of neither could be brought to bear. The Frenchmen, immensely superior in numbers, made an impetuous rush across their forecastle, and leapt on the quarter-deck of the *Phœnix*.

The marines of that ship, however, drawn up in a steady line across the deck, resisted the whole rush of the French boarders; and the British sailors, tumbling up from their guns, cutlass and boarding-pike in hand, and wroth with the audacity of the "French lubbers" daring to board "the cocky little *Phœnix*," with one rush pushed fiercely home, swept the Frenchmen back on to their own vessel.

On the French forecastle stood a brass 36-pounder saw the preparation being made; a double squad of marines was brought up at a run to the larboard gangway, and opened a swift and deadly fire into the cabin, crowded with English sailors busy rigging their guns.

The men dropped in clusters, the floor of the cabin was covered with the slain, its walls were splashed with blood; but Baker and the few men not yet struck down kept coolly to their task.

The gun was loaded under the actual flash of the French muskets, its muzzle was thrust through the port, and it was fired. Its charge of langridge swept the French ship from her larboard quarter, and struck down in an instant twenty-four men!

The deadly fire was renewed again and again, the British marines on the quarter-deck meanwhile keeping down with their musketry the fire of the great French carronade.

The fierce and bloody wrestle lasted for nearly thirty

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minutes, then the *Didon* began to fore-reach. Her great bowsprit ground slowly along the side of the *Phœnix*. It crossed the line of the second aftermost gun on the British deck. Its flames on the instant smote the Frenchman's head-rails to splinters, and destroyed the gammoning of her bowsprit.

Gun after gun of the two ships was brought in succession to bear; but in this close and deadly contest the *Phœnix* had the advantage. Her guns were lighter, her men better drilled, and their fierce energy overbore the Frenchmen. Presently the *Didon*, with her foremast tottering, her mainmast gone, her decks a blood-stained wreck, passed out of gunshot ahead.

In the tangle between the two ships the fly of the British white ensign at the gaff end dropped on the *Didon's* forecastle. The Frenchmen tore it off, and, as the ships moved apart, they waved it triumphantly from the *Didon's* stern. All the colours of the *Phœnix*, indeed, in one way or another had vanished, and the only response the exasperated British tars could make to the insult of the *Didon* was to immediately lash a boat's ensign to the larboard, and the Union Jack to the starboard end of their cross-jack yard-arm.

The wind had dropped; both ships were now lying in a semi-wrecked condition out of gunshot of each other, and it became a question of which could soonest repair damages and get into fighting condition again. Both ships, as it happened, had begun the fight with nearly all canvas spread, and from their splintered masts the sails now hung one wild net-work of rags. In each ship a desperate race to effect repairs begun.

On the Frenchman's decks arose a babel of sounds, the shouts of officers, the tumult of the men's voices. The British, on the other hand, worked in grim and orderly silence, with no sound but the cool stern orders of the officers. In such a race the British were sure to win, and fortune aided them. The two ships were rolling heavily in the windless swell, and a little before noon the British saw the wounded foremast of their enemy suddenly snap and tumble, with all its canvas, upon the unfortunate *Didon's* decks.

This gave new and exultant vigour to the British.

Shot holes were plugged, dismounted guns refitted, fresh braces rove, the torn rigging spliced, new canvas spread. The wind blew softly again, and a little after noon the *Phœnix*, sorely battered indeed, but in fighting trim, with guns loaded, and the survivors of her crew at quarters, bore down on the *Didon*, and took her position on that ship's weather bow. Just when the word "fire!" was about to be given, the *Didon's* flag fluttered reluctantly down; she had struck!

The toils of the *Phœnix*, however, were not even yet ended. The ship she had captured was practically a wreck, its mainmast tottering to its fall, while the prisoners greatly exceeded in numbers their captors. The little *Phœnix* courageously took her big prize in tow, and laid her course for Plymouth.

Once the pair of crippled frigates were chased by the whole of Villeneuve's fleet; once by a few chance words overheard, a plot amongst the French prisoners for seizing the *Phœnix* and then re-taking the *Didon* was detected—almost too late—and thwarted! The *Phœnix* and her prize reached Gibraltar when a thick fog lay on the Straits, a fog which, as the sorely-damaged ships crept through it, was full of the sound of signal guns and the ringing of bells. The Franco-Spanish fleet, in a word, a procession of giants, went slowly past the crippled ships in the fog, and never saw them!

Fell with a splash.

On September 3rd, however, the *Phœnix* safely brought her hard-won and stubbornly-guarded prize safely into Plymouth Sound.

The fight between the two ships was marked by many heroic incidents. During the action the very invalids in the sick-bay of the *Phœnix* crept from their cots and tried to take some feeble part in the fight. The purser is not actually part of the fighting staff of a ship, but the acting purser of the *Phœnix*, while her captain was in the smoke-filled cabin below, trying to rig up a gun to bear on the *Didon*, took charge of the quarter-deck, kept his post opposite the brazen mouth of the great carronade we have described, and, with a few marines, kept down the fire.

A little middy had the distinction of saving his captain's life. The *Didon's* bowsprit was thrust, like the shaft of a gigantic lance, over the quarter of the *Phœnix*, and a Frenchman, lying along it, levelled his musket at Captain Baker, not six paces distant, and took deliberate aim. A middy named Phillips, armed with a musket as big as himself, saw the levelled piece of the Frenchman; he gave his captain an unceremonious jostle aside, just as the Frenchman's musket flashed, and with almost the same movement, discharged his own piece at the enemy.

The French bullet tore off the brim of Captain Baker's hat, but the body of the man who fired it fell with a splash betwixt the two ships into the water. Here was a story indeed for a middy to tell, to the admiration of all the gun-rooms in the fleet.

The middy of the period, however, was half imp, half hero. Another youthful Nelson aged sixteen, at the hottest stage of the fight—probably at the moment the acting purser was in command on the quarter-deck—found an opportunity of getting at the purser's stores. With jaws widely distended, he was in the act of sucking—in the fashion so delightful to boys—a huge orange, when a musket ball, after passing through the head of a seaman, went clean through both the youth's distended cheeks—and this without touching a single tooth!

(*Next week, "The Blood-stained Hill of Busaco."*)

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CHAPTER XXII.

The Coffin.

There are poisons so subtle that the least conceivable portion entering the blood on a pin's point will produce the convulsions of death. The blood will congeal to a putrid cream. The limbs will curl and shoot for agony.

Lucretia Borgia had a ring furnished with a tiny poisoned prick, with which she shook hands with such of her guests as she wished to die.

"What is it?" said Arthur.

Nature has secrets and resources which can only be described as ghastly. You meet with them on the road to the Abyss.

On contact with this dark chemistry many human brains reel with frenzy.

In this scientific witchcraft Dr. Danton was an adept. In the middle ages there were drugs known to the learned of such marvellous operation that it is no wonder if they were regarded as diabolical agencies. Men hardly dared speak of them in the open day to each other; if anyone dared to *write* of them, he did it timorously, in cryptograms and symbols. A great part of his life Danton had spent in trying to decipher such hidden lore.

The condition known as the *Somnus Angelorum*—the Sleep of the Angels—is produced by a drug which probably few living men of science could prepare. The body stiffens into the rigour of death; all the bodily functions cease totally. Only the brain remains clear; the mind is active; the senses are acute. But the victim can no more lift an eyelash than he could blow away the moon with a breath.

When Arthur on the appointed Friday at a quarter to three arrived at No. 11, Rue Taitbout, he was suprised to see that the house was apparently untenanted. Why had Danton appointed such a place for the meeting? A faint suspicion, a vague uneasiness, passed like a mist through his mind. But he was not a man given to fears. He stood with one foot on the front steps, waiting. His face showed no agitation—but his heart was thumping in his bosom. He was about to see—*her*.

The front door opened above him, and there stood Danton's great body, calling to him to enter.

"What is it?" said Arthur. "I prefer, thank you, to remain here till the lady arrives."

"Pray—enter," said Danton.

"I will stay here."

"If it pleases you, certainly. But the lady is already within."

"I do not believe one word of it."

Danton bowed.

"It is true, nevertheless."

Arthur's heart was fluttering. She was here, already! He could divine no motive for the lie.

"You say she *is* here?"

"I have said it."

"That, on your honour?"

"By all means."

"You have no honour, Danton. But I suppose a human creature can't lie in that way."

He mounted the stone steps. He entered. The door banged ominously behind him, moaning through the hollow house.

"This way, please," said Danton.

He led the way through three large apartments, then up a flight of uncarpeted wooden stairs, towards the back of the mansion.

They stood at length in a bare room. In it was nothing but a low kind of platform at one end. On this platform stood a small vial containing a greenish liquid, a wine-glass, and a long black coffin, the lid of which leant up against the wall.

Danton, as they walked in, shut the door behind him; then, with a hideous laugh, holding out his arm, he said:

"Shake hands!"

"You frightful ruffian! what is the meaning of this insolence?" cried Arthur.

Danton had a huge ring on his middle finger. He did not reply, but with his palm he struck Arthur on the back of his hand.

In less than a minute Arthur had turned pale, and tottered faint towards the wall.

Danton emitted a whistle, and Hawke entered the room.

"Hold him, Hawke, while I give him these few drops." Danton walked towards the platform, very carefully measured out ten drops from the vial into the glass, and poured them down Arthur's throat, while Hawke supported him.

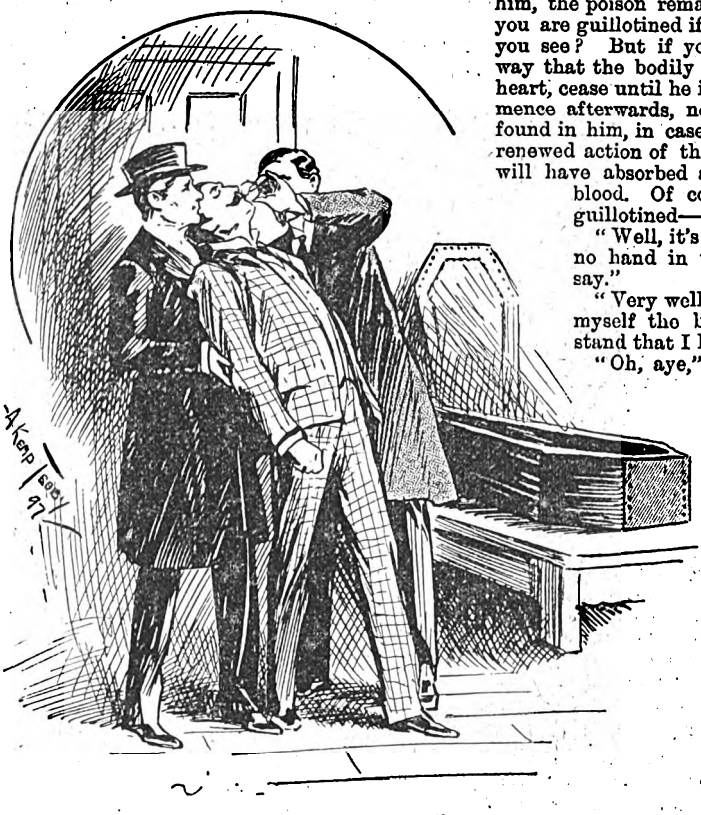
Arthur suddenly felt his consciousness revive. His brain cleared; he knew that there was Danton watching him. He knew that he was leaning on another man. He tried to stand upright, but his weight seemed to have grown too heavy for him. He waited a moment, and said to himself: "*Now* I will stand up!" But he could no more move a muscle, or the atom of a muscle, than he could fly. His body was fixed and stiff in death. He tried to look round. His eyes would not move. He had a will, an intelligence, but his frame no longer owned them. He was living in the tomb of himself, in a prison of flesh that had turned to granite.

Danton touched with his forefinger the ball of Arthur's glazed and lifeless eyes.

"*That* is all right," he murmured.

Arthur heard him speak, knew that he had touched his eyes, but the eyes did not flinch to the millionth part of an inch.

Danton put his ear to his heart—to his chest.



Poured them down Arthur's throat.

"*Those* are all right," he murmured. "They have quite ceased to act. Hold his shoulders, Hawke."

Hawke took his shoulders, Danton his feet. They bore and laid him in the coffin, and over the coffin they settled the lid. Arthur tried to shriek; he could as soon have lifted the earth.

"Is he dead, mate?" asked Hawke, as he and Danton walked away.

"Dead, no! He will shake himself out of that in thirty-six hours' time, and be as hearty as you or I."

"But he will be under the ground by that time, won't he?"

"Certainly."

"Why not kill the poor lad outright, and spare him all that misery? Look here, I tell you plain, mate, I don't like this job."

"You are a fool, Hawke. If you poison a man and kill him, the poison remains in his stomach; and you are guillotined if his stomach is searched, you see? But if you poison him in such a way that the bodily functions, the lungs, the heart, cease until he is buried, and then recommence afterwards, no trace of poison will be found in him, in case of exhumation; for the renewed action of the functions in the grave will have absorbed all the poison into the blood. Of course, if you *wish* to be guillotined——"

"Well, it's nothing to me. I've got no hand in the matter, that's all I say."

"Very well, Mr. Hawke, I take upon myself the burden. But you understand that I leave you to-night?"

"Oh, aye," said Hawke; "it's all very fine for you to be going down to your grand château in the country with this girl, and leave me to do all the dirty burial work."

"By no means," said Lemaitre. "*I* have done all the work that is necessary. The books at Père Lachaise were signed two days ago; a friend upon whose discretion you may rely looked to that for me. He believed, in fact, that he was signing for a grave for a pauper lunatic whom I formerly attended. Nothing remains to be done except to accompany the hearse to the cemetery."

"That would be a fine job for Wheeler to nab me on, wouldn't it?"

"Wheeler must not 'nab' you. You have gone out before, since your trick upon him, in a close carriage—why can you not go to-morrow?"

"Oh, very well, I'll risk it. But suppose, after all, the girl won't go with you to the country?"

"She will, Mr. Hawke."

"I doubt it myself."

"She will come. My care for her will make her love me. I shall make her rich promises, Mr. Hawke, a stately country house after her poverty, perfect solitude——"

"*That* promise, anyway, will be made like pie-crusts, to be broken."

"What, sir! Did you ever know me to break a promise, and to the lady of my heart, you villain? No! she

shall, I say, have perfect solitude—for some weeks, at any rate, until she learns to look for me, to long for me. I shall go away, I shall travel. When I return to her she will have learnt to trust me utterly, to love me madly, Mr. Hawke."

"I like your big talk, I do!" said Hawke. "Suppose she runs away from the château?"

"I have made full provision for that, Hawke. I can trust my servants, sir. She will be watched and guarded."

"Do you know," said Hawke meditatively, "I've once or twice thought that this here girl is really the daughter of your wife by her first husband?"

"You idiot! What wife?"

"Why, Julie."

"Hold your tongue, you beast, or I shall knock every tooth down your vile throat!"

"All right, mate. Strikes me you don't much like hearing that word 'Julie' mentioned, do you? But this here girl, Edith, greatly favours you in the face, you know; no one can say she don't."

"Do you mean to say she is like me?"

"I do."

"It is the affinity between us, you idiot. We are made out of the same piece—our two souls—our two bodies."

"Oh, that's all very fine! But when I showed her that photo of your—your—Julie, do you know she said 'yes—that *is* my mother?' Now, that wur very strange, you know."

"She did not see the picture well, I suppose," said Lemaitre musingly; "and there *may*, in truth, have been some resemblance between her mother—and—and—the other woman. You are talking nonsense, sir!"

No suspicion had ever yet crossed Lemaitre's mind that Edith was the daughter of Julie; for Julie had carefully concealed from him the fact that she had ever had a daughter.

At this point there was a knock at the front door. It was Edith.

Expecting to meet Arthur, she fainted into Lemaitre's arms on seeing him come to the door.

He bore her to the only furnished room in the house, and laid her on a couch. It was a room next to that in which Arthur lay.

For a long time Arthur, stretched in his coffin, heard the occasional tones of her voice, though he could not catch the words. Toward evening, two hours afterwards, she drove away in a carriage with Lemaitre, bound for his newly-purchased château in far Provence. In her eyes was the wild and weak look of mesmeric ecstasy.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Search.

All that afternoon, Cécile, at the Hôtel Anglais, was waiting for Arthur; he had made a new appointment with her, but he did not come.

About nine Tom Wilson was ushered into her presence in her suite of apartments on the first floor.

Cécile was cross. Jack Heathcote was sitting woebegone at the other end of the room, banished from her.

"Well, Tom, what have you?"

"A'm no that easy in my moind about Captain Musgrave," said Tom. "He went oot and said he'd be back long since."

"He promised to be here, Tom. One can do nothing. Why do you come to me in your trouble?"

"A always do, 'ee knoa. Didst thoo no tell me to look well after t' Captain?"

"And you do, I think, Tom? Because you are *good*, eh? as one *said* you were?"

"That's neither here nor there, Cécile Delisle. Wot A've got to say is, thot o' Tuesday evening, A went oot after him, having naught to do, keeping an eye, 'ee knoa, in this ootlandish pleace; and A see that lump of a man, Dr. Danton, they call him—get from his carriage, and have speech with t' Captain. A doan't loike thot Danton at all."

"No, Tom? Is it so, yes? Then you *are* my very boy! *I* don't like him, too!"

"A thought not. Danton showed him some newspapers. A heerd them say as they shoold meet again. Thot's aboot all A've to tell."

Some newspapers! Cécile spent a sleepless night in her chair. For his first breach of his appointment with her, Arthur had been profuse in apologies. If he broke a *second* appointment, what could she think? She must think that he broke it because he could not, by any possibility, keep it.

But she could dream of nothing that could prevent him, except physical inability; and she went over in her mind all the various forms of such physical inability, rejecting the far-fetched. He was not dangerously ill, except through some accident, which was unlikely; he was not detained in prison. He was bound by some artificial force, by private hands—or he was dead. If he were dead, he was murdered.

She did not need the information of Tom Wilson to make her think of Danton as the source of the mischief. Yet she knew nothing against Danton. Was the man capable of committing a crime, as his close comrade, Lemaitre, had been?

In the morning, early, she rose, washed, and hurried in a cab to Arthur's hotel. He had not come home. She took Tom Wilson, who was walking to and fro in front of the hotel façade, into the cab with her, and made straight for Père Lachaise cemetery.

She left Tom in the cab at the gates, and walked rapidly towards the bureau of the *Archiviste des Sépulcres*. An old woman who was sweeping near the entrance told her that she was too early by an hour.

For an hour, in an agony of impatience, she walked about among the avenues of stately monuments and streets of tombs. When at last she entered the bureau and asked for the *archiviste*, one of the clerks sitting at a table led her along a passage, up some stairs, and ushered her into a room of many shelves, stocked with dusty documents. An old man in a scull-cap sat reading at a table.

"I wish to know if you have appointed any grave within the last day or two on a death certificate delivered by a Dr. Danton," said Cécile.

The old man searched a pile of papers. Then he opened a pig-skin volume, and ran his finger down a column of "D's" on a page.

"Not only is the answer to your question no," he said; "but there is no such doctor as Dr. Danton in Paris at all."

"Then I give notice," answered Cécile, "that in case of such a death-certificate being handed in, there will be a necessity for investigation——"

"But your notice is useless. There being no such doctor here, the Registrar of Deaths would refuse to pass the certificate on to me, mademoiselle."

"But what am I to do, then, m'sieur? I have a fear that an Englishman, by name Arthur Musgrave, may have met foul play in Paris——"

"That is a matter for the police, mademoiselle. It is entirely beyond my province."

Cécile turned and walked sharply away. "It is *not* a matter for the police," she said inwardly. "It is a matter for instant action—for desperate effort, by *me*. So 'Danton' is not his real name, then?"

She hurried back to Tom Wilson, and scribbled in pencil on the unused half of a note, which she took from her pocket, the words:

"Get quickly *all* the Paris papers since Monday last, and search in the advertisements for the name of Edith. Will see you at one."

She handed it to Tom, and told him to take it at once to Jack Heathcote at the Hôtel Anglais. The newspapers which Tom Wilson had seen Danton showing to Arthur!

Her quick instinct told her that there, if anywhere, would light be found.

As Tom rolled away in his cab, she hailed another, and set off in a different direction. Her first point of aim was the Tribunal de Police in the Rue de St. Sepulcre, where she merely stated her case, briefly mentioning the disappearance of Arthur, with a description of the man calling himself "Danton." Then she procured a list of the cemeteries in Paris and its environs, and began a wild career from district to district, collecting items of information about all the burials to take place within the next few days, with the address of the bodies, and the causes of death.

"What am I to do, then, m'sieur?"

Sharp at one she was back to the Hôtel Anglais. Jack was waiting for her in her rooms; he pointed to the *Courier de Soir*, and the advertisements appointing a meeting at the Rue Taitbout.

Cécile threw herself on a couch, face downwards, her hands covering her face; and for half-an-hour lay so thinking.

"Stupid!" she cried at last, springing up. "I have wasted a whole morning: what I undertook was just endless. Arthur is at the Rue Taitbout, of course—alive or dead. Come."

She, with Heathcote, rode in a front cab; behind, Tom Wilson and three *agents de police*, whom Cécile picked up on her way; two of them were already in search for Arthur; and all of them drove at high speed toward the Rue Taitbout.

At No. 11 Cecile stopped, flew up the steps, and knocked. The other five followed her, and waited round the door. There was no answer. The truncheons of the police began pounding clamorously at the door, the whole street echoing with the alarm. But there was no answer. . . . The shoulders of the five men went urging at the door; it was heavy, but old; with many a jerky swing their invading shoulders gained slowly upon its tense resistance; there was a creaking—a sudden ripping of wood—and they tumbled in through the splintered door, victorious.

They rushed different ways through the house, searching every cranny of it; but they found it empty.

An hour before, Arthur, lying in the stiffness and pallor of death in his coffin, had heard the screws turn and groan in the lid which shut the light from him. The thunders of the Day of Doom itself could not have affected him with half the horror inspired by this simple sound.

Ten minutes later, if anyone had peeped within that coffin, the hair of the coffined man would have been seen to have turned to the whiteness of untrodden snow.

At the moment when the door of No. 11, Rue Taitbout, was being ripped to shivers, Arthur was hearing the heavy, wet clods of the grave falling in dull thuds upon his coffin-lid. His imprisoned spirit went mad, and swooned.

Hawke had seen to it that the funeral took place at an early hour. Old gaol-bird as he was, his tough conscience was ill at ease at his deed. He had made up his mind to have an afternoon of hopeless drunkenness—a grand time; and as soon as he saw the coffin lifted from the hearse at the grave-side, he called to the driver of his close carriage, and drove away to Lemaitre's mansion in the Rue de Rome. Here he had the choice of many forms of delight, and before long was lying on a couch, singing, laughing, and drunk

As Cécile walked hurriedly about the rooms of No. 11, Rue Taitbout, her wits, which had hardly been as clear that day as usual owing to the confusion of her terror and dismay, sprang up into vividest life. She felt that it was a case of now or never. "Oh, I must not be a blind fool this day—this day of all days!" she said to herself. She called one of the gendarmes, and, pointing to the ground, said: "Look there!"

"What, mademoiselle?"

What she showed him was so faint that he had to stoop quite low down to see it. It was the damp mark of a footstep nearly dry on the uncarpeted floor. It had been raining a little that morning.

Yet, small and indistinct as the marks of the footsteps were, she astounded the officer by saying five minutes later:

"There have been no fewer than three men here within the last hour. And they were bearing a heavy burden."

"Is that so, mad'moiselle?" said the man.

"Yes. If you look closely, you will see that the marks on the floor are characterised in three distinct ways by the three pairs of feet; and the random direction of the footfalls lead one to guess that they were struggling under a burden."

In another minute she raised an outcry which brought them all round her. She had entered the room from which the coffin had been removed.

"See there!" she cried, pointing to the low, dust-covered platform, "that is where the coffin stood. It has left its distinct shape marked out in the dust!"

"To the cemetery—quick!" cried one of the men.

"But *which* cemetery?" asked Cécile.

"Père Lachaise. That is where a person from this district would most likely be interred."

In a quarter of an hour they had dashed through the streets and stood before the *archiviste*.

"What you ask is impossible," he said to their representation; "twenty-five persons have been buried here this morning. To exhume the whole of them would be nothing short of an outrage upon the twenty-four."

Before this dilemma the search-party stood dumb. But Cécile had a sudden thought.

"You say that 'Danton' is not among the certified doctors of Paris. Will you see, then, if 'Lemaitre' is?"

"Yes," said the *archiviste*, "I know the name. One of to-day's certificates is actually signed by him."

"Then the body for which he signed is the body we want!" cried Cecile.

In five minutes an order for exhumation was in her hand; in thirty the white, dead face of Arthur appeared before her. The girl was leaning pallid and faint on Jack Heathcote.

"Is that the Englishman, mademoiselle?"

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"Yes—no, no, that is not he! His hair is white—is white as snow." Then with a sudden shriek: "Yes, see his eyelid! He lives! he lives! It is Arthur! Oh, God!"

Her eyes closed, she sighed, and fainted.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Schooner.

Four days later, towards evening, she stood with him at the railway station, the Gare du Nord. Arthur was sitting inside the train, and Cécile stood talking at the window.

"Well," she said, "if you will be cruel and obstinate I cannot prevent you; but you have not, I think, the right to go fighting in Egypt just now."

"Dear Miss Delisle," he said, "how good you are, and wise, and strong! But I feel as well as ever I did; my hand, I admit, shakes a little."

He held it out and it trembled. He was a changed Arthur Musgrave—that was clear. If Dr. Lemaitre had seen him now with his white hair he would no longer have said that he was "playing the child"; the grave had made of him a full man—a developed man. The over-fine well-bred languor of manner was gone, and as he held out his shaking hand with a smile, his eyes were lifted to Heaven in gratitude, and a tear dropped from them.

"Well, if you will go, you will go," said Cécile, "but is it kind to Edith?"

"One must do one's duty," he said. "Edith is with Dr. Danton. It his her own will, I assure you. I told you I heard the tones of her voice speaking to him, from the coffin. They were sad and subdued tones, I admit, but I am sure that they were not *angry* tones. She has chosen her own way."

"But you do not doubt that she loves you?"

"I must doubt it—I cannot but doubt it. Yes, decidedly, I doubt it."

Cécile sighed.

"It is no good speaking of it," she said; "some day you may know better. God keep you—good-bye."

He wrung her hand. The train was whistling to start.

But before she turned away, she called Tom Wilson out of the carriage, and led him a little way from it.

"Tom," she said, "I want you to promise me something. You will look well after the Captain, I think?"

Tom nodded.

"You won't let him be killed, will you?"

Tom nodded.

"Promise me."

"Aye—A promise."

"It is Arthur! Oh, God!"

She kissed him on the forehead—on both cheeks—on the mouth.

The train whistled and moved. Tom rushed back to his place beside Arthur, crying. Cécile waved her hand—and sighed.

* * * * *

France was growing hot for Dr. Danton. The news of the body buried alive had gone through the country. The name of Danton, who had arranged to meet the buried man at No. 11, Rue Taitbout, and the name Lemaitre, who had signed the death certificate, was in everybody's mouth. Probably the only person who saw nothing of it was Edith, living alone in the grand château in the solitudes of Provence.

What was the connection between Danton and Lemaitre? everyone was asking, but no one knew. Meanwhile, it could not be difficult for the authorities to find Danton, though of Lemaitre they could obtain no trace. Danton's properties—his house in the Rue de Rome, and his château in Provence—had recently been purchased. Within two days after the exhumation of Arthur, the police had gathered this information from the estate agents of Paris.

But long before two days Lemaitre had decided upon his course. As soon as he read of the salvation of Arthur he determined upon a swift and bold plan. He must destroy his identity as though he had never existed; then he would settle down in some secure nook of the world, and spend the rest of his existence in peace with Edith, his soul, his life. He at once telegraphed a warning to Hawke at the Rue de Rome; and before the police had had time to visit the house Hawke was well out of it, by no means very anxious about the matter. His pockets were kept well lined by Lemaitre, and in a state of maudlin content, just taking a few necessary precautions to keep himself unsuspected, he entered upon a career replete with his favourite enjoyments of gambling and drinking.

With masterly activity, Lemaitre, having dispatched the telegram to Hawke, hurried back to his château, for immediately on reaching it with Edith, he had kept his promise to her, and gone away. By his mysterious power over her will, he was enabled to persuade her that there were reasons why the château would not, after all, be a fit residence for her. Edith heard him with surprise, mistrust, and scorn, but with gradually lessening resistance.

After each of her encounters with him, when he had left her, she was filled with marvel at herself for yielding to his will; but the mysterious laws of Nature are stronger

than we. Always at the next contest with Lemaitre, the result was the same as at the last: she yielded.

That morning he had seen the offer of a lonely furnished house near the Lake of Como advertised for sale in an Avignon paper, and he had promptly purchased it under an assumed name. In the end, he induced Edith to travel thither alone that very day, and take up her abode in this Italian *casa*, with the promise that she would remain there in perfect seclusion till she heard from him. He sent with her three of the château servants, whom he trusted. He provided one of them with a roll of notes, and saw the party off by train. The same night, having elaborately disguised himself, he boldly started for Paris.

By the next evening, he had gathered into his pockets all the money he was worth from the Paris banks, in which it had been deposited in the assumed name of Corot.

At seven o'clock he was walking rapidly through the streets towards the Gare du Nord, a travelling-bag in his hand, when Cécile Delisle, who was walking in the same direction, but more slowly, saw him from behind beneath a lamp.

"My God! there is Lemaitre!" she muttered under her breath. "Why, he has the very back of Dr. Danton!"

Lemaitre had on a long mauve-coloured overcoat, which reached to his feet. It was furred at the neck, and wrapped him high up round the head. The weather was quite mild, but he had chosen it for the double purpose of concealment and warmth in his long journey. He had not once worn it since an eventful day, months ago, and he had not brushed it on taking it from his trunk on the previous day.

"My God! there is Lemaitre——"

She had seen, beneath the lamp, three blood-red hairs—like the hairs of a rug—still adhering to the back of the light-coloured coat.

She ran to the other side, and on in front, to a point from which she could look back at his face, and at once, with sinking disappointment, cried:

"But *that* is not Lemaitre! *That* is not a pale man!"

Lemaitre had at present a high, florid complexion, red hair, and a long, pointed, red beard; he looked very like a Yankee traveller. A peaked cap of check cloth was drawn low down over his eyes.

"*Was* it Lemaitre?" Her mind swung backward in favour of the negative. Might not *two* men, by some possibility, have red hairs on a mauve coat? And this man had the wrong face. She was distracted with doubt. And she felt that, if *she* were so, an officer of the police would be certain to smile at her simplicity if she attempted to give the man in charge.

But she would not lose sight of him. Just then she had been going to the Gare de Lyons, intending to travel south, with the object of spying out Danton's château near Avignon. She had an instinct that Edith might be found there. But now she changed her mind, and walking abreast of Lemaitre on the opposite side of the street, she kept up with him till he reached the other station. She heard him take his ticket. When he stepped into the Calais train, she, too, got into it, immediately behind him.

She slept towards morning in the Hotel Continental at Calais, where Lemaitre, too, had put up.

She awoke frightened, about eleven a.m. She had overslept herself. What if he had gone? She made inquiries in the hotel, and heard that the gentleman with the red beard had gone out, but would return. She looked through the recent arrivals in the visitors' book, but saw no name that she knew. If this were, indeed, Lemaitre, he was in disguise, and had used a false name. She hurriedly ate something, and went out into the streets.

Moored to the end of the pier was a Marseilles schooner with her mainsail up and flapping in the breeze. There was quite a swarm of men about and on her, busily loading her with firkins of paraffin-oil in cubic tin boxes. She was to leave that evening, and had already taken out a clearance for Toulon.

In the cabin, at the time when Cécile came out to spy after him, Lemaitre was closeted with the skipper of the schooner, a thick-set tar, with short beard, and broad face Their conference lasted two hours.

The schooner was heavily insured for the voyage; and it was arranged between them, that on Lemaitre handing the captain 15,000 francs for his own personal benefit, the captain and mate should land him in a boat in the middle of the second night out, on a lonely spot of the western coast of France. The schooner should then proceed some distance on her way, and be hurriedly scuttled towards morning. When the crew were already in the boats, and the schooner was on the very point of sinking, the captain and mate, who alone were to be in the secret, should raise the alarm that the passenger had been forgotten in his berth; and they should pretend to make some effort to save him just as the schooner disappeared from sight. The other sailors would thus be made certain that the passenger had perished.

Shortly before leaving the Hotel Continental, Lemaitre intended altering the false name he had put in the visitors' book to his true name; and as all France was talking of that name, the police would quickly know that he had been there, the sailors on board the steamer also would know him by his true name; and two days after the world would be convinced that Lemaitre had perished at sea. He would then boldly resume his life, without disguise, as Dr. Danton. The police knew the appearance of Dr. Danton, and would doubtless find and bother him. But that would be, at worst, a mere temporary inconvenience. Against Danton they had not even a charge to bring, much less evidence to prove it. For Arthur had been so stupefied by the slight prick of Danton's ring, which was too slight for him even

"Was *it Lemaitre?*"

to feel or know of, that he was utterly unaware of the drops which had been afterwards administered to him; so that he could not at all account, when questioned, for the strange state of death-in-life into which he had fallen. When asked if any drug had been given him, he had, in fact, said no.

It was Lemaitre who had signed the death certificate; it was Lemaitre who had murdered Julie; it was Lemaitre

whose existence and identity must be wiped clean out of the book of life; but Danton was safe.

But when Lemaitre was stepping from the schooner back to the pier, all being arranged between him and the skipper, Cécile saw him from a distance. And half-an-hour later she was beseeching the captain to grant her a passage to Toulon in his ship.

He told her that it was impossible. His craft was not a passenger-boat; and he had already departed from his custom by taking one passenger.

"A gentleman?"

"Yes."

"I wish I could see him—he might yield his place to me. What name?"

"Dr. Lemaitre."

Cécile tingled.

"So you cannot let me go with you?"

She looked through the hole.

"Well, haven't I told you at least twenty times, mademoiselle, it is quite out of the question?"

"I will go with you all the same," said Cécile to herself.

For two hours longer she watched Lemaitre about Calais, keeping her face well out of view. He had no idea that she was near him. And in her effort to escape his notice, it happened, too, that she never really saw his features well. About three p.m. she observed him write something in the visitors' book, and soon afterwards, looking, saw the words: "Armand Lemaitre."

She no longer doubted that he was the Lemaitre she sought, and decided that his florid colour was a disguise. She could then and there have given him into custody with tolerable certainty; but the mystery of this bold announcement of his name was too much for her egotism, her scent for the hidden; this man was *hers;* for many months all her thoughts had been centred around him; she herself must probe him to the bottom, and shew herself his master.

"And now," she said, "for the schooner!"

She mounted watch from the quay, near the bustling and swarming craft, and watched till she saw the captain step ashore and walk away landward. She had in her hand a small bag, crammed with sandwiches and a bottle of water.

About seven, the schooner dropped from her moorings and sailed leisurely out, deep-laden. Lemaitre occupied a stuffy little cabin on the starboard side. Immediately for'ard of it was the pantry; and immediately connected with this, separated from it by a sliding board, a tiny compartment, totally dark, from the ceiling of which hung three hams. On the floor of this cell, her back propped against the partition, sat Cécile, chewing sandwiches.

In two hours, the schooner was plunging and swaggering about among the waters. The night came on bleak and squally, and up rose the north wind stormily, rolling large billows before it.

At about eleven Cécile staggered from her hiding-place, drew the panel, entered the pantry, and came out into the passage of the cabin. All was still, save the piping winds, the slow dirge of the creaking ropes, and the click of a lantern wildly swinging from the roof. On first coming down into the cabin, she had looked into all the berths, and decided which was the best; that one, she knew, would be allotted to Lemaitre.

There was no key in the door, and steadying herself with both hands, she looked through the hole. A lantern nailed to a beam gave light within. Lemaitre was sitting on the edge of his bed, fully dressed, with something held up in his hand, at which he steadily gazed. Was he sea-sick? she wondered. He hardly seemed the same man whose face she had seen that day. Beneath the red with which his face was painted, the greenish hue of horror was now suggested. The hand which held the something before his eyes trembled like a reed in the wind.

She stood clinging desperately to the posts, looking at him for about half-an-hour, and keeping at the same time a sharp ear for any approaching step. Lemaitre, but for his trembling hand, seemed turned to stone. Suddenly he dashed the thing he held on to a chair, with a jerk of terror and abhorrence. It was then that Cécile saw that it was a photograph of Julie. She had seen the likeness which Edith had had of her mother, and recognised it under the lantern-light. Lemaitre suddenly picked it up again and put it hurriedly into an inner pocket of his overcoat, which he still wore. Cécile crept back to her retreat, frightened by the look she had seen in those haunted eyes.

When the day broke a definite storm was blowing from the north-west, and the schooner, labouring heavily, was drenching the man at the wheel with seas shipped over her bows. Through the day the wind continued to roar, loading the reefed sails with tempest. At five o'clock it was as dark as midnight, and the schooner was butting blindly and sullenly along in a cloud of spray, under half her jib and mainsail. Her foresail, an hour before, had been battered into shreds by the cuffs of the blast.

At seven the captain was down below in Lemaitre's berth having a long conference with him. Cécile, ever on the watch from the dark door of the pantry, saw him enter, and crept near. She heard from their talk, the whole scheme, by which Lemaitre was to be landed and the ship scuttled. The captain had come to tell him that on such a night as this the thing was out of the question. A boat put out in such a sea would almost certainly founder.

Lemaitre walked up and down the little berth, mad at the delay.

Cécile's quick wit took in the entire plan. Lemaitre intended to wipe out his whole former existence from the world of men. This, then, was the secret of the signature of his true name in the hotel book. When the captain rose to leave him, Cécile plunged back to her pantry.

It could hardly have been ten minutes later when the cry of "Fire! Fire!" was raised far for'ard.

"Fire! Fire!"

The ship was loaded with oil, and the winds were howling like ten thousand bulls in pain.

(To be concluded.)

RESULT OF JUMBLED PICTURE COMPETITION.

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Harry Nobbs, 67, Frobisher Road, Hornsey, £2 2s.

A copy of "Valdar the Oft-Born" has been forwarded to each of the following five:

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Herewith you have the next ten pictures. Write down the names in the spaces provided, and keep your list until two other sets have appeared. **DON'T SEND THEM IN UNTIL TUESDAY, APRIL 27,** *next.*

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of five must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.

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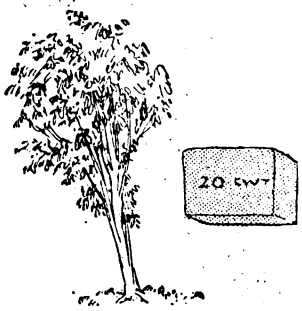

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Remember these Things.

YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the surnames of the people, except in cases where the christian names are depicted.

Name.....

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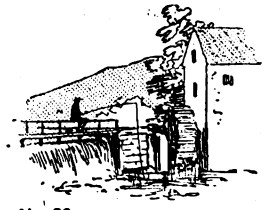

No. 30.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of M.P.'s.—Whitaker's Almanack, the London Post-Office Directory, Hazell's Annual, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

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Easter Eggs.

I was twenty years old and inspector of the study-hall at the College of Chautevigne, a little old town whose lime-whitened houses were basking in the sun on the banks of the Rhone.

Above the houses, and surmounted by a weather-cock or a cross, pointed the steeples of its innumerable churches, while the whole was inclosed with sham fortifications, cut out as if from pieces of lace, and gilded like the crust of a *pâté*.

By what train of circumstances I had come to occupy this not very lucrative and little-to-be-envied situation, permit me to say nothing. The story, besides, would not be new. There comes a time to many of us when, if the heart is rich and the brain full, the pocket is light and the purse empty.

The College was, as are almost all these little colleges of the South, an old religious building, more or less appropriate for its novel use. The passages were dark and winding; the class-rooms had still the air of the cell; in the refectory was still the chair where formerly each of the white fathers came in his turn to read some pious work, while the others, in silence, ate their stew of potatoes or their bowl of rice and milk. Even now the table fare was but little changed. In the court, surrounded by its circular yard, surmounted by high-standing walls covered with moss, the sun seemed never willing to enter.

Ah, well! You may believe me or not, as you wish, but this college without sunshine, with its old walls and its gloomy passages, had ended by pleasing me, and I lived there contentedly; I ceased to remember the principal, a very slim man with a spare beard, whose blue glasses and enormous bunch of keys seemed at every instant to spring up behind you; I even forgot my scholars, a lot of *gamins* badly combed, mischievous, and wicked—and all this because, one morning, from the window of my room, I made a discovery.

It was Thursday. I was awaiting the hour to descend to the study-hall, and was leaning on my elbow at the window, gazing at the roofs and chimneys. I saw in the distance the fields already green, and on my right the Rhone, on the blue waves of which, hoisting their white sails, the little barques were passing. Below, in the street, a scissor-grinder sang as he made the wheel of his grindstone whizz; and in the material silence of being and things, his song came up to me, mixed with the rumbling of the stone under the iron.

Suddenly a window was opened almost opposite me, a hand pushed back the narrow shutter, which creaked on its hinges; then a head appeared, a pretty blonde head, with large blue eyes and hair disordered in a most amusing fashion. She had not seen me. Gently she hung a little mirror on the side of the window; then, taking her long golden hair in her hands, she set about completing her toilet. I stood there open-mouthed, my heart beating loudly. But at the same time I listened to the neighbouring clock. If I could, I would have stopped the hands. Alas! It rang the hour! Below the drummer beat his drum, and its roll mounting, spread the length of the long corridors of the old college. It was the porter, whose business it was to beat the morning call, and he acquitted himself very conscientiously, I assure you.

At the noise my neighbour lifted her head. She saw me. I began to redden, for her look, at first angry, softened, and while I withdrew with regret from the window, it seemed to me that a peal of mocking laughter accompanied my departure.

I arrived at the study-hall late. The principal said nothing, but the bunch of keys shook in the most significant manner.

At noon I knew who my charming unknown was! Ah! the lady was neither a duchess nor a marchioness, but love never has had its titles of nobility. She was called Mariette, and she simply was the niece of the pastry-cook established almost in front of our college, and who recruited his best clients among all our young students.

I never, until that day, had paid any attention to his marble shelves, whereon gridirons placed on painted plates, spread in a most appetising way, were golden nugatines, buns loaded with raisins, and cream puffs on which the sugar glistened.

I had never entered his shop, but now I desired two things—to cross the threshold and to win, at any price, the friendship of the uncle. It seemed to me that that was the chief point, and I commenced the attack that same day.

At two o'clock, when I went out with my pupils, I made them pass very near the shop. I ought to say that in this I had not much trouble, as they went very willingly indeed. The uncle was there, large and fat, in his white vest with its double row of buttons. Timidly, I saluted him. Surprised, he glanced at me; then mechanically bowed. Good man! how gladly I would have hugged him!

That same evening, towards six o'clock, I entered his house. The shop of the pastry-cook was open to everyone. In a trembling voice I asked, from the threshold of the door, for four sous' worth of gum drops! And I coughed to give a most serious aspect to my demand.

It was *she* who came to serve me; ravishingly pretty, blonder even than I had thought, and very sweet with her white apron so tidy, and giving out a warm perfume of fresh cakes. She smiled sweetly, handing me the little paper bag, and I gave her my four sous.

"Thank you, monsieur," said she, bowing slightly.

"Thank you, mademoiselle," said I, my voice trembling.

And I went out, not without once more saluting the uncle, who was reading his paper at the end of the shop.

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I have filled myself with gum drops all this month, and I have accomplished nothing. To write I have not dared; nor have I ventured to speak.

The uncle, it is true, bids me good-day now—Mariette salutes me also. But I am afraid of everyone, of myself, of the porter, of the neighbours, of the principal, of my two colleagues especially, two old mocking bachelors who, at times, look at me with a provoking air. And it was thus I found myself at Easter Sunday. I had before me five long days of vacation, five days of liberty.

"Are you a man?" I asked myself.

"Yes."

"Well, then, go ahead."

* * * * *

I awoke in the morning very full of life, songs on my lips and my heart full of laughter. I opened wide my window. Ah! but it is good to live! This was a great feast everywhere. The birds were warbling above my head, under the eaves. On all sides the bells were ringing, and their joyous chime seemed to answer one another. Then they began to chant all together, the big ones, with deep, loud basses, accompanying the clear voices of the smallest. And these sounds all seemed to ascend and then disperse high up in the rosy sky, and already all is bathed in sunshine.

A sharp knock at my door made me turn quickly. I opened it, and saw standing there the porter, a small, round, fat, old man, who smilingly handed me a package folded in white paper. "For you, Monsieur Jacques," said he. And he was gone.

Astonished, trembling, without knowing why, I untied the pink ribbon which fastened the parcel; I unfolded the paper and a little box appeared. I opened the box at once, and on a bed of cotton, white as snow, I saw—what? An Easter egg. A little Easter egg of sugar, on which, in red letters, was traced this magic word, "Hope!"

I remained a moment confused, gazing down by turns at the ribbon shining on the floor, the box, and the egg. Nothing indicated, nothing could indicate to me from whence came this gracious gift. I knew no one at Chautevigne. All at once I uttered a cry. I had divined the mystery. "It is from her," I said, and taking the egg in both my hands, I covered it with kisses, kisses which left on my lips a delicious perfume of violets. For I had now recognised the egg. All the week I had seen it in the shop window of the little shop.

It was she. She had guessed my secret. She had divined my timidity and my silence, and she had sent me this little Easter present that it might speak to me of her. Hope and confidence. My imagination travelled so much and so far that only an hour after I went down dressed in my best clothes. What I would do I had not decided, but I would do something.

It must be said my coat shone a little in the sun, the nap of my hat was a little thin in places, but I did not give much thought to these details. It was Easter. It made the sun clear. The bells were ringing like the joyous chimes of betrothal. And in the pocket of my coat, delicately resting in its bed of cotton, I could feel the egg of sugar, which I had been too willing to carry with me.

In passing before the porter's lodge I saw my two colleagues. I waved my hand to them; they bowed and smiled, and I went on. I was on the point of telling everyone of my good luck, even to the principal, if I had met him.

The pastry-cook, the uncle, was at his door. He saw me and signed me to approach. I pretended not to have seen, but he called me. I saw I commenced to be nervous. I was too lucky, and my happiness frightened me. I had always had a timid nature. I went towards him.

"And where were you going so fast?" said the large man, extending his hand, "and so fine!" added he, beginning to laugh.

I reddened, and did not know what to reply, but with a look I searched the interior of the shop. "If I could only let Mariette know that I am here!" thought I.

All at once an idea came to me. My old trick! I coughed.

"Still that villainous cold there?" asked the uncle.

"Yes," replied I. "By-the-way," I added, "since I am here I may as well take some gum drops."

"Very good," said he; "come in."

And I entered. Mariette was not there!

The uncle took down the jar, and one by one rolled the gum drops in the scales, separating any that were fastened together. I looked about me, my eyes everywhere, hoping that the curtain at the end would be lifted, and in her pretty white apron, Mariette would appear, smiling, a finger on her lips; and I quietly prepared to take the egg from my pocket, that she might see that I had received it and that I understood.

"*A propos* of this," said the pastry-cook, rolling the paper bag between his fat fingers, "has the farce succeeded?"

I looked at him in astonishment, not understanding.

"Ah, but you are not, perhaps, in the game," said he. "Your colleagues told us the story last evening. They came to buy an Easter egg, which they wished to send to a silly friend of theirs, to make him think that the present came from a beautiful unknown, for whom he had been sighing for two months."

It seemed that everything was turning round me.

"They wanted one," he continued, "with a suitable motto. Mariette found an old one of last year for them However, they will tell you the story better than I, but this much I can say: they laughed very heartily as they tied their little package with a beautiful pink ribbon. *A propos*, I had forgotten to tell you the principal thing, and, to a customer like you, that would be impolite! My niece will no longer serve you with gum drops. She is to be married in eight days. Her future family has come to visit her this morning, and this evening a grand betrothal dinner will be given. Ah, it will be a great affair!"

And, bursting with laughter and pleasure, he slapped me on the shoulder. The shock was too rude—I fell back limply on a chair, unable to say a word. Under me I heard a crash. It was the egg which broke. I had sat upon it. Fortunately, a customer entered, and I went out immediately.

"You have forgotten your gum drops," called the pastrycook.

"Thank you," said I, and taking the little bag I rushed away. I wished to be at home—alone with myself.

In passing the porter's lodge I saw my colleagues still there. I passed bravely by them, and went up the stairs singing. But once in my room, I sadly removed my coat, and plunged my hand in my pocket to see what remained of my poor Easter egg. It was in crumbs.

Easter fell this year on the first of April—I had forgotten. It was in looking at the calendar that there came back to me the remembrance of this little story.

Fernaud Beissier.

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By the Author of "Danesford," etc.

CHAPTER VI.

Diplomacy at Fault.

Sir Richard Arbuthnot stepped briskly along the front at Brighton towards Hove. The wind coming from the sea dashed the waves with sounding force against the wall, and flung the spray high overhead. Here and there frothy patches blew across the asphalt, and stones and weed lay scattered by the railings. The tide was high, and as the white-crested waves rolled to the beach and broke in tumult, small groups of sightseers, daring a cold douche, ran briskly forward to the railings and back, followed by the flying scud. Not always with impunity, for now and again the ringing laughter of children would tell that one of their number had been caught, and he, a hero for the moment amongst his playfellows, ran back to safety, wet but happy.

The sun shone brightly, and tempted many to brave the biting wind, so that Sir Richard found his way barred many a time by groups of people retreating from some heavy rush of bubbling water. But he did not linger; he was there on an errand not to his liking. His thoughts were elsewhere.

(1.)

But for an exclamation of impatience as some hurrying child cannoned against his legs, he paid no attention to the scene around.

At length he turned to the King's Road, and drawing an envelope from his pocket read an address. "Alpha Villas," he muttered; "an ominous name. The beginning of the alphabet; I wish we could skip all the other letters and reach the end. There will be a row, I know. What could possess that silly boy to run his head into the noose a second time passes my comprehension. I freed him from the entanglement once—got no thanks by-the-way—and now—— Why will men make such fools of themselves about women? Ah! well, Dick, my boy, strictly between ourselves, you need not say too much. But this must be the house. No. 17, yes, I know the type, tawdry, dingy neighbours either side, a bright clean villa, with an air, in between. I wonder if the lady will see me?"

Of the maid who answered the bell, he asked if Mrs. Dennison were at home, handed her a card and waited in the porch.

Presently the maid returned with a message that her mistress was indisposed and could not see the gentleman.

"Now, look here," said Sir Richard to the girl, "I must see your mistress. You tell her I have come from London on purpose, and I am not going back again until I have seen her. I will send out for sandwiches and some beer and sit on the doorstep until she is ready. Now, tell her that."

After a few minutes Sir Richard was requested to enter, and turning into a tiny drawing-room, which opened into a smaller conservatory, found himself face to face with Nelly.

Standing in the centre of the room, drawn to her full height, with flashing eyes and head thrown back, she angrily demanded, as soon as he entered:

"How dare you come into my house in this way, Sir Richard Arbuthnot?"

"Mrs. Dennison?" he queried with a smile and bow.

"You know I am Mrs. Dennison," she answered with heightened colour, "but my question?"

"Not so fast, my dear young lady. I want to have some conversation with you. But with your permission I will take a chair."

"You will evidently do as you please."

"That I confess has been my aim in life. But will you not be seated also? I may keep you some little time."

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"You assume that I will allow you to remain?"

"I think you will not turn me out to eat sandwiches on your doorstep. Now, please sit down. That is better; now we may talk more at ease."

"I have no wish to talk at all. I am waiting to hear why you have intruded here. You must know I hate you, and with good reason."

"Hate, eh," said Sir Richard with affected surprise, "why, what have I done?"

"Did you not take Roy away from me months ago? Do you not come here to do so again?"

"Now, my dear lady——"

"Do not speak to me like that. It is an impertinence," she broke in hotly.

"I beg your pardon, but you are very charming, and the phrase came naturally. Now, don't interrupt again. We shall never get on at this rate. It is about Roy I have come to speak. I need not go into the past, I am a man of the world, and was young once, and now that I have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Dennison I can appreciate his temptation, I can——"

She sprang to her feet in anger.

"You madden me, you insult me with a compliment. For Heaven's sake say what you have to say and go. Am I to ring the bell and have you shown to the door?"

But he only smiled amusedly, as he resumed.

"Pray sit down again. You excite yourself into quite unnecessary anger. I meant no insult, I meant what I said, and had no second thought. You are a handsome woman in anger; you can, I am sure, be charming in every mood. Now, my de——, there, I forgot for the moment I must not say that. I am not here to make you angry, I am here as Roy's father. What was is past, the present is my concern. Of course, he does not know I have called upon you. Roy is married, as you know. His wife would not stand this—affair, shall I call it? Few wives would; I appeal to you to put a stop to it. It can only end in disaster for him and her. I know, of course, that my daughter came to your rooms when Roy was there. He has made his peace. She believes this ended. Misery, ruin, regret, stare him in the face if she discover that he has lied. It is not too late, but it will be so soon."

"And I? You do not consider me."

"We do not expect you to starve. We will be most happy to make arrangements."

"Stop, stop, Sir Richard; you speak of we for the first time. Are you here with Roy's sanction? Mind, I ask the truth, and will verify your reply, for frankly I do not trust you."

"Now that is not fair," he said, but not in an offended tone. In truth, he admired what he mistook for a business-like grasp of the situation. But he was not prepared to lie. "No," he proceeded, "I have already said Roy does not know I am here."

"Thank Heaven!" she exclaimed.

Then he saw his mistake. Still, he could not believe that money would not smooth away difficulties. He must be circumspect, but anticipated success.

(2.)

"Of course," he proceeded, "I do not intend that you should suffer pecuniarily. That I trust you will permit me to make my business. I will instruct my lawyers to——"

She buried her face in her hands and moaned:

"Lawyers! How cold, how pitiless you are! I love him, I tell you—love him with a love of which you know nothing, and you talk of lawyers! Oh, I shall go mad! In pity go. If you wanted revenge, if you wanted to wound me, be content; you have crushed me. Oh, go, go!"

"Revenge — wound! Not I. No such thought entered my head. I hoped we were upon a business footing. I offer you a bargain. No, do not wince; you do not like the word. It is an ugly one, perhaps, but sentiment has long been dead with me. As men grow older, sentiment, gush, love—er—of this sort, lose their grip before the real force of common-sense. The intangible gives place to the tangible. Roy cannot, would not, put it so. He is infatuated, reckless. Yes, I feared that would please you; but I, his father, see but ruin ahead, absolute social ruin and misery for him and her. Again I appeal to you. My daughter-in-law is a good, pure woman. Think of her. It is not too late; she knows nothing of this. She believes Roy to be true; now she has forgiven, she loves him."

She sprang to her feet and faced him with flashing eyes. That last phrase had undone the effect of his appeal.

"She has no right to love him—he is mine, mine, I say. She bought him. He married her to save you. Oh, I know! You were on the verge of bankruptcy. He had no choice. You forced on the marriage. He loves me—I hate her!"

She paced up and down the small room with brows knitted and hands clenched. She had no thought for the

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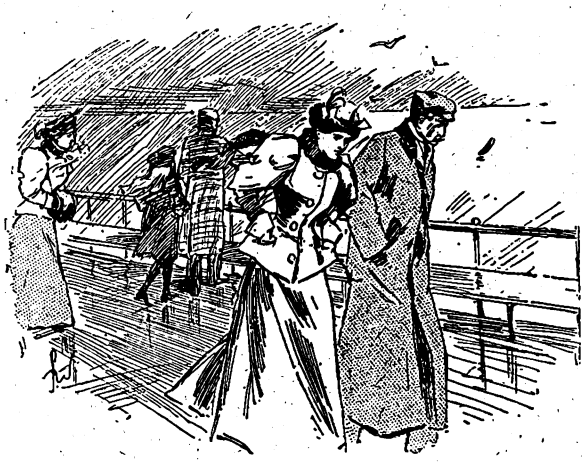

(3.)

man who sat before her, silenced by her passionate outburst. She saw but Roy as she had seen him last, confident, happy, the old smile upon his face, the smile she knew so well and which, as a fact, had long been absent.

They had cast in their lot together; come what might, they had sworn eternal love. She paused before the window, and unconsciously followed the whirling movements of a few crisp, dry leaves which, torn by the gale from a stunted oak, rustled across the pavement.

The lines across her face smoothed out, a smile puckered the corners of her eyes, she no longer stooped as but a few moments ago. She looked into a dingy street, true, but the mental vision soared far and away above the driving clouds into bright sunshine.

Sir Richard's clear, cold voice startled her as he said: "Well, Mrs. Dennison, what is your answer? You do not refuse my offer, I hope. Now, do not be hasty," as he noted her quick turn and the light in her eyes, "I will come later, if you wish. Take time to think it over. Yes, that will be best, think it over. Upon your decision the happiness of many depends."

Never before had Dick Arbuthnot felt so uncomfortable, never had he felt so small. Many a time in the past had his good offices been in request on behalf of friends who wished to make other arrangements; then he had carried matters with a high hand, had offered terms and seen them accepted, but now before she spoke he knew he had failed.

For once his confidence failed him, and though he attempted an easy mien it was but a sorry effort.

"No need to wait, to think it over. You have my answer now. Until Roy asks me to free him I will not. You are utterly selfish; your pleading, up to a point, moved me. Then you offered gold, gold which must come from her; you have none, you have been a beggar for years past. It is your turn to wince now. Hear me out; this is my scene." And as anger mastered her control, she stood before him with hand outstretched pointed to him. "She whom I hate and detest may never know, but the money you offer would come from her purse. You—yes, you, immaculate you—would manage that. You would buy me with her money, and Roy does not know. You think yourself a good diplomatist; I tell you, you are puny, despicable! Go your way; I refuse to listen to you. Go!" and she rang the bell violently. "The door, Frances," as the maid appeared hurriedly.

"One minute, please." Then, turning to the maid, he said, in tones she obeyed mechanically: "Step outside that door and close it." Then he proceeded. "Now, Mrs. Dennison, you have refused my offer, to my great regret. I will not reopen that subject for the present, but I appeal to you to be discreet. You know Roy is at the Métropôle; perhaps you do not know his wife is there also. I beg of you, let there be no scandal. You said in anger just now you hated her. In calmer moments you would not, I am sure, say that; you would not wish to. But there, you understand me. May I hope you will do me this favour?"

As Sir Richard, crestfallen, returned to the Métropôle, battling with the wind, which was rising to the force of a gale, he irritably reviled this woman who had defied him, and all concerned, except himself. His well-meant effort had been a failure; but as his natural buoyancy returned, he did not dream of attributing want of success to his inability.

CHAPTER VII.

Saved in Error.

Roy Arbuthnot, in the meantime, had gone for a ride, and alone. From the front he had turned to the north, past the gas works at Hove, and then some distance on.

(4.)

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leaving the road, he had followed the path across the fields to a solitary farmhouse, which nestled amongst trees at the foot of a steep hill, upon the summit of which a tiny church reared its square tower, sombre and grey. A solitary building, mean and unpretentious in design, where, at most, some twenty or thirty worshippers regularly assembled each week, as their forefathers had done, and were content with the simple ritual, untroubled with doubts and modern innovations, under the guidance of the Vicar, who had led their devotions for a generation.

Here the wind moaned high overhead, bending the topmost boughs of the taller trees, whistling round the old grey tower, but leaving in peace the quiet valley where he paused.

Over the farm buildings the few remaining leaves of a luxuriantly-climbing creeper glowed a deep russet red, some grand old oaks, which had not yet shed their leaves, rustled and quivered in querulous age. The hedgerows still were green, and here and there a bright mass of red berries stood out in bold relief before a background of deep green holly. The ducks and geese in the pond by the gates made much of the warm sunshine, pluming themselves with noisy splashing of wings in the dark water, and chattering incessantly in language they doubtless understood.

On another occasion, in a different mood, he would have appreciated the quiet beauty of the scene, the restfulness of the surroundings, but to-day he longed for action. Impatiently he pressed his horse against the hill opposite, and galloped along the ride which crosses the golf-links at a speed which the animal he rode did not appreciate.

On the high land the wind spent its full force, screaming through the gorse, and bending before it the yielding bracken-like waves of an oily sea. He drew bridle only at the Dyke, to admire, perhaps, the finest view of Southern England. On this sharp wintry day no tourists were about to offend ears and eyes by inane shoutings and boisterous horse-play.

At his feet, deep in the valley, lay a peaceful hamlet, dreaming its life, a life of dull routine, to which excitement and bustle were but names, but which had compensations in absence of these very points. And beyond, far as the eyes could reach, like a well-drawn map, stretched field upon field, homestead after homestead, the hedges standing out darkly across the green, which alternately paled and deepened as scudding clouds crossed the sun—a network framed by man on Nature's foundation, the parts of a puzzle fitting closely with no patch left blank; and in the blue distance range upon range of hills, until an indistinct blur marked the limit of human vision.

But he could not enjoy the panorama of beauty spread before him. He was troubled with the spirit of unrest. The wind howled around the desolate inn, and flapped the cords against the flagstaff with short, sharp cracks which irritated. The surroundings were in contrast. Here, on the summit of the hill, were rush and roar; below, in the valley, peace and quietude. He would face the gale, and turning, again cantered over the springy turf of the downs right in its teeth.

And now the blood tingled in his veins, his spirits rose as the fierce gusts beat upon him, and he pressed his knees against the willing sides of the game chestnut which caught something of his master's mood, and with distended nostril, forced his way onward at reckless speed.

At length, soothed, perhaps tired with battle, he slackened speed, and turning homewards, jogged quietly to the hotel. There he learned that Mary and his father had gone upon the pier to watch the breakers roll to the shore.

Nelly, when Sir Richard had left, had indulged in a fit of crying. She had flung herself upon a couch and sobbed hysterically. It was all too cruel. No one had any thought for her. Sinclair, *his* father, each thought only of Roy and his wife. She was not even considered. She was a pawn in this game of chess, of little or no account. She was utterly, unspeakably miserable.

(5.)

Why follow her mood through? There is no need. The inevitable reaction followed. The reaction which prevents more suicides than does qualm of conscience or scruple. Gradually she braced herself to fight, to see it through. Roy's wife was at Brighton—she would see her again and judge of the chances of the coming struggle.

She washed away the traces of tears, and dressing with perhaps more than usual care, set out for a walk. Battling with the boisterous wind, which whirled her skirts closely round, fighting for foothold as each strong gust threatened to carry her off her feet, she pressed on. Her combative instincts had been braced this morning, and now she relished this struggle with the elements which at any rate fought fair. She laughed joyously at each fresh challenge of strength, and at repeated victories.

After all, this noisy but humourous antagonist could do no more than reveal a shapely ankle for a few seconds, and a dexterous twirl of drapery robbed him and others of that pleasure. The colour mounted to her cheeks, she was, and she knew it, as dainty a specimen of English womanhood as Brighton contained. Hers was not the mind to brood long over worries; hers was an elastic temperament which rebounded easily. The interview with Sir Richard had crushed her for the time being, but knowing herself, she had prescribed this cure, and found it efficacious. She had even for the moment forgotten the object of this hard tussle; she was a beautiful animal warring amiably against a rough yet chivalrous enemy, and she enjoyed it.

Before she realised where she had got to, she was opposite the Métropôle. With a start, she stopped, for on the steps she saw Sir Richard Arbuthnot, holding his hat on with one hand, whilst with the other, he pointed to the pier, and apparently was asking a lady by his side to go there.

This must be Roy's wife. Yes, she saw it was, and Nelly turned, and followed them at a distance. She noted that Mary, for her style, was a handsome woman. She reluctantly admitted that. She was a formidable rival, she had allowed that already.

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Anger, jealousy, returned. With frowning brows and pale cheeks, she followed them along the pier. If only this woman were out of the way, if only she were dead, Roy would, she knew, marry her, despite all. The thought was maddening. She was a murderess in thought, utterly reckless. Mary dead! Impossible. There, in front, she stepped with the free, easy swing of perfect health. The sea beneath rolled with majestic sweep in white-crested billows to the shore, to burst in roar and tumult upon the shingle.

She felt she could laugh to see Mary caught on the crest of a huge wave, and dashed lifeless on the stones, with froth and weed for a shroud. She shuddered; it was too horrible, but it was real. She was not herself yet as she followed them along the pier; the hideous thought would come: if only it could be! If only some accident would clear her path.

And Roy was but a few yards away, though he did not see her.

In front of her Sir Richard and Mary, bending low to meet the wind, were passing to the head of the pier, where a small knot of people stood watching the waves hiss and foam through the iron grating of the lower landing steps. The rail on the leeward side had been removed for the purpose of carrying out some repairs then in progress.

As Mary fearlessly stood by the edge of the pier, Nelly reached her side. Without warning a heavy squall struck the pier.

Through the air there flew a human form to fall upon the crest of a broken wave, whilst above the roar, a voice shrieked: "Roy, Roy!"

"Heavens, Nelly!" shouted Roy to the gale, and throwing off coat and vest, plunged into the sea. His was a hard fight. Time and again he almost gave up the struggle. His strength failed, the blinding spray filled his eyes. His breath came in short, painful gasps. Rolled over in the surf, buffeted by the pitiless waves, he, yet with his burden, was driven shorewards. Once he thought he heard encouraging shouts, directions it might be. Then came—a blank.

A glimmer of reason returned as he lay upon the beach beyond the reach of the waves, with strong arms holding him. By his side lay motionless, a woman, and as he turned he saw Mary.

"Good heavens, my wife!"

Hours later as the tide receded, loungers by the beach saw another form twisting in the surging water, now close in, now drawn back with the suck of a retreating wave. And when at length it was recovered, there lay a beautiful woman with long, auburn hair, which clung around her face and in part concealed an ugly gash across a fair brow.

* * * * *

Again May had arrived, and Sir Richard Arbuthnot was in town for the season. He had met Sinclair in Bond Street, and he was now answering a string of questions.

"Roy? Yes, he's in the country and likely to remain there for the present. He was much cut up about that Brighton business. Sad, you say? Well, in a way, yes, but most opportune. She could not have chosen a more fitting time, nor, as it turned out, a more telling manner of quitting life. She pushed Mary into the sea. Nonsense? I tell you I saw her do it. You can't believe it? Ah, my boy, you, perhaps, have not seen her in a rage. I have.

"She once assumed, for my benefit, the tragedy queen business, and did it well, too. I have no doubt she overbalanced and the sudden squall helped. She must have struck a girder as she fell, and sank like a stone. I was on the beach and helped to pull Roy in. Of course, Mary thinks he went over to save her, and she worships Roy. She will never learn the truth. By-the-way, do you know there is a son and heir? All goes well, in fact. Roy's health? Well, might be better, perhaps. He broods a good deal, and worries; but he always was too sensitive. Give him time. You are in a hurry, I see. Well, good-bye! See you to-night, I suppose."

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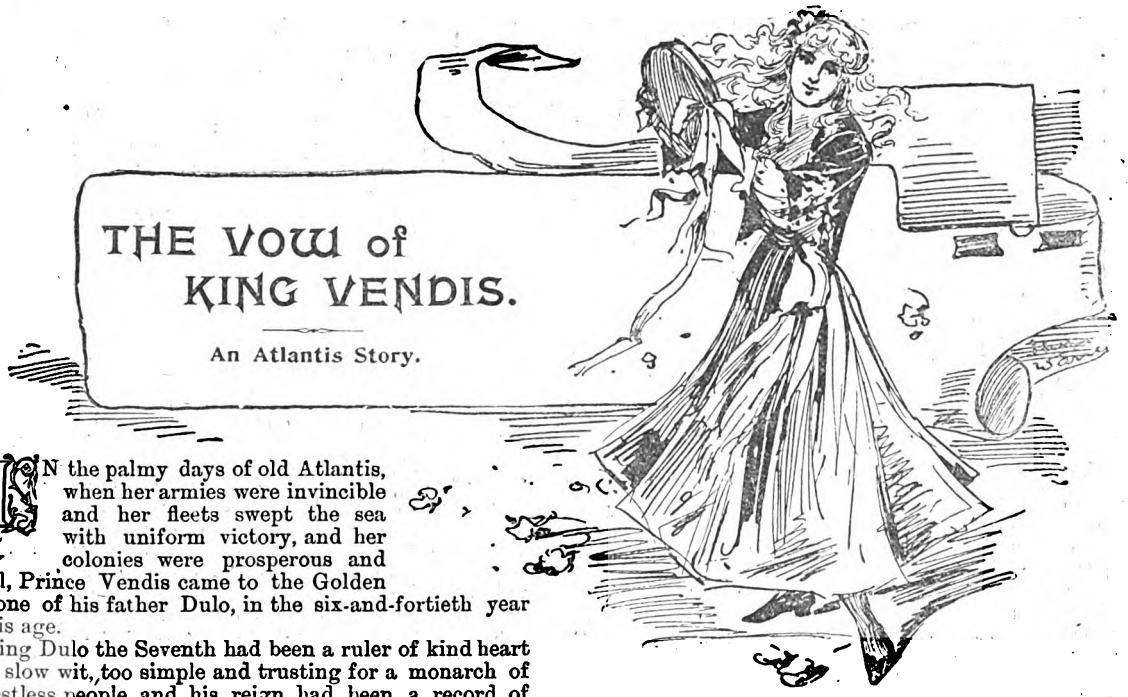

THE VOW of KING VENDIS.

An Atlantis Story.

IN the palmy days of old Atlantis, when her armies were invincible and her fleets swept the sea with uniform victory, and her colonies were prosperous and loyal, Prince Vendis came to the Golden Throne of his father Dulo, in the six-and-fortieth year of his age.

King Dulo the Seventh had been a ruler of kind heart and slow wit, too simple and trusting for a monarch of a restless people, and his reign had been a record of misfortunes and losses of legal privilege and dignity, second only to the record of Unlucky Atripan. But it has passed into a by-word that delicate children make old folks and fragile buildings are the last to be destroyed, and so it happened, that for all his lucklessness, King Dulo reigned long and undisputedly, leaving the throne to his only son when Vendis was a man past the prime of life, and over-worn with dissipation and Court living.

Many were the forebodings of the priests as to the future of Atlantis when the Prince put on the crown after his father was buried in the pyramid of Kronos; yet their fears proved baseless in the end. Power and responsibility brought sobriety and wisdom to Vendis, and he set himself to regain what his father had lost, to curb the usurpations of the nobles, to check the avarice of the priests, to make himself a king in deed as well as in name.

He succeeded well, and under his sway the people settled down, glad to feel a master-hand at the helm of the ship of state, and for ten years there was peace in Atlantis, and all her Court intrigues were set at rest.

But happiness is never the lot of mortals for long together, and trouble came to King Vendis towards the last.

Like his father, he had one child only—a son—and, like himself, Prince Sanim was grown past his youth before he saw the end of his father's reign. Now Sanim was a goodly-looking man, with brown curly locks and ruddy face, and a stalwart figure that women loved to see, and it was openly bruited about at the palace that the hands of the most high-born and beauteous maidens in the land were his for the asking. Bright eyes, and honeyed words, and tender glances, were ever ready for him at the banquets and state ceremonials, and they were many who envied his lot.

But though his father besought him often to make his choice from amongst these, particularly wishing him to marry the daughter of one Dernon, a rich noble governor of the Province of Aidè, Prince Sanim would have none of them, seeking instead amongst the women of the poorer classes for a wife.

So a coolness grew between the King and his son, and their lives drifted apart, Sanim dwelling chiefly in the old Palace of Miropis, the ancient capital, doing as his desires listed; and one day a messenger came to Vendis whilst he was seated in the Hall of Audience, and spoke secretly in his ear. A blackness as of the Shadows grew upon the King's face as he listened to the news, and the messenger trembled as he saw the Royal hand fly to the sword hilt.

"Art sure that this is a true tale, slave?" cried Vendis, with menace in his tone. "Wilt swear it by the Spirit of Truth; by the Eternal Three?"

"I swear it, King," said the terrified bearer of ill tidings, "by all and every spirit known to men! It is a true tale I have brought thee."

"Then tell it to my counsellors and people, slave," said Vendis, seizing his crown and dashing it to the carpet in front of the throne. "Tell it to them, so that all men may know how my son hath brought disgrace upon me and upon my father's house and upon the banner of Atlantis. Tell it them, I command thee."

The Nubian slave, knowing full well the stern nature of the King, stood forth and told his tale. And these were his words:

"I am sent here from Miropis, by the Priests of Truth that guard the Sacred Grotto, to tell unto the King the sad news that his only son, Prince Sanim, hath taken unto himself a wife without his knowledge, and, moreover, a woman who is of no good repute, the daughter of a pirate captain, whose ship has sorely ravaged our coast.

"And even this is not the worst. In the blood of this woman runs the blood of the foreigners of the eastern isles, and their marriage having been consum-

mated in secret for more than a year, the two have already a child—a son—whom the Prince has named Dulo, after thy father, King. And the wife of the Prince is beautiful, and he loves her greatly, and hath sworn to make their child our future king, and the priests predict that his wish shall be fulfilled. And more than this I know not."

A murmur of consternation, of surprise, of perplexity, went round the vaulted chamber, and in the midst of it the slave stood trembling, fearful lest the weight of the Royal anger should fall upon him, the bringer of the evil news. As the murmur died away, Acron, the Secretary, picked up the crown and placed it once more on the King's head, and, with the gleam of a set resolve flushing his features, Vendis rose.

"'Tis well thou knowest no more, slave," he said, his voice ringing hard and stern, "for what thou dost know is enough to turn my greying hairs to white and plunge a nation into sorrow. But stand thou there, at my side, and fear not; I may want thee again.

"And to you, my people and ministers, what can I say? How can I look up again to the Spirits who have guarded Atlantis from her birth when I know that my son hath desecrated our line by wedlock with a woman of foreign blood, and would place her child upon the sacred throne? To you, my people, I can say little, save that my heart is grieved beyond the power of words to tell, and that rather than this, I would know that my son—who shall no longer be a son of mine—was lying dead, a hundred fathoms deep below the waves of the sea.

"But this I can say to the Eternal Spirits, this I can vow to them, by all that a man and a king may hold most dear; that neither Sanim, who was my son, nor his wife, nor their son, nor any children they may have, shall ever sit upon the Golden Throne of Atlantis. By the Three Spirits I make this vow. By all that is on earth, and in the sea, and in the Land of Shadows beyond the grave, I make it. By all I love and cherish, by my title and my dignity, and in the name of our loved Atlantis, I swear it. By Amarunth, the God of Death, I swear this vow: Sanim, who was my son, shall never come to the Golden Throne on which Queen Unnalala sat, nor shall his wife nor any of his children. I have spoken words beyond recall."

And raising his sword high above his head, King Vendis once more repeated the awful vow to the Eternal Three; the vow that might never be broken. And the people answered with a murmur of approval, though some, friends of the Prince, were silent, and turned sorrowfully away. Then Vendis spoke to the slave again:

"Go straightway to Miropis," said he, "and give Sanim word of what I have sworn this day, and add, that even though he come to me, and weep tears of blood at my knees, that which is done cannot be undone. And tell him, moreover, that it were better he never saw my face again; that it were better he shook the dust of his native land from off his feet, and sought a home amongst the people of the eastern isles whom he has run after to make his kith and kin. And say also, to those meddling priests of the Sanctuary of the Sleeper, that I hold their prophecies of small account, and that it is in my mind to raise one of our brave generals to the throne when the mists of death begin to dim my eyes. Tell them this, and may all the land know it also .... And you, my ministers, leave me, for the blow is a sore one, and I would fain be alone awhile.'

The slave, swift of foot, departed on his errand, the Royal Guard cleared the Audience Chamber of the crowd, and King Vendis passed beneath the purple curtain to his own room. And for forty days, as at the death of his wife, Viola, the Royal household went into mourning.

Bactri the slave was a trusty messenger, and in due time came to the palace at Miropis and told the Prince what the King had said.

Sanim heard him to the end with unmoved face, though there was a terrible fire in his eyes, and when he had heard all, he bent his head, as though in submission. Then he dismissed the Nubian with a handsome present, and went into the inner hall and told Isida, his wife. It was then the morning, and before noon the whole city was agog with the news, and many of the more reckless spirits of the place were for acclaiming Sanim as their King and setting up in open revolt.

But Sanim would have none of it, and bade them get ready his favourite pleasure barque, and just as the even shades began to fall, went down to the harbour with his wife and child and got aboard. A mournful crowd of the people went to the water's edge to bid him good speed in parting token of their esteem, and as the graceful vessel gathered way under the impulse of her hundred oars and swept swiftly down the narrow channel to the bosom of the sea, Prince Sanim felt a choking in his throat and a strange dimness before his eyes.

The ship held on, the cheering of the people grew fainter and more faint until it ceased, the lights came together in a cluster of brilliant points that faded to a haze on the horizon, and the outcast turned his gaze away, and seized Isida in his arms and kissed her fiercely and then the babe that nestled at her breast, and then strode to the bow, muttering angrily to himself. And how the gay ship fared thereafter was never known, for no native of Atlantis ever saw its lines of symmetry again.

Now King Vendis grew old and weary of his life, and repented him of the rashness of the vow he had made but could not undo. The fawning flatteries of the Court grew less pleasant to his ears, the pomp and panoply of martial ceremonial less pleasing to his eyes, the droning of the priestly services distasteful to his soul, and more and more he passed his time upon the sea, aboard his favourite warship, chasing the pirates, and learning, in his latter years, the arts of naval war.

Four years after the banishment of Sanim, being then in his sixty-first year, King Vendis put off in the bright glow of a summer noon from the harbour of Kronos, with a squadron of ships, headed by his vessel, the *Monarch of Storms*. The captains put their prows to the east, for the ships were well filled with men, and they had certain news of the whereabouts of a pirate flotilla that had long been a terror to the coast. And chief of that pirate fleet—seen now and then, and never at one place twice or for long—was a rakish, low-built craft, with queer rigging, and monstrous lion-head upon her upcurved prow. This ship was a scourge to the merchant vessels that poured the luxuries of the far-off East into the ports of Atlantis, and it was whispered by some who had seen it that it was commanded by a reckless Atlantian and his lovely wife, and that he was none other than Sanim the Prince. But there were others who denied this.

So King Vendis paced the deck of his great ship in sullen mood as the leagues of glittering amethyst were overpassed on the way to the isles set in the sunny eastern sea, and not until the squadron came in sight of

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a dozen pirate vessels making northward, did his interest awaken. Then he ordered all speed to be put on, and after the now flying vessels the seven royal ships foamed on through the tumbling waves, in the teeth of a rising gale.

The chase was a long and stern one, but the warships slowly gained, and by nightfall of that day the *Monarch of Storms* was within a cable's length of the rearmost foe, and her six consorts were far behind, visible only as black specks in the wild waste of waters. The pirate strove to tack and so escape, but the great ship was too near, and drove on resistless through the seething spray, and her sharp-cutting prow, catching the doomed craft on the port-bow, shore her in twain and passed on. The severed fragments of the wreck, with the shrieking robbers aboard, floated a moment on the angry sea, then were swallowed up in the fury of the storm and the blackness of the night. The *Monarch of Storms* held on with scarcely a shiver of her staunch timbers, and the face of the King wore a grim smile of joy.

But the gale was now a tempest. The wind howled wildly through the rigging, and tore the lashing waves in giant furrows; the rain came down in a deluge that drenched the crew to the very skin. Out of the thick darkness of the cloud-banked sky came the flashes of the lightning and the rolling roar of the thunder-wheels of the gods, and when Vendis and his sailors looked around they saw only through the driving murk the fleet of pirate vessels speeding on in front. Behind was now no speck to break the wild greyness of the billowy expanse.

Through the stormy night the stern pursuit went on, and when the sun arose upon the waters, Vendis saw that nine ships only of the foe remained. But these now lay to and waited his coming, and as the *Monarch of Storms* forged up to them, closed round, and beset her on all sides. In his old age the King had grown reckless, and so refused to escape, bidding his men, with set, flushed face, be ready for the fray. One more ship they rammed ere they were boarded on bow and stern and quarters, and one they disabled beyond repair, but the other seven hung round the great ship as dogs round the hart driven to bay at last, and those tough pirates fought desperately when roused.

Yet the crew of the *Monarch of Storms* was an old and well tried one, and equal in number to three of the others, and they fought hard, and died well, standing there amidships round their King, and the robbers began to fear lest the combat should be prolonged till some of the other royal craft came on the scene.

Now Vendis had noted with wonder that the famous ship with the lion-headed prow was not amongst the hostile fleet, and was in secret glad, because of the rumour, but in the midst of the struggle, just as his keen blade struck one of the robber captains to the wet and slippery deck, he beheld the very vessel of his thought approaching on the leeward bow, riding the calming sea as lightly as a bird. And two figures there were upon her deck that made Vendis sick at heart—for one was Sanim his son, and the other a woman of surpassing loveliness. The King dashed the salt glaze from his face and plunged into the fight anew at that sight, and of the fifty sailors who now remained, none fought so desperately as he.

Now the lion-headed ship joined the rest, and her crew mingled with the others, and one by one the sailors were cut down, till presently Vendis alone was left, facing a ring of pitiless foes—wounded, weary, and forlorn. His grey and white hair and his evil plight might have moved some men to mercy, but the pirates were made of stern stuff, and closed round him with cries of revenge; and one giant of a fellow, Lycian by name, a grim and grizzled veteran of the deep, smote the King's sword out of the weakening fingers, and upraised his own broad gleaming blade to strike the fatal blow. A strange numbness seized King Vendis, a singing came in his ears, and he put his hand to his eyes as he leant against the mast, waiting for the moment of death.

But it came not. A man broke through the jeering ring with a woman at his side, and whilst his sword flew up and dashed away the falling blade, the woman threw herself between the victors and the vanquished, shielding the old man with her graceful form, as he sank to the deck in weakness. Sanim's act came just in time, yet so strong and forceful was big Lycian's stroke that his sword point swept down within an inch of Isida's heaving breast, even cutting a little gash in the linen of her tunic.

"Back, you! Murderers all!" cried the Prince. "Have I not cautioned you against this deed? Would you have me the slayer of my father, or the captain of his slayers? Back, all of you, and leave us!"

The men, obedient, and amazed at Isida's daring for the sake of her husband's father, shrank back to the decks of the nearer ships, leaving the three alone. Then Sanim raised the King, his father, from the deck, and Isida staunched his wounds and cleansed his face and spoke to him words of loving care. For awhile Vendis answered not, though tears stood in his eyes and his hands trembled in her grasp. Then he said, slowly:

"The Spirits be thanked for this day! Now I know that my son is no rebel but a son indeed, and fit to be a King, and that his wife is lovely indeed, and worthy to be his Queen. The gods be praised for this day of ill-fortune!"

"But the vow—the vow that cannot be recalled?" said Sanim. "What of that? Thou canst not make me King now, howsoever thou mayst wish. Thou canst not undo the evil that thou didst in thy passion, and which has embittered me against thee ever since until this day."

"Be not too sure, my son," said Vendis, recovering a little, a queer smile growing on his face. "I may yet set thee upon the throne of Atlantis, though I may not break my word. Wilt thou be my son again, and forget and forgive; and wilt thou, lovely one, be as a daughter to me, and pardon the past, if I can do this?"

"Right wil ingly!" they cried together, and while the puckers of perplexity gathered deeper on the brow of the Prince, Isida bent down and kissed the old man on the lips.

"It is well," he said, with a sigh of satisfaction. "Now do as I command, Sanim, remembering that I am King Vendis and thou art the Prince, my son. First call me thy most trusted men hither, so that I may speak with them, and then—if things fall out as I expect—thou wilt come back to Kronos with me and live in my palace till that end comes, which I feel is not far off."

Sanim summoned the men as he was bid, and the scarred and sour-faced pirates stood round, a strangely silent line. The King was now so far recovered that he was able to support himself against the mast.

"My stalwart men," he said, and there was a royal ring in his tone, "I have but little to say to you, in whose power I am, but that little will be no supplication

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for mercy. "I am still your King, and I ask you to leave your reckless and uncertain life and take service with me. If you will bring your arms and your ships, your tough sinews and stern wills, into my fleet, you shall have riches and honours galore and no past faults shall be remembered against you. It is your King who asks and offers this."

A moment there was silence and suspense among those rough-and-ready robbers of the sea, then Lycian threw down his sword at the King's feet and knelt upon it, and swore by Amarunth that henceforward the King would have no trustier servant than he. And with that the others joined him in a shout of boisterous acclamation that startled the flying gulls, and raised their weapons to the sky in token of the self-same will. The last shadow of sorrow left the King's face.

"Well said, my worthy sailors," he answered. "I have fought many fights upon the sea, and won many victories, but to-day's defeat hath pleased more than any of them. I am but an old man on the shore of the Shadows, and I feel that Atlantis will not know me long, so now I would return and see my son enthroned before fate intervenes. You will man this noble ship at once, and set your prows for Atlantis and for home."

The sailors, with veterans' eyes, conned the powerful build and matchless lines of the great battleship with exultant joy, and as the seven pirate ships turned their bows to the westward, the *Monarch of Storms* swept grandly to the front and led the way to the harbour of Kronos, her new crew chanting the rollicking refrain of the "*Ina-Ana*," the war-song of the seas.

A fleet came out to meet them as they neared the bar on which the white surf rose, a fleet of many ships, for the people thought it was a pirate raid, but King Vendis stood high on the deck of his ship, with Sanim and Isida at his side, and when the captains saw that they turned about with joy, and a swift barque bore the news to the city, and all became excitement and pleasure and boundless amaze.

That very day the King gave secret orders to sundry of his artificers, and sent out word by his heralds that rejoicing must be made at the coming home of his son the Prince, and Isida the future Queen, and their little one, Dulo, for he was reconciled to them again and before many days Sanim would be made King.

On the eve of the eventful day the Stately City held high carnival, and in the bright, propitious morning, as the hour drew near, a crowd congregated in the pillared palace courts, and the grey-clad soldiers had much ado to keep the thronging thousands within the limits set for them. But their task was not a hard one, for the eager citizens were full of good nature and high spirits, and passed the time of waiting with jest and song.

A great roar of acclaim went up as the prancing steeds and the golden-filigreed car drew up at the marble steps, and Vendis and his grandson stepped out and bowed together to the people, and Sanim and Isida followed, and all went into the palace and stood in the open place before the throne. The priests and nobles went in after them, and then all the populace who could find standing room, and as every man went in a look of surprise grew on his face, and over the whole assembly a spell of silence fell.

For at the foot of the throne steps, where the royal party stood, lay a massive ingot of solid gold, gleaming dully yellow in the softened light, and over the throne itself was thrown a covering of purple cloth. And behind the seat stood Bactri the slave—high now in the King's favour—and behind him the repentant pirates, a grim-visaged group.

"What meaneth this?" cried a voice from the crowd.

In answer, Acron the secretary stood forth, and bowing low to Prince Sanim, said:

"King, I salute thee! This day, as he hath declared in the temple, Vendis, our former King, giveth his crown and his sword, and his dignity, and the throne of Atlantis, into thy keeping whilst thou livest."

"But the vow!" cried Namen, the priest of Truth. "The vow! By all the laws and customs of Atlantis, the King cannot do this thing. He hath given his word, sworn to the gods an oath that may never be broken."

A murmur of disappointment, mingled with anger, rose from the mighty throng, but Vendis smiled quietly as he said:

"Nor shall I break my vow. What said I, Bactri, when I swore it?"

"These were thy words, King," said the Nubian slave with a glitter of mirth in his coal-black eyes. "That by the Eternal Spirits and all that a man and a king may hold dear, neither Sanim, who was thy son, nor his wife, nor their son, nor any children of theirs, should ever sit upon the Golden Throne of Atlantis. By all the gods, by all things, thou madest this vow: *That Sanim, who was thy son, should never come to the Golden Throne, nor should his wife, nor any of his children.* That was thy vow, King."

The face of Sanim darkened as he heard the words, and Isida's clouded with sorrow, and perplexity came to many, but Vendis remained calm.

"And that vow I shall preserve," he said. "Sanim, my son shall never sit upon the Golden Throne, nor shall any King of Atlantis ever sit upon it again. But upon the throne of Atlantis shall Sanim, my son, be crowned this day. It is time, slave!"

All eyes were strained upon Bactri as he gathered a corner of the cloth that covered the throne, in his hand, and a cry of astonishment went up as he drew it aside with a sudden movement, revealing a regal chair of pure and polished silver, inlaid with rose-coloured granite and ivory stars.

"Go forward, Sanim," cried his father, in the silence, "and Namen shall place the crown upon thy head; and thou, Isida, shall sit beside him and be his Queen. As for little Dulo, he shall stay here with me."

Acting as one in a dream, Sanim obeyed, and was made King; the first King of Atlantis who was crowned on the Silver Throne. And upon that self-same silver seat was Arnon, its last King, crowned, in the days of the end.

"And where is the Golden Throne that has so long been used?" asked one.

"It is here," said Vendis, placing his foot on the ingot of gold. "And half of it shall be given in equal parts to the stalwart pirates who rallied to my flag in the hour of their success, and the other half shall be given amongst all those in Kronos who are poor and in need. And now come with me, little Dulo, for I am weary already and would fain rest."

A thunderous roar of appraise rose from a thousand throats as the ex-King and his little grandson the Prince went out and stepped into their car to be whirled off to the palace in the suburbs. And as the rattle of the chariot wheels died away and King Sanim turned to Queen Isida his wife with words of love upon his lips, the trained priests led the people in the joyful chorus of a festive song.

Geo. C. Wallis

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Answers to Correspondents.

Half-a-Dozen volumes of Mr. Louis Tracy's book, "The Final War," will be given to the first six readers who correctly place the sketches on pages 502-5 in their proper order with the corresponding reading matter underneath. Simply write on a sheet of paper the numbers of the sketches in the order you believe correct, and alongside each figure place the text. Envelopes to be marked "Reading," and to reach this office by Tuesday, April 20th.

T. H. asks: "What is the cause of cold perspiration?" ——— There are several ways of finding out this by personal experience. Try stepping upon a dog in the dark.

J. F. B. wants to know if there is such a thing as a women's boating club. Yes, at a women's college at Boston, in America, there is a boating "eight" composed entirely of girl students.

D. H. — Alas, there are too many methods of torture employed in Siberia to mention in these columns. One of the most fearful ways in which information is extracted from prisoners is by means of thirst. The victim is fed entirely upon salt herrings, and allowed nothing whatever to drink. This treatment promotes such inconceivable agony that, after a time, he is almost invariably willing to impart whatever is required of him.

G. D.—Do not be disheartened because the parents of the girl you love do not look upon your suit with favour. If she is anything like the rest of her sex, it will only make her all the more determined to marry you.

J. J.—We are very much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken to make *Short Stories* known amongst your friends. It is indeed the most practical way in which you can show your appreciation of the paper.

The result of the first series of *Pearson's* Picture Puzzles appears in *P. W.* dated April 17th.

R. B.—Geraniums are considered an excellent balm for cuts and wounds where the skin is rubbed off. Bruise a few leaves and apply them to the part, and you will find the wound will be cicatrised in a very short time.

R. D. writes to ask me if I can tell him who was the inventor of the "penny-in-the-slot" machines. ——— An American named Everitt was the inventor of the present-day machines. The same principle, however, was used by the Egyptians two hundred years before the Christian era.

Particulars will be found on page 506 regarding *Pearson's Athletic Record*, one of the new papers issued from this office. Its chief object will be to give full and graphic details of all Saturday's sports, and to publish reports on the subject of cricket, cycling, and swimming, as well as golf, hockey, and lacrosse; and votaries of any one of these sports will find all they wish to know in the *Athletic Record*. The paper is published every Monday morning, and may be obtained from newsagents and booksellers for a penny.

P. K.—The habit of opium eating kills about 160,000 people in China every year.

D. B. wishes to know if it is possible to obtain a blue rose. ——— No. The law which governs the colouring of flowers makes a blue rose an impossibility.

W. H.—The works of Charles Dickens are more widely read on the Continent than those of any other English novelist. Thackeray and George Eliot are also great favourites abroad.

J. W. A.—Many thanks for the suggestion, but it is impracticable. A single odd sheet cannot be inserted in either *Pearson's Weekly* or *Short Stories* unless it is pasted, and the cost of doing this would be prohibitive.

A. Beginner.—If you find that you lose your breath as a result of continuous running, the best thing you can do is to stop it altogether—the running.

A. B.—No; the Arabs eat very little animal food. They live almost entirely on dates and a coarse kind of bread, and seldom drink anything but water.

Engrosser.—If you are troubled with cramp do not write too long at a time, and use a thick-handled pen.

J. Y.—Certainly you can sign your insurance coupon with a copying pencil, provided it is treated in the way you mention.

H. J. Chapman.—Hyde Park would hold 8,712,960 people. This is assuming that all the timber was removed and that the people were allowed to stand on the flower-beds.

H. H. has very sensitive nerves, and is very much annoyed when at a theatre or opera for an evening's enjoyment by the amount of time devoted by the orchestra to the tuning of their instruments. "Why in the world don't they tune up before coming into the orchestra?" he growls. ——— So they do, my dear H. H., but if you knew anything about stringed instruments, you would understand the reason. The slightest change of temperature influences the catgut of the strings—even the performer's own breath affects it. The loosening of a peg or the slightest alteration in the tension of the strings all tend to necessitate a second tuning.

J. M. F.—Subject to certain exemptions, it is still lawful in case of emergency to impress men for service in Her Majesty's service.

E. C. B. is insured with an American life assurance society, and wishes to know if in the event of war occurring between this country and the United States, the company would cease paying the annuity. ——— I should think that the payment would be stopped unless the company had in this country sufficient funds to meet all demands.

A. G. wishes to know if any members of our Royal Family have ever been tattooed. ——— Yes. Both the sons of the Prince of Wales, the late Duke of Clarence and the present Duke of York, were tattooed on the arms while on a visit in Japan. The Duke of Edinburgh was also tattooed by the Japanese.

B. B.—Ships can travel at a greater speed in deep than in shallow water.

L. C. M. (Glasgow).—No glasses are made which fit under the eyelids, unless they have been constructed by a private person for his own use. Even then, I don't see the use of them.

J. H. H.—Such a series of articles as you suggest appeared in *Pearson's Weekly* some time ago. It was entitled: "How to Succeed," and dealt with all the chief trades.

J. B. C. and Allison.—I dare say you would be able to obtain a bottle of the water from the priest in charge of the Shrine at Lourdes.

In a Fix.—If there is any substance lighter than cork that can be cut into perfectly round balls about the size of a pea with a very smooth surface, I have never heard of it.

May.—No, there is no such thing as a sea serpent. The belief in these creatures dates from very early times. Some wonderful stories have been told of these so-called sea serpents, but nothing authentic has ever been proved. A large mass of seaweed has on more than one occasion been cautiously approached, and even harpooned, under the impression that it was one of these monsters of the deep.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 434. FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 24TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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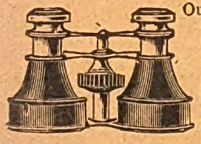

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No. 434.—One Penny. April 24, 1897.

SHORT STORIES

TOLD BY THE DOCTOR.

No. I.—THE MYSTERY OF A COUNTRY HOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

Major Dessalene's Illness.

In looking back over my experiences, I am driven to the conclusion that no single medical man can have had so many romances, crimes, and mysteries brought under his notice in connection with his profession as I have been called upon in my time to help investigate. My friend, Tom Arlack, Q.C., says that if he is called a criminal lawyer, I ought to be dubbed a criminal doctor, and the term is not inapplicable to me.

Soon after I passed my examination, and became qualified to practise, the death of a rich relative removed the necessity for my doing so, and I became known among my large circle of medical friends as a man who could be relied on to take up at a moment's notice any case which called for more time or careful investigation than they, with their practices to attend to, could personally afford.

It became known, too, that I had given a great deal of study to that mysterious influence of mind over mind, which men call, indifferently, hypnotism, mesmerism, or animal magnetism, a branch of study which medical men too often sedulously neglect; and this fact brought some very interesting cases which my friends preferred not to touch. Then again, after the notorious Dessalene case, it became a generally-received impression that "mysteries" were my speciality; and people with "mysteries" to unravel sought me out accordingly to assist in investigating them.

It was certainly the Dessalene case which gave me my reputation in this direction, although I really did nothing towards throwing light on what was in the beginning a really puzzling affair. My friend, Dr. Diplock, was the Dessalenes' family doctor—he had a pretty big practice round Almond Ferry, where the Dessalenes had their country house—and he asked me to come over and see the Major, simply because he could not make out what on earth was the matter with him.

"Why, it is a case of opium poisoning," I said to Diplock, after I had seen his patient, and he had taken me downstairs to ask my opinion. He shook his head.

"That is what I thought, but he has been like this for nearly a fortnight. If he had taken a dose of opium then, he would be better, or dead, now; but he remains just the same—unconscious most of the time, with a little wakening up now and then."

"Oh, yes!" I said, "if it is opium the dose must be regularly repeated—each time too little to cause death outright."

"And each time too much for any opium-taker to give himself," added my friend.

"I do not know—an habitual opium-drinker. But one can see at a glance that Major Dessalene is not that," I said. "It seems as though somebody must be poisoning him slowly."

"Yes," said Diplock, "I have thought of that."

"Then why not have the police in to see into the case before the murderer succeeds in his purpose?"

"Because I do not want to make a fool of myself," said my companion. "The Major tells me, when he has a lucid moment, that he has been like this before, that his illness is considered an affection of the brain. If it is, and I bring a lot of

The men went out on the moors every day.

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police ferreting about, why, I shall lose my practice to begin with. Now you are just the man. You take up the case as a medical man, and if there is foul play going on, I think I can trust you better than the average detective to find it out."

I thanked him for the compliment. Looking back now, I am afraid that I did not justify his opinion of me, although I had the best of opportunities. Diplock, I found, had arranged that I should live at the house, where there was certainly plenty of room for me, although the place was full of guests. The Major and his young wife had just filled the house for the shooting when the former's illness began, and Dessalene, in his intervals of consciousness, was very earnest in insisting that everything should go on as if he were well.

According to Diplock, the Major was not of much account in the house. Mrs. Dessalene was the ruling spirit. So things really did go on exactly as they had been doing before the Major's illness. The men went out on the moors every day, and most of them forgot even to inquire how their host was getting on when they returned.

As Mr. Diplock was leaving me entirely in charge of the case, and as there seemed some suspicion of foul play, I made him tell me all he could about the people in the house. As he did so, my interest became centred on three people: the hostess, Mrs. Dessalene, her cousin, Captain Allis, and Sir Reginald Dyne, who had come up the day before Dessalene's seizure.

Mrs. Dessalene was not yet twenty-four. My informant knew the date, because he had helped her into the world. She was the daughter of a clergyman, with a living not ten miles away, and had only been married a little over a year. A beautiful woman she was, as I saw for myself later in the day, with big blue eyes in a clear, straight-featured face, framed in the most gossamer fluff of golden hair. I could see that old Diplock had a warm place in his heart for her. All the men were head-over ears in love with her, he said.

"What! is she a flirt?" I asked, and her champion shook his head.

"No, not a flirt. But I am sorry to say she acts like so many heart-broken women do, making a kind of sport of love since her own love story has ended unhappily."

I was rather mystified.

"It was not a love match, then—this marriage to Major Dessalene?" I asked.

"No, poor girl! She was driven into it by her parents, I am afraid."

"Then it is possible that she may be trying to poison the old gentleman. As you know so much about her, Diplock, can you tell me whether she was really in love with anybody at the time she married?"

"I am afraid so. Everybody thought she would marry Sir Reginald Dyne, to whom her father was tutor. But he was poor, worse luck, and her father raised obstacles. You see I am pretty well acquainted with her history, as I have attended the family all her lifetime.

"The Canon, her father, was in Major Dessalene's debt rather deeply. All of a sudden it was announced that Miss Clytie was to marry the Major, and Sir Reginald went abroad—or rather he was abroad till the day of the wedding, and came back as soon as he heard the news. The saddest thing about it was that Dyne had just come into a fortune unexpectedly, and was coming home to ask Clytie to marry him. I happened to be the one to tell him the news, poor fellow, that Clytie had that day become Mrs. Dessalene. This visit is the first occasion on which they have met since, I believe."

"It is rather queer, his coming," I said, "under the circumstances, isn't it?"

Dr. Diplock stammered:

"Yes—I took it upon myself to suggest as much to Mrs. Dessalene. But I was given to understand that the invitation came from the Major."

"Who is ignorant, of course, of the little history you have told me?"

"Oh, no. Dessalene was quite aware how the land lay before he married his wife. So it seems strange. But he is a man full of queer whims."

"It seems like it." I said drily. "And does this old suitor make love to his pretty hostess?"

"No; he is the only man who doesn't."

"Who does not openly, you mean. The love-making may be all the more serious on that account. Do any of the other men seem in earnest?"

Good old Dr. Diplock lowered his voice to a whisper.

"Well, if you ask me, Favel, I think her cousin, the Captain, is in deadly earnest. I want you to see Captain Allis. He is what I call a thoroughly wicked-looking man, although his breeding is perfect."

"A melodramatic villain," I said; "and he is in love with the pretty heroine. Then we must naturally suspect him of trying to murder the heedless husband. Why, it makes quite a pretty little story. Madam is in love with the handsome Baronet, but married to the ancient Major. The wicked Captain is in love with Madam, but the passion is not reciprocated. The wicked Captain removes the ancient Major, and hangman removes the wicked Captain, and the hero and heroine, Mrs. Dessalene and the young Baronet, are left free to marry. A very pretty little story. It seems quite a pity for us to interfere, doesn't it?"

Dr. Diplock was hurt. "If you are going to treat this case as a jest," he said severely, "I am sorry I asked you to assist me in it."

I was serious at once. "I was not altogether jesting," I explained. "Do you not yourself expect that Captain Allis may be slowly poisoning our patient in order to marry his widow?"

"If so," said Diplock, "I am quite sure Mrs. Dessalene knows nothing at all about it."

"Of course not. Allis would find his labour lost as far as he is concerned. Now tell me—who is looking after our patient? Does his wife stay with him much?"

"Yes; she is a good wife. I had trouble in persuading her to go out this afternoon for her health's sake. She is always at her husband's bedside."

"A suspicious circumstance."

My old friend was certainly getting very short-tempered in his old age. My interruption put him into a passion, and I had quite a task to pacify him. I explained that I must come to the investigation with a perfectly impartial mind.

My old friend retorted that I came with the fixed idea that Mrs. Dessalene—one of the best women who ever lived—was poisoning her husband.

I never argue with people who feel deeply; so I went on making inquiries about my new patient's nursing.

"Who was the woman I saw in the room? A professional nurse?"

"Yes. I have just engaged her. Mrs. Dessalene has just given me a free hand in the matter—not a very likely thing for a woman to do if she were poisoning the man, as you think—and whatever the Major says in his lucid intervals, we take no notice of."

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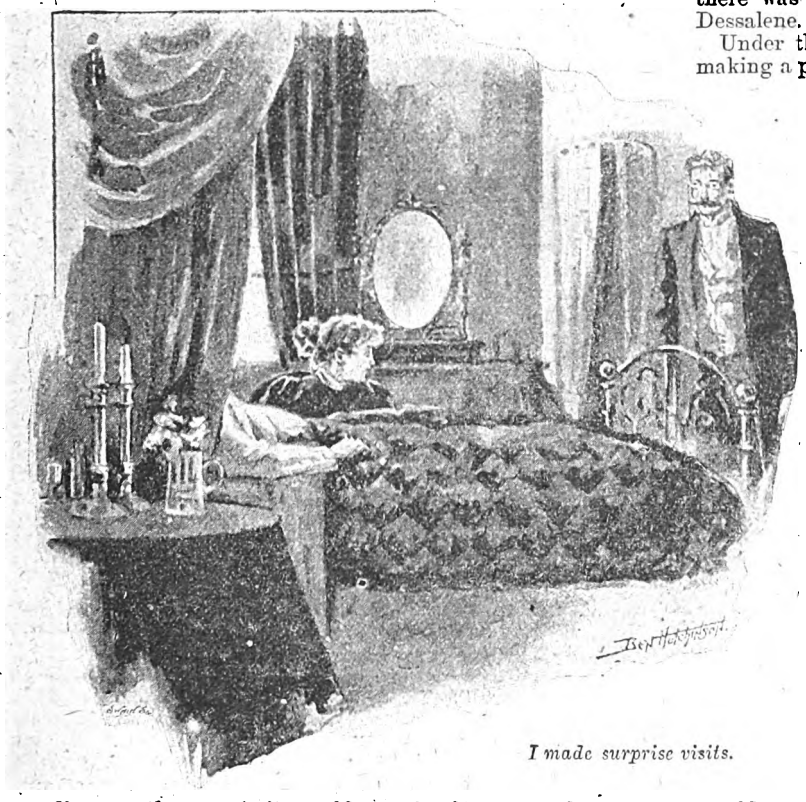
"The Major objected to the nurse coming?" I asked.

"Yes—and to your coming as well. He says we are making a great deal of fuss about a very insignificant illness. I often wonder if he is right. But I feel easier now I've done my best, and if there is anything wrong, you will be sure to find it out, thank goodness!"

CHAPTER II.

The First Murder.

I did not feel quite so sure as my old medical friend that I should discover the secret of Major Dessalene's illness. But I thought, at the same time, that if I did not discover the secret, it would not be for want of opportunity. I was given a couple of nicely-furnished rooms, exactly opposite that of my patient, with the understanding that I was to do exactly as I liked in the house—consider myself a guest, and join the shooting-parties, or keep to myself in my own rooms, as the whim took me. I was to direct the Major's treatment, of course, and rule in the sick-room; and I devoted myself during the first day or two in keeping a strict watch on all the food and medicine which my patient had prepared for him.



I made surprise visits.

I made surprise visits, too, when he was alone with his wife or any other member of the establishment. The nurse, whom Diplock had himself obtained from a nursing sisterhood in London, after the commencement of the illness, I could not, of course, include in my mental list of suspects. With that one exception everybody in the house was down on it, since there was no knowing at first what the relations of any person in the place to the Major actually were, or what motives the least likely might have in poisoning him.

As the days passed and I discovered more about the various people among whom I found myself the list naturally thinned down, and by the third or fourth day of my stay I began to believe that Captain Allis was the man on whom I must most particularly keep watch.

No wonder that old Diplock suspected him. He was often in the sick-room, being the only one of Major Dessalene's guests who made a point of exhibiting a distinct interest in his host's indisposition, and he called every morning to make inquiries or spend a few minutes by the sick man's bedside, an attention which, I am sorry to say, I did not ascribe to his good nature. Then there was no mistaking his passion for Mrs. Dessalene.

Under the circumstances I felt justified in making a private survey of the Captain's bedroom while he was out on the moors, in the hope of discovering some traces of the poison to which I ascribed my patient's indisposition, but I was no more successful there in finding opium than I had been in discovering it in the Major's food and medicine, or in any part of the sick-room.

That was on a Saturday, the fifth day after my arrival. In the evening my patient had one of his temporary improvements, and seemed much better than I had seen him yet.

He talked to me quite lucidly, asking my opinion of his illness, and seemed to take an interest in the little I told him about it. I did not mention my idea that he was being poisoned, and was rather surprised, therefore, to hear the suggestion from his own lips.

"I thought it was my brain again," he said, speaking dreamily, "but I do not know."

"Indeed," I said, as cheerfully as possible, "and what do you think now, Major Dessalene?"

"I think I am being poisoned!"

I concealed my interest, and answered lightly:

"Who would want to poison you, Major?"

"Every man in the house would. They are all after my wife. Clytie is too beautiful for a dull old fellow like me. Don't you think so, Dr. Favel?"

He had my name before my arrival. I answered that Mrs. Dessalene was undoubtedly beautiful; but that it was not customary for the husbands of beautiful women to be poisoned.

The sick man took no encouragement from my words or manner. He went on mumbling with a drowsy mournfulness:

"Every man here would be glad for me to die, so that he might have a chance of marrying Clytie, I know. I have watched them before I was ill."

"My dear sir," I said, "if you think that, why on earth don't you have the house cleared? I understood that it was only by your express desire that the party did not break up."

My patient opened his eyes in faint surprise.

"No, no; it is Clytie," he said sadly. "I beg her every time—I know what I am doing—to send them

away, and she will not. She says she won't be in an empty house with this mystery hanging over the place."

I had been inclined to like and admire Mrs. Dessalene, but when I heard this, she went down some pegs in my estimation, and up a little in my list of suspects, with Captain Allis at the top.

I asked the Major which of the men he suspected; but he seemed relapsing into his usual state of unconsciousness, and did not seem to hear my question. However, he must have done so, for suddenly he started, and, staring at me, whispered hoarsely: "Captain Allis." Then he fell back on the bed, breathing heavily. I poured out a dose of the counter-poison, with which I was trying to fight the opium, and held it to his lips; but it was too late for him to drink the potion. I had to force it between his teeth.

After glancing into the inner room, where the nurse, Sister Agnes, slept, to make sure that it was empty, I walked away to my own room across the passage, determined to keep watch on the sick room until Sister Agnes, who was enjoying a constitutional, returned; for it was always after these intervals of awakening that my patient's illness developed its worst form, and I was determined that he should not receive another murderous dose without my knowing it.

However, as it happened I was called away by a servant, who came up excitedly to tell me that Mrs. Dessalene was fainting in the drawing-room, having cut her finger badly. It was a very trifling matter I found when I went down, but it kept me occupied for some little time. When I returned to the sick-room I found that Sister Agnes and Captain Allis were both in the room, and that the Major, as usual after his improvements, had become perfectly unconscious.

"It is Captain Allis," I said to myself, and I felt that I should be almost justified in denouncing him publicly as poisoner; but al hough I was fully persuaded myself that he was the criminal, still I had not sufficient evidence, I knew, to convict him of the crime. So I resolved to watch and wait, only hoping that I should succeed in revealing his villainy in time to save the poor Major's life.

I was very pleased, then, when I was knocked up in the middle of Sunday night by a half-dressed servant, too excited to say anything but reiterate: "Captain Allis! Captain Allis! Will you please come to Captain Allis?"

By the time that I had unlocked the door the man was gone.

"The game is up. He is caught in the act!" I said to myself as I threw on my dressing-gown and prepared to cross the passage into the sick man's room.

I was suprised to find the door closed, and when I entered, it was only to find the sick-room undisturbed, and the patient lying in the most profound of his trances, while a monotonous snoring in the inner room told me that Sister Agnes had not been aroused.

My call had evidently nothing to do with my patient, and I left the room, somewhat disappointed, to seek out Captain Allis's chamber on the floor above. I had no difficulty in doing so, for the room was quite filled with a crowd of frightened and half-dressed servants and guests, all whispering together. The man who had roused me was just coming through the doorway, on his way to hurry me, and he beckoned me in excitedly.

"Please be quick, sir; he seems to be bleeding to death," he said, as I entered.

But the man was wrong. Captain Allis had bled to death fully half-an-hour before I bent over his body, as it lay cold and motionless in the bed. A great gash in the throat must have killed him almost instantaneously.

The butler pointed to a blood-stained razor lying on the dressing-table.

"It is suicide, I suppose, sir?" he said in a whisper; and I turned away from the bed to follow the direction of his finger.

"Has the razor been moved?" I asked.

"No, sir; I was the one to find him, smelling something burning—where you see the bed has been set on fire and smouldered a little"—he pointed at the tindered quilt as he spoke—"and the razor was there just as it is now."

"Then there is no question of suicide," I answered decisively. "No man could get from the dressing-table to the bed with that gash in his throat, much less stop to fire the bed. Cover up the body, and send for the police."

CHAPTER III.

Silax is Killed.

The murder of Captain Allis left me without a single theory to account for the illness of Major Dessalene. If the Captain had not been dosing him with opium, who could have done it? The wild thought occurred to me, of course, that Allis had been killed by some friend of the Major's, in order to prevent his poisoning the latter, but the idea was too extravagant, and there seemed to me nobody in the house sufficiently fond of Dessalene to defend him.

His wife was attentive, and spent most of her time at her husband's bedside; but she certainly had not the strength to kill the Captain as he had been killed.

It was probable that both crimes were the work of the same man, but why the criminal should choose slow poisoning in one case, and a speedy throat-cutting in the other, was a perfect puzzle to me. The whole case was so perplexing, that I was quite rejoiced when a detective from Scotland Yard came over to take the case in hand. The guests all cleared out rapidly. Even their enthusiasm for shooting, and Mrs. Dessalene's society, could not keep them in the face of this terrible tragedy to one of their number.

One guest alone remained at the earnest request, I understood, of Mrs. Dessalene, who was prostrated by this second mystery in the house, and nervously terrified at the thought of being left in it with none but strangers.

Sir Reginald Dyne, who seemed a manly, outspoken young fellow, gave me another reason for remaining at the house when the other guests had gone.

"I am told that some people suspect me of poisoning old Dessalene," he said frankly. "Everybody knows that there was no love lost between Allis and me, so I expect his murder will be put down to my charge also. Under the circumstances, I do not think it right to leave the house until I have done my level best to find out who really killed Captain Allis."

"Yes," I said doubtfully, thinking that two amateur detectives in additional to a professional one might cause complications; and my companion misinterpreted my hesitation.

"Perhaps you are one of those that suspect me?" he asked sharply.

I shook my head and laughed.

"No, I do not think you are the man to commit a murder," I answered quite truthfully. For the Baronet's manner had won my confidence entirely.

My trust in his innocence was not shared by Mr.

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Robin Silax, the gentleman from Scotland Yard, who had been provided with a room in the ever-hospitable house, to enable him more effectively to carry out his investigations. He informed me in a burst of sympathy that Sir Reginald and Mrs. Dessalene were managing the murdering business between them.

Mr. Robin Silax seemed to me very well fitted for a novelist; for he had worked out of the materials in his hands the plot for an interesting story. "Mrs. D—— is poisoning her husband," he said, "in order to marry her old love"—he had wormed the love-story out of old Diplock—"Captain Allis found out what she was doing and kept 'mum' in the hope of frightening madam into his hands. So the young Baronet had to 'pop off' the Captain to keep him quieter still and less embarrassing. I shall have them both in gaol in a week," he finished complacently.

"Of course, you have evidence to prove your case?" I said stiffly; because I liked both the persons he was accusing, and I did *not* like Mr. Robin Silax.

The detective took a pinch of snuff.

"I am collecting evidence," he said cheerfully, and pulling out a dingy letter-case handed me a letter to read.

"Tell me what you think of this," he said with another pinch of his abominable snuff, and I got halfway through the epistle before I realised that it must have been purloined from Mrs. Dessalene's possession. Then I handed it back, indignant with myself and him. I glanced at the date, however.

"That was written two years ago, before Mrs. Dessalene's marriage," I said.

"Possibly," returned Silax, his eyes twinkling wickedly, "but marriage does not put out red-hot love like that—marriage, that is, to another man. And it proves something; that the lady has kept the letter till now hidden away in the desk, which I took the liberty of investigating."

The man irritated me, and I turned away abruptly, sad at heart every time that I thought of the outpouring of love I had read, terrible in its earnestness; desperately pathetic, when I thought how that love had been blighted.

"Poor Dyne!" I kept saying to myself, and "Poor girl! poor girl!" when I thought of the woman who had treasured up that old letter, when to do so was a sin against the man she had married.

My idea of a detective, gathered, I will admit, entirely from books, is a man of perfect reticence, who in silence and secrecy builds up a chain of evidence from the merest trifles, until the chain is complete, then startles everybody by a result which appears nothing less than miraculous until the workings are shown.

Mr. Silax was as different as possible from this ideal sleuth-hound of the law. No sooner had he come across any small discovery, than he hurried to me with an account of it and a new and wonderful theory based upon it. He suspected in turn, as circumstances occurred to alter his opinion, every member of the household, and explained to me in detail what their object was in killing Captain Allis and poisoning Major Dessalene; and when he surprised me one night in the sick man's room, where I had gone in the course of my own researches, I could tell from his ominous silence and the manner in which he looked at me, that I in turn was enjoying the favour of his suspicions. I ought not to try and belittle the poor man, however, now that he is dead.

He came to me one night looking every inch the astute and unreadable detective of the story-books. His manner was altogether different from usual, and he even waited for me to ask how he was getting on. His answer, for once, almost impressed me.

"I am collecting evidence."

"I have got to the bottom of the case," he said quietly, "or rather, I have got the key. I will admit that it was more or less of an accident my finding it, but there is no doubting it this time. I have seen the person who doses Major Dessalene in the act."

"And who was it, man?" I said, almost excited.

"I cannot tell you just at present," he said, "but I think I shall be able to show you before to-morrow. I may wake you at any time in the night, I suppose?"

"Certainly."

His unusual reticence really impressed me, especially when I found that it was quite impossible to get any further information out of him about his discovery.

That night I lay awake quite a long while, wondering whether Silax would give me a call, and whether he had really obtained at last the key to the mystery which I was unable to solve. I did not fall asleep till after two, and then only slept for a couple of hours. As the clock in the turret was chiming the hour before striking four, I sat up suddenly wide-awake, with the certain conviction that something had happened, or was just about to happen.

My thoughts went, of course, to my patient, and I jumped out of bed at once, resolved to give him a call. A light burnt all night in the sick-room, so I did not trouble to strike a light, but felt my way into my slippers and dressing-gown.

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The passage outside my room was pitch dark, the Major's door being closed, and I made my way very gingerly across, afraid of making a noise and thus disturbing the criminal, whom I imagined for some reason to be at that very moment in the sick man's room.

Just outside the door, however, I stumbled over something, and, bending down to discover what it was, drew back suddenly, my hands warm and wet with a moisture that, in spite of my professional experience, made me turn sick and faint.

I rushed back to my room for matches, and returned, spilling them all over the place in my haste. When I managed to strike one I believe I looked at my hands first, and that prepared me for what I saw when I looked down. It was poor Silax, with a knife in his heart, and a little bottle of liquid opium in his clasped hand.

CHAPTER IV.

The Mystery is Cleared.

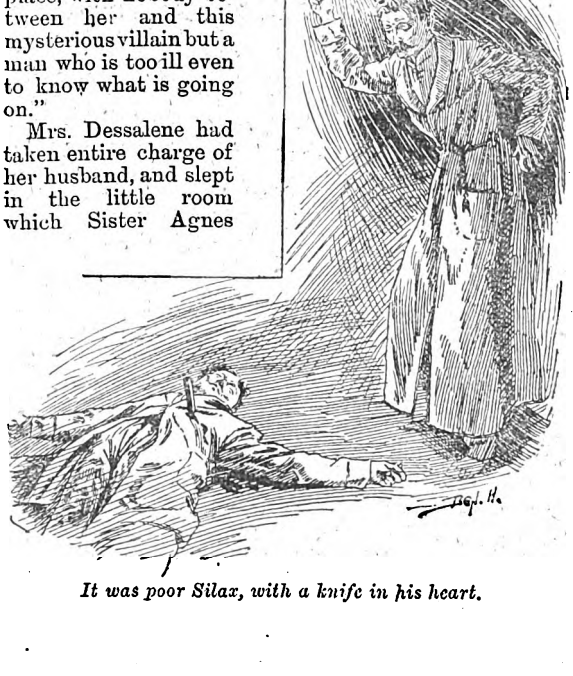
In the morning, when it became known that another murder had been committed in the house, the servants all left in a body. The nurse whom Dr. Diplock had engaged to attend on Major Dessalene went with them, although she would be expelled from her sisterhood for doing so. They said that an evil spirit was abroad in the house, and that no one could tell who would be its next victim. I did not share their superstitious belief, of course, but I felt that every person who remained in the house was menaced by a very great danger, and I determined to sleep with my door locked in future, and keep sharp look-out in walking about the house, especially after dark.

Sir Reginald Dyne still stayed on, although I felt bound to suggest to him that he would most likely be the next victim.

The Baronet smiled; we had ceased to laugh in that fateful house.

"I don't think I'll run away," he said. "I could not bear to think of that poor girl alone in the place, with nobody between her and this mysterious villain but a man who is too ill even to know what is going on."

Mrs. Dessalene had taken entire charge of her husband, and slept in the little room which Sister Agnes had occupied. I cannot speak too highly of her devotion and ability.



It was poor Silax, with a knife in his heart.

Mrs. Jagger, a very estimable old servant, who had nursed Mrs. Dessalene as a baby, and had accompanied her on her marriage to her new abode, proved the only noble exception in the general exodus of servants. If it had not been for her devoted courage, I suppose the Baronet and I would have had to take turns in cooking our meals, and fulfilling other necessary domestic duties in the house. With Mrs. Jagger's services, we managed very comfortably, and sat down solemnly to dinner together at our usual time, as if nothing extraordinary had occurred. Our hostess had begun to take all her meals in her husband's room.

Now that the circle had narrowed, the problem I had come to solve became more mysterious and exciting. If any other outrage occurred in the house, or if the Major's illness continued, either the miscreant must be some terrible being from outside, or dexterously hiding in the large rambling house, or it must be one of four persons. Of these four I knew that I myself was innocent, although I began to wonder what I might be capable of doing in my sleep. Then it seemed extremely hard to think that either Dyne or Clytie Dessalene, or her old servant, could possibly be guilty of such wholesale murder.

I am afraid we all considered the others with a little suspicion. I had my eyes on Sir Reginald every moment he was in my company, looking in vain for some slight indication of hidden madness or brutality under his pleasing exterior character. I made a point of inquiring specially into the history and character of Mrs. Jagger, and stayed awake a whole night considering the possibility of her committing a crime to aid a beloved mistress. In turn, I doubt not they were considering whether I had not used my presence in the house to satisfy some homicidal mania to which I might be subject, for all they knew.

So impossible was it, however, for us to seriously suspect each other, that the two women had taken to speaking in whispers of the "influence," while Sir Reginald Dyne and I made a complete search throughout the old house, and a careful examination of doors and shutters before retiring to rest.

We were left entirely to ourselves in the matter, for some hitch had arisen at Scotland Yard about sending down another man, and the local policeman who came making arrangements for the inquest, was visibly shivering all the time he was in the house.

The inquest on poor Silax was held at the Dessalene Arms, in the village where Dyne had had the body removed, in deference to Mrs. Dessalene's nervous horror of it. When I saw the Major, just before we started for the inn, he seemed much better than usual, and I began to hope that if he were really being poisoned the prisoner had departed with the servants. Perhaps, after all, it was one of them who had a grudge against his master, and had been obliged to kill both Captain Allis and the detective to avoid detection. I breathed more freely at the thought.

But a rough shock came next day at dinner, to which, as I said, Dyne and I sat down together. Usually we help ourselves to a glass apiece of the Major's '74 port after the meal, but on this occasion the Baronet declined this. He poured me out my glass, however, from the decanter, and handed it across to me, asking me some ordinary question or other as he did so. Luckily, I stopped to answer him before drinking the wine, and in doing so something in the scent of it made me

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suspicious. In an ordinary way I should not have taken any notice of the slight difference of perfume, but to-day all my senses were on the alert to discover danger; and so, instead of drinking my port, I took it upstairs with me to my room, decanter and all, leaving Sir Reginald staring at me in apparent astonishment. He came and tapped at my door ten minutes afterwards.

"What on earth is the matter, Doctor?" he asked, when I let him in. "Something the matter with the port?"

"Yes," I answered grimly. "Poison."

Sir Reginald started.

"You are quite sure of it?"

"Quite; the decanter has opium in it enough to kill six people."

He sat down on a chair and looked gloomily straight before him. Neither of us spoke for fully five minutes, while I went on with my rough analysis of the decanter's contents. Then my companion said gravely:

"This is a bad look-out for us. We shall not dare to eat or drink anything in the house."

"I was hoping 'he' had gone with the servants," I said. We always spoke of the mysterious murderer as "he."

Dyne cheered up a little.

"Perhaps 'he' put that poison in the decanter before he went," he said, as the bright idea struck him.

But I could not let him retain even that small consolation.

"I saw Mrs. Jagger filling the decanter yesterday morning," I said. "It is lucky we did not dine at home after the inquest."

"Then he is in the house still?" said Dyne in a whisper.

"Apparently."

There was another silence. Then the Baronet said meditatively:

"I never used to think myself a coward; but this mysterious business is taking the heart out of me. I don't like to be a moment alone in this house. I hate the idea of sleeping alone in it."

I had it on the tip of my tongue to invite him to share my bed, which was roomy enough. But up came the everlasting suspicion in time to stop me. No, I said to myself, one must lock one's door at night against *everybody*, if one wants to be safe; and when Sir Reginald Dyne went on to put the request straightforwardly into words, I made some excuse for refusing it. I advised him to lock both window and door when he went to bed, and luckily as it happened, he took my advice.

Mrs. Dessalene also promised to lock the door of her husband's room to secure them both from any midnight assailant. Mrs. Jagger needed no advice on the subject, so that half-past ten o'clock found the household ensconced in four separate strongholds, protected as well as possible from intrusion, both from outside and inside the house.

I felt so secure in my own defences that I slept soundly, for the first time since poor Allis's death.

In the dead of the night I was awakened by a quick tapping on my bedroom door. Jumping out of bed, I took the precaution of asking who was there before turning the key. It was Mrs. Dessalene's voice which replied, and when I had hastily made myself presentable and thrown open the door, in the light which I had kept burning all night in my room I found her standing, with bare feet and only a shawl thrown over her night-dress, appealing to me with a white, terrified face. Her yellow hair streamed down over her shoulders like a golden aureola, and even at that moment I thought what a lovely woman she was.

"Oh, please come," she was saying excitedly, "they have carried my poor husband away," and she led the way across the passage into the sick-room, where I had always seen Major Dessalene lying. Now his bed was empty.

Sir Reginald staring at me in apparent astonishment.

"I just woke," said Mrs. Dessalene, "and peeped out of my little room to see if all was right. And the door was open, although I locked and bolted it before I returned. Oh, tell me, what have they done to him? Where have they taken him?"

She seemed under the impression that the Major had been removed by some evil spirit, and terror was written on her face.

But to me the Major's disappearance came as a sudden revelation, and when poor Mrs. Dessalene cried again, wringing her hands: "Oh! where is he?" I answered excitedly, as I seized one of the big brass candlesticks, the nearest substitute for a weapon, and hurried from the room:

"Quick; he is upstairs—murdering Reginald Dyne!"

I got up the first flight of stairs as quickly as most men could do it, but Mrs. Dessalene was at the top first, and I had to seize her arm and pull her back.

"We must go carefully," I hissed into her ear, "or we shall both be killed as well;" and still I had to hold her with all my force to prevent her flying to her fate.

The Baronet's room was two flights above ours, and up the second flight we crept stealthily. Then we crouched, watching; for a man was at Dyne's door,

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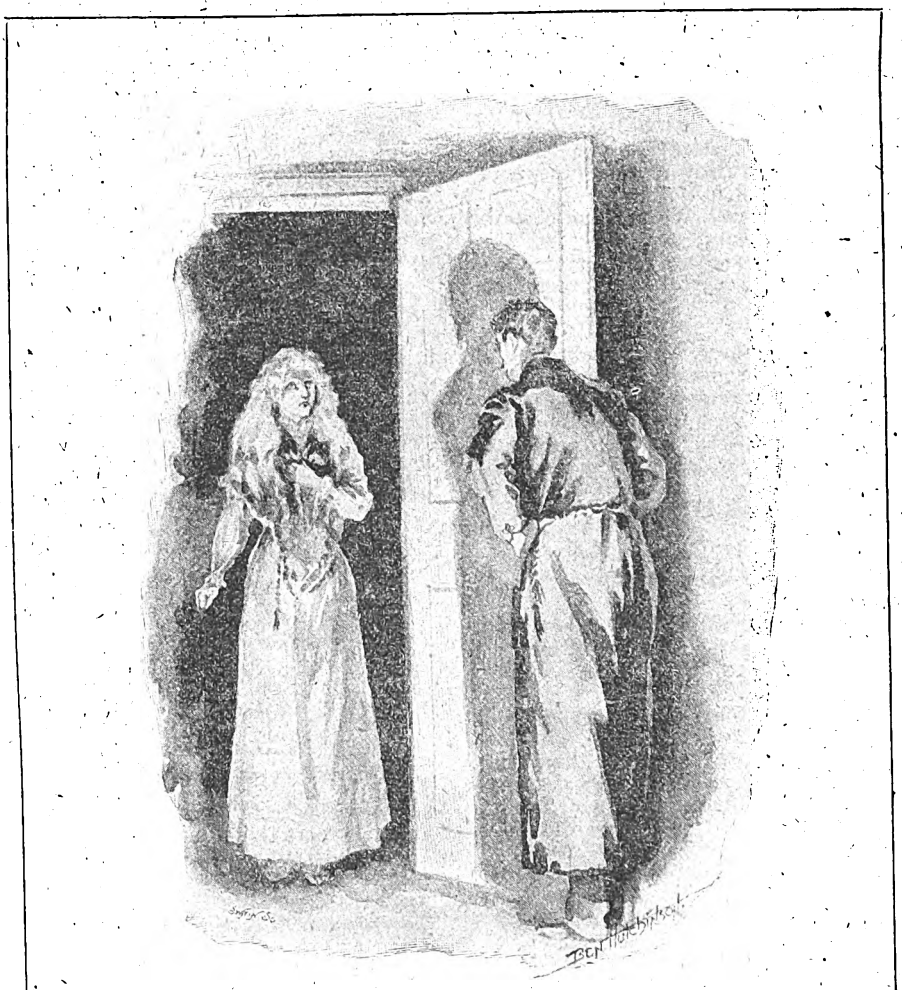
trying a bunch of keys one by one, carefully, noiselessly in the closed lock.

"Quick! For Heaven's sake do not let him get in," whispered the woman at my side. "Let me go and stop him if you are afraid."

I waited, in spite of this taunt even, until the right key was found and the door swung back. Then like a shot I was up the stairs and into the room behind the

we struggled together like wild beasts on the bed, till poor Dyne, who was underneath us, awoke to see the strange scene, and collected himself sufficiently to take my part. After that the battle was soon decided, and Dyne, who was something of a sailor, managed to tie the Major up pretty effectively with the cording of his boxes.

It was only then that I had a chance of thinking of Mrs. Dessalene, whom I found in a swoon at the top of



Appealing to me with a white, terrified face.

intruder. And still I was only just in time; for the Major was bending over the sleeping Baronet with a great knife—like the one which ended Silax's life—in his hand. He turned as I entered the room, and faced me, glaring at me malignantly. I ought to have struck him down instantly with the heavy brass candlestick in my hand, but I was too excited to do anything but fling myself upon him, dropping my weapon, and grappling for the knife in his hand. He fell back as I did so, and

the stairs. Dyne carried her to the room of the fair Jagger, while I kept watch, with Dyne's revolver in my hand, on the imprisoned murderer, who lay foaming and chafing like some wild animal on the bed. When Dyne returned, we took him down to his own room, which had iron-bound windows (being easy of access for burglars from the conservatory), and locked him in there while Dyne dressed and went for further assistance.

For some reasons it was a pity we did so, since the

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poor wretch managed, in spite of his bonds, to get at his opium supply, and was dead by the time that the Baronet returned with some men from the nearest farm.

The opium supply was left uncovered—ten three-ounce bottles in a specially prepared recess in the woodwork of the bed. As the Major was dead this discovery was all that we had to help us in clearing up the mystery. With its assistance Diplock and I managed to put together a fairly probable explanation of the whole series of occurrences, which we had to be content with, since the chief actor was dead.

We put down the Major as the victim of a mad jealousy. The preparation of the recess and the storing of the opium showed that he must have made careful arrangements beforehand for his deception. So we thought that he had planned to collect at the house all the men who paid any attention to his wife at all, with the intention of killing them one by one. His own illness was arranged, of course, to remove him out of the range of suspicion, and he evidently knew how much opium he could give himself without endangering his life.

Poor Robin Silax, I suppose, must have really discovered the secret of the mystery. He had seen the Major dosing himself, and was coming to me with one of the bottles of opium, probably thinking the murderer asleep, when Dessalene jumped up, followed him, and killed him outside his door to preserve the secret, the preservation of which by that time was worth the effort. The knives must have been obtained especially, too, and hidden, since nobody had seen them in the house before. Their hiding-place, however, was never found. The poison had been placed in the decanter of port, of course, while we were away at the inquest, for Dyne's benefit.

Dropping my weapon, and grappling for the knife in his hand.

Such is the best solution which Diplock, Dyne, and I can give of the case, after considering all the details together. Possibly some of my readers may think of a better.

The whole case, of course, caused a great stir in the papers at the time, which some of you may remember, and the name of Dessalene became so notorious that within six months Mrs. Dessalene changed hers for that of Lady Reginald Dyne.

Herbert Flowerdew.

MEN! GIVE UP YOUR CIGARS,

LADIES! GIVE UP YOUR CHOCOLATES,

FOR ONE DAY,

And send what you would have spent on them to the FRESH AIR FUND. Ninepence pays for a day's happiness for one child. £8 2s. pays for a party of 200, with adults to look after them. The children are chosen from the most poverty-stricken quarters of the large towns throughout the kingdom, irrespective of creed.

Cast-off clothing, toys, boots, old coins—anything, in fact, that will realise money, however small the sum, will be gratefully acknowledged in *Pearson's Weekly*.

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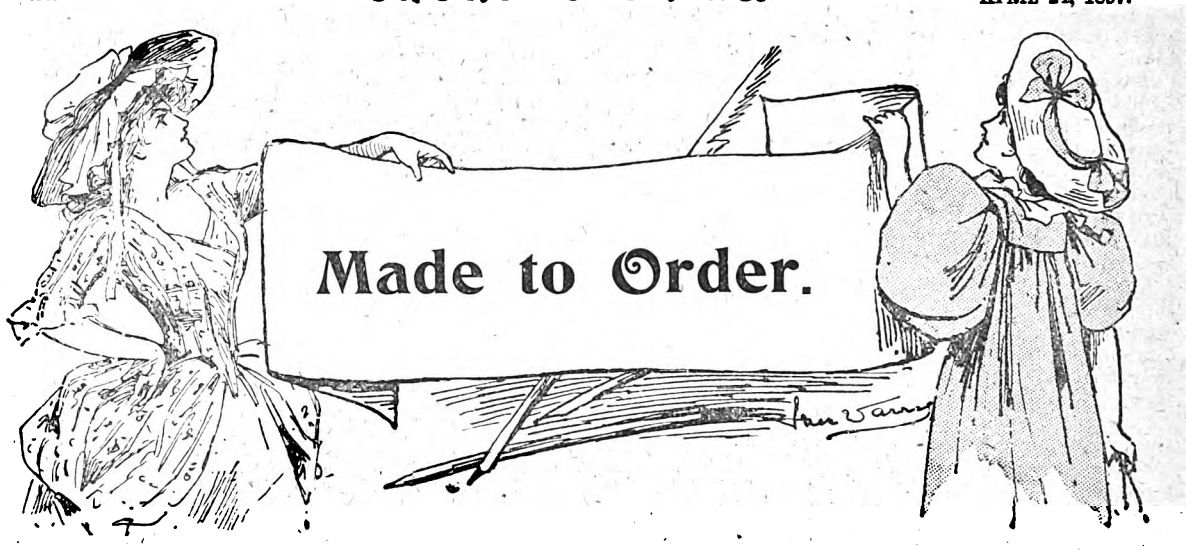

Made to Order.

Mr. Augustus Stead was an original genius from the land of the Elephant and Castle, and it is seldom that the Elephant produces so great a son.

He had been the idol of his fond mother, the pet of his respectable father, a small master printer, and the plaything of compositors: and at last, he was the *dux* of a small commercial academy, thanks to the large bones he had inherited from his father, the beef with which he had been early nourished, and the solid, plodding, phlegmatic habit of mind which made him certain to climb and to succeed.

Nature had endowed him with an admired type of face, a little after the high art of tailors' advertisements perhaps, and his moustache was obviously a triumph of cosmetics, but one must not be censorious.

Mr. Augustus Stead was also a literary genius, for contact with authors is very stimulating for young printers. He knew several reporters, and a leader writer for the Elephant's *Trumpeter*, the organ of progressive local thought.

Augustus was not only a remarkably steady young man, he was the superintendent of a Sunday-school, where he reigned in glory over a mixed assembly.

There was a mobile crowd of children beneath five or six fair and smiling lady teachers, with a crippled youth and a bald mechanic, and Augustus was king among them all.

He handled the large register with the air of some Norman William fingering Doomsday Book. When he rang a little muffin bell (consecrated by such uses and the touch of his royal hand), his grave severity would have quelled the ribald mirth even of Pantaloon's own children, had they been present; but he would relax a little and unbend at the teachers' meeting, where he coached his team, if one may dare to say so, against next week's effort.

He would also hold long and intimate conversation with the teachers about individual scholars—at least, this honour was accorded to the ladies—and he would drink tea with them in turns at their fathers' houses.

Each lady in turn was talked about as a possible Mrs. Augustus Stead; but though they were all worthy girls, Augustus was wise. He came and saw and meditated upon their virtues, but his heart remained whole.

The prettiest ones were unfortunately the humblest in rank. The best teachers were lacking in the outward and formal adornments of mere beauty, and had no countervailing charm of personality to amend the yellowness of their skins.

Miss Goldstein, the piano-maker's daughter, was passing rich on £50 a year pin-money, and she could afford velvet and ostrich feathers; but unfortunately she had a hare lip, with a good deal of hair on it, too.

It was libel for Miss Jones to call her the cavalry officer; but the future Mrs. Stead must have no moustache, he felt.

He had not found his ideal, as he constantly told his friends. The older he grew, the more impossible did it seem to find that not impossible she who should fulfil his expectations, and be worthy to accept his hand and share his throne.

Two things conspired to banish her from actual life. First, he had a rising sense of his own uniqueness; and, secondly, his uncle, a most respectable poulterer, of Leadenhall, was rising rapidly in the social scale, and therefore it was the more necessary that the nephew of a liveryman should walk discreetly.

There was a sweet child in Miss Goldstein's class, with a thick head of glossy hair, beautiful, especially when it had been washed with soda, and brushed. Her manner was timid, and yet frank. She had won the first prize for running on school feast-day.

She was affectionate, and would slip her hand into Augustus' palm and walk with him. She always dropped the handkerchief upon him, at that fatuous sport. She was a most regular scholar, and always learnt her lessons.

Her name was Violet Howard, and she had no kith or kin (except an old grandmother) who could interfere with any plans for her future greatness.

Augustus made a decree that Violet Howard should be selected and used as the raw material out of which his ideal should be made to order. It is needless to say that he did not consider that she, too, being not born of a stock or of a tree, but being also human, might possibly have an ideal of her own to which he might fairly be asked to conform. Pooh! a chit like that would have no business to make demands upon a man such as Augustus Stead. Out upon it! Was he not already ideal enough for any maid? And besides, is the free soul of man, and, above all, of a superintendent

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to be fitted perforce to any bed of Procrustes called an Ideal?

Augustus, like Napoleon and other great men, was rapid in his actions. He resolved, as he chewed a quill in office hours; and his plan was wise and easy. He knew a decayed gentlewoman in Surrey, who was pensioned by her friends.

Violet should board with her, partly as companion, partly as pupil. He, the great one, should pay for the girl's board, and the decayed one should educate her in the ways of the truly genteel.

The plan was well conceived. Grandmother Howard thanked him for finding so good a place; Mrs. Chapman was grateful for a free companion and help, whom she might use as a servant at a pinch; Miss Goldstein was relieved of a "forward and inquisitive" pupil; and, of course, Violet herself would be more than grateful when she knew the end. She would repay her exaltation with the enthusiasm of a life of cheerful service.

For two years and a half Mr. Augustus Stead was a happy man.

He made a point of spending two evenings a week in Surrey, where he examined his pupil in good learning and piety. The decayed gentlewoman had a decayed piano, and Violet practised wild melodies upon it, and learnt to accompany Augustus in his rather slow and flat rendering of his wish to be a butterfly and other enviable things.

There was great insistence upon the letter 'h'; a little French was added, and physical geography, with some excursions into history, including the dates of the Conquest, the Edict of Nantes, and Waterloo. Divinity, too, was most carefully studied in the lives of Gideon, Ahab, and Nathaniel, and St. Paul's missionary journeys.

Happy conscious Augustus! Happy unconscious Violet! And since the design was still unknown, we may add that the Sunday-school teachers, who still hoped and adored, were happy too. But pleasant dreams, even though they endure for thirty revolving months, must end at last.

Violet was eighteen to the day, Augustus, twice her age, when he explained to her the splendour which was in store for her, in a long, formal speech.

He touched upon the cheerful steadiness of her behaviour, her clean habits, her personal comeliness, her quickness of learning, her assiduous attention to duty.

"And so, dear girl," he said in a prize-giving voice, "I have determined to ask you to be Mrs. Augustus Stead."

She heard him without any show of surprise. Indeed, she had expected this long ago, and yet, actually, some light, quick tears stood in her round eyes, no doubt tears of gratitude. She did not spring up from her chair as he had expected, but on the contrary, she said:

"Thank you, Mr. Stead. I—I'm not in love with anybody else, and, of course, if you think it best——"

He then unbent a little and dried her tears, bade her sit upon his knee, which she did; and in a little time she laughed and became quite cheerful, and tried on the tan gloves (at 2s. 11½d.) which he had bought for her birthday and forgotten to give her, and she asked him very archly for a troth ring.

Indeed, she was a sweet and innocent young thing, and he could not but feel that, except for her almost babyish way of looking at things, she would be a most satisfactory consort, for she was in every respect made to order.

But, alas! marriage is a lottery indeed, and Mr. Stead soon bewailed the revolting ingratitude of womankind. First of all, the teachers, though they dismissed him with a heavy marble clock emblazoned with a nickel tablet, quite brutally refused to take any further interest in him. Then he was distinctly disappointed. Mrs. Stead's first offence was to show an unbecoming and snubbing disposition towards the whole body of the lady teachers. And next she actually told her own Augustus that he was selfish and lacking in taste, and once she added that he was a toady—"a word no respectable woman ought to use," he told her.

But the following unfeeling and undated letter from one of his old schoolfellows, will reveal to the curious the full guilt of the ungrateful girl:

Dear Emmie,—After all, I went to call on old Gus and his pretty wife at Peckham. My word! She's lovely, and just exactly the thing for him. You know his way of riding the high horse? She simply won't stand it, and he has to behave himself like an ordinary mortal. If he prophesies, as you call it, she simply laughs at him in the prettiest way, and if he begins any of those tedious old yarns of his, she just remembers the point for him, and then gets him away before he bores one to death. She's awfully clever, too, and makes him read to her while she sews. In fact, you'd hardly know him again, he's ever so much nicer. Every one likes her awfully, and thinks her too good for him, but he's not such a brute as he was by any means. He's rather brutal to her, but she keeps him in jolly good order without jumping on him. He solemnly told Tom he was unhappy for the first three years, but is now resigned to his fate. She has made him shave off his moustache. Do let's go and call together soon. I want you to know her.—Yours, R. V.

P.S.—He boasted that he had her made to order. She seems made to order him.

C. L. Marson.

A GRAND NEW SERIAL STORY by JOAN BARRETT,

ENTITLED

"A BROKEN VOW,"

WILL START NEXT WEEK.

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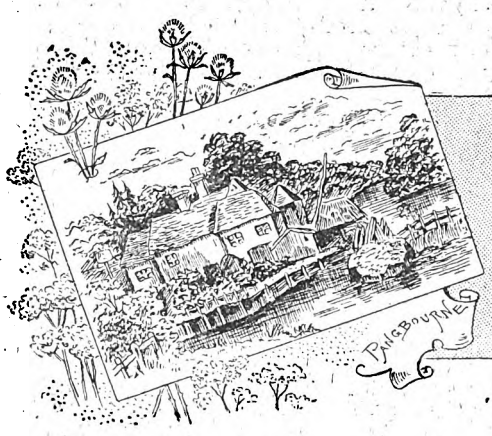

The Trumpeter.

Those who have not assisted in great battles, and know of them only from brilliant description, have little idea of these desperate conflicts, where the massed armies launched against each other struggle through the whole day in an atmosphere of flame and iron rain.

Dwelling upon the victorious result, they ignore the uncertainties, the detours and the unexpected happenings of these terrible days. Reading in the narratives of historians of the strategy of generals, one is led to believe that all that takes place is like a parade—a kind of mathematical chess carried on by players who have soldiers for pawns. It is necessary to take part in this *mêlée* to understand the sanguinary chaos. The plan of a battle, so easy to follow in a history, cannot be comprehended so clearly upon the ground. Enveloped in clouds of dust and smoke, one knows nothing of what is transpiring around him, distinguishes with difficulty a corps of friends from that of enemies, and dies without becoming aware with which side rests the advantage. Each one does his duty blindly, and often knows of victory but from the order of the day.

It was thus with certain regiments at Auerstadt. The Prussians, who presented a battle front of six leagues, were attacked along the whole line at nearly the same time, and there resulted a series of conflicts which led, as one may say, to two battles, one won by Napoleon, the other by Marshal Davoust.

Our company, sent into one of these encounters, was successful after a struggle of several hours, and drove the enemy from a village which they abandoned only after it was set on fire. I was pursuing the last skirmishers, who were retiring towards the wing commanded by the Prince of Hohenlohe, when in scaling an inclosure I was struck by a musket ball which knocked me over and caused me to lose consciousness almost instantly.

When I regained my senses I found myself alone at the foot of the wall I had attempted to climb. The other houses were still burning; some dead bodies were dispersed here and there, and there could be heard in the distance the boom of cannons and the crack of musketry.

I partially arose, and with difficulty drawing myself upon my knees, sought to discover some near point to which to proceed for succour; but all was silence. Evidently the battle had concentrated itself in the two extremities of the enemy's line, and I was abandoned.

This conviction, together with the blood I had lost, reduced my courage. I saw myself condemned to perish miserably amidst this ruined hamlet. However, I made a last effort to gain a small isolated dwelling, which seemed the only one that had escaped destruction.

The inhabitants had obviously abandoned it before the approach of the two armies, for it was entirely vacant. The Prussian soldiers, who had bivouacked there the preceding night, had broken the furniture up for fuel. I found but the four walls and scattered *débris*.

Of all the sufferings I endured, that of thirst was the most intolerable. In crossing the court I had perceived a well, but it was deep; I had no means of drawing from it, and, like a true Tantalus, it was in vain for me to bend towards this water the lips that could not reach it.

I was at the end of my strength and courage. My leg, stiff from the bleeding of the wound, did not permit me to take another step. Everything began to swim before my eyes; a coldness seized me, and darkness came on. I gained a corner of a room on the ground floor, where I fell, groaning. A sort of numbness dulled the pains which penetrated my body: I gradually lost the perception of my suffering.

I had, as might be said, accepted my miserable situation as one buried alive.

A considerable time elapsed. I thought that all was at an end for me, when a step sounded at the door of the cottage. With an effort I raised my head and tried to give a cry for help, but my voice was extinguished between my teeth, convulsively set together. I could only perceive by the lingering evening light a trumpeter of our regiment, who was about to enter, seemingly himself seeking shelter. He crossed the porch with caution, and looking into the depths of the apartment, perceived me.

"A comrade," he cried, approaching me. "I see you have had a bad encounter. Some ball wanted to chat with you too near. But how happens it that you are alone here, far from the ambulances?"

I attempted to explain what had occurred.

"I understand—I understand," he replied. "The company has followed its course without regarding those who have been left behind. It is the same with mine, which, drawn to the left wing, was set on by a regiment of cavalry and swept so far away that I was not able to regain the detachment."

"Where is the fighting?"

"I don't know. When I found myself alone and night approaching, I thought of seeking a nook in which to rest till morning. Only I expected to fall into a better

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place than this. There does not seem to be much luxury of furniture here—the planks for a feather bed and the walls for covering. You have found your couch a little military."

I replied with chattering teeth that such a trifle mattered little to a dying man.

"Fie, fie," interrupted the trumpeter, approaching me. "Die because of a damaged stump? I'll wager you are thirsty!"

"I burn!"

"I will go and draw some water from the well."

He turned towards the doorway, when I cried to him that the bucket was broken and the rope removed.

"No matter," said he. "I must try other means. It shall never be said that one Frenchman allowed another to die for want of drink."

He went out and I turned my face to the wall, certain that his endeavours would be useless. The length of his absence led me even to believe that he had departed, but at length he reappeared, bearing his shako within his hands; it was transformed into a water bucket; from the chin strap depended a long withe in place of rope.

"Victory!" he cried. "We have the fluid! I have been gone some time. The merchants of this place having shut up their shops, it was needful to fabricate something; but at last I am here. Drink in discretion."

He presented the shako to me, and I drank with avidity. He then informed me that the cannons had ceased to make themselves heard; the battle was ended, and, according to all appearance, to our advantage, for the line occupied the previous evening by the Prussians as bivouac had been abandoned. We need only to wait till morning for succour.

While giving me some encouraging details the trooper sought about us for means of rendering our condition less painful. The night wind which penetrated the apartment through the door and broken window froze me. He departed for a few minutes, and reappeared with several old bundles of straw which he fastened over the apertures so securely as to defend us against the cold.

He bathed and dressed my wound, declaring it to be a good one, and likely to make me a major. I allowed him to do all this without resisting, and also without thanking him. I was so cast down by my misfortunes that I had lost the instinct of self-preservation. Lying upon the earth in my obscure corner, I awaited the end of my sufferings with more of longing than of fear.

The trumpeter, who had rested a moment, bent over me and shook his head.

"My comrade has not much desire for life," he murmured. "Yet, nevertheless, the wound is nothing—a little lead in the shank. These poor quarters have beaten down his moral courage. Cannot I enable him to sleep more decently?"

He made the tour of the chamber, mounted to the storey above, and descended without having found anything.

As for myself, plunged into a half somnolent state, I followed his movements as seen in a mist. At intervals I lost all sense of his presence; then I perceived him again without comprehending what he was doing. He seemed now to me to be examining a partition which divided this lower room into two parts. He set himself to demolish it. First I saw fall under his sabre the light pine carpentry work; then he detached some large pieces of packing cloth. Here there ensued a blank. When I regained consciousness of what was going on, the trumpeter was returning from outside, and the packing cloth had been transformed by him into a pallet which he had stuffed with moss and leaves. I saw him extend it along the wall; he came to me and assisted me to rise, and soon afterwards I felt myself lying upon this improvised bed, and speedily fell asleep.

I was awakened by a sensation of gentle warmth. A fire burnt brightly upon the hearth, where the trumpeter had heaped the fragments of the partition. I raised myself with an exclamation of surprise and pleasure.

"Ah! this resuscitates you!" he cried gaily. "You see there are always means of ameliorating one's condition if time is not wasted in contemplating the buttons of one's gaiters."

"You are a magician!" I cried.

"A little, my friend," he replied, as he manufactured a seat from the remnants of the broken woodwork; "but it is white magic, with a wand having four fingers and a thumb. You think perhaps that I lit this fire merely for warmth—that it is a parlour fire? You are in error, my dear fellow; this is a fire to cook by, and destined to be a pot-boiler."

"They have distributed rations to your company then?" I said.

"Cartridge rations," responded the trumpeter. "But we can't eat them. We shall take some from the Prussians."

"Where do you expect to find their food?"

"Where? Why here. Do not the vanquished feed the vanquishers?" Understanding my gesture of doubt, he continued: "Ah, you have not much confidence in their larder, have you? The fact may be that the locality is a little bare, but a true Frenchman never despairs. Provided his general distributes to him his share of glory, it is for him to procure something to eat. At the time when I was gathering in the garden those dry leaves to make you a bed of eider-down, I perceived some little heaps in a corner. They suggested potatoes. I dug into them with my steel, and exposed to the light of day some twenty of these virtuous tubers. The whole lot are under the ashes there, and ought to be already cooked. We will, in consequence, proceed to feast. Oh! master of the hotel, say grace at once, and serve up hot!"

As he repeated this army phrase in the tone of a master of ceremonies, the trumpeter drew forth, one after another, from underneath the coals, the smoking potatoes, and ranged them symmetrically upon the hearth.

I had eaten nothing since morning. The savoury odour had awakened my hunger. I made an effort to sit up, and was about to partake of the supper prepared by the trumpeter, when I saw him all at once lift his head and listen.

"What is it?" I asked.

He imposed silence by a gesture, rose quickly, caught up his gun which he had placed against the wall, and advanced rapidly towards the door.

At this moment, I, in my turn, distinguished the sound of footsteps outside. Suddenly they became silent, as if the person were approaching with distrust. At last, however, they paused on the threshold. There was an interval, then a hand lifted gently the straw which closed the entrance; a man dressed in the costume of the country appeared at the opening; he looked within and made a step forward.

The trumpeter's gun was at his shoulder and arrested him promptly. He recoiled with a cry.

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"Make one movement and you are dead!" said the soldier.

The German clasped his hands and stammered forth a prayer for quarter.

"Do not fire!" I cried to my companion. "He asks for mercy."

"I understand that," replied the trumpeter; "but it is necessary to know what brings him hither."

"Let him approach; I will speak with him," I said.

"So you know German? Bravo. Then we are going to have some prattle. Come, deliver yourself up, *mein Herr*, to this person you see here who speaks your savage language. Ask him who he is, whence he comes, what he wants, and, if possible, procure some butter for our potatoes."

Thus speaking, he forced the German to advance towards me.

When the stranger perceived that I was wounded he expressed much compassion, and asked over and over again where I was hurt, if I were in pain, whether I would not be able to gain the French encampment.

The last question led me to believe that the Prussians had retreated all along their line. The trumpeter, to whom I imparted this good news, cried: "Long live the Emperor!" and presented arms. The German stated also that he had quitted the burning hamlet the same morning, and that the only house remaining, the one in which we found ourselves, was his. As to the reason of his coming here in the midst of so much danger, and at such an hour, he appeared embarrassed to explain it and became involved in confused statement.

However, my companion appeared to rest contented with the information given, and invited him, with a sort of soldierly cordiality, to approach the fire.

"We have broken up the barracks a little," added he, "but that was your fault. You should have left the key to your wood-shed."

The German excused himself, through me, saying that all had been consumed by the Prussians, who occupied the village.

It was with difficulty that he had been able to transport some furniture and other effects which had escaped pillage to the house of a relative who dwelt at some distance, and who had consented to receive his family.

"Yes, yes," said the trumpeter, "one knows that. In the time of the Republic the Austrians came thus into France; they were quartered in our village, and my mother tells what the poor people had to undergo. War is good enough for the soldier; he returns the blows he receives, but the home dweller is always the sufferer, and it is necessary that he pay the expense. Seat yourself, my old friend, and if your heart allows, eat, drink, and shelter yourself. You may act as in your own house."

This nonsensical joviality of the soldier reassured the German more than would any amount of protestations. He seated himself upon the bench, and after some moments of conversation, cried:

"Upon my soul, gentlemen, you are worthy men."

"As one of those worthy men, I feel flattered," said my companion, blowing upon a very hot potato.

"Though I am ruined, I should like to treat you as my guests," continued the villager. "Wait for me here."

"We will wait for you, gladly."

He crossed the room, entered the shed which adjoined it, and remained there some time. The trumpeter carelessly hummed to himself, without appearing to wonder what the other might be doing. Finally, after a long absence, the German reappeared with a small bottle of brandy.

"It is the last," he said. "I hid it from the Prussian Hussars. But I could not find a better occasion to drink it than now."

"It comes in good time," exclaimed the trumpeter joyously. "Here's to the health of the Emperor Napoleon. You are not obliged to propose him, *mein Herr*. Each may celebrate his saint, it is said; and we, who are of the *grande nation*, we have the right to drink to the Little Corporal."

He had uncorked the bottle, to which he made a long application. He passed it to me. I took a draught; then it was the German's turn.

The effect of this fiery liquor was not long in showing itself. Our blood began to circulate with great rapidity, and the frugal supper concluded as if it were a feast.

When the bottle was empty the villager rose, and spoke of departing. He was in haste to announce to his wife and children that the house had escaped the general conflagration. I urged him to set forth without delay, and the trumpeter joined his entreaties to mine. The German wished us all manner of prosperity, gained the door, and disappeared.

When the sound of his footsteps was lost in the distance the trumpeter, who was filling his pipe by the hearth, looked towards the door, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Simple fellow," said he, laughing, "to believe I was hoodwinked!"

"What do you mean?" I asked, astonished.

"Do you suppose I let myself be caught in his explanations? He has known since morning that his 'cage' had not been burnt, so that he need not have come to assure himself of it."

"But what then do you suppose his intention to have been?"

"His intention? Why it is as clear as spring water. When the Prussians came this man hid his hoard in some corner."

"What! You suppose——"

"I am sure of it. I saw, and when he came out of the shed with the bottle, that the pockets of his blouse were stuffed full. I appeared not to observe this, lest he might believe that one would rather drink treasure than brandy; but happily I have no hunger for such bread. We are soldiers and not despoilers of peasants. If ever I return home I wish to enter there saying: 'Nothing in my hands and nothing in my pockets.' All I ask is to have the chance of wearing on my breast as decoration, a little ribbon."

"And you merit it," I cried, extending to him my hand. "While you have been here you have shown proof to me of the humanity and ingenuity of the French soldier, and I now know of his honour."

C. A. Shaw.

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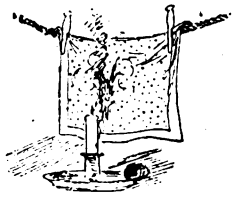
Here you have the next ten pictures. Write down the names in the spaces provided, and keep your list until another set has appeared. **DON'T SEND THEM IN UNTIL TUESDAY, APRIL 27,** *next.*

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of five must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.

No. 31.....



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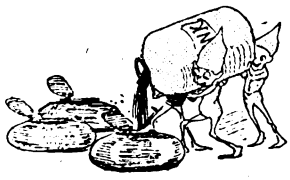

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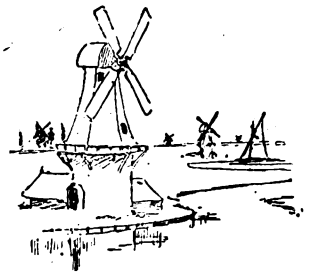

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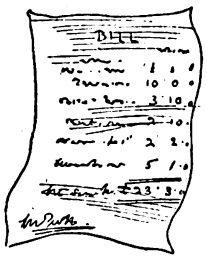

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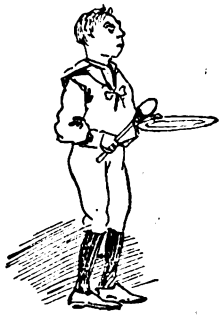


No. 38.....

Remember these Things. . .

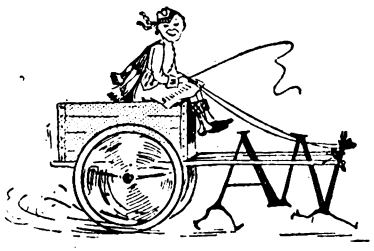
YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the surnames of the people, except in cases where the christian names are depicted.

Name.....

Address.....



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No. 40.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of M.P.'s.—Whitaker's Almanack, the London Post-Office Directory, Hazell's Annual, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

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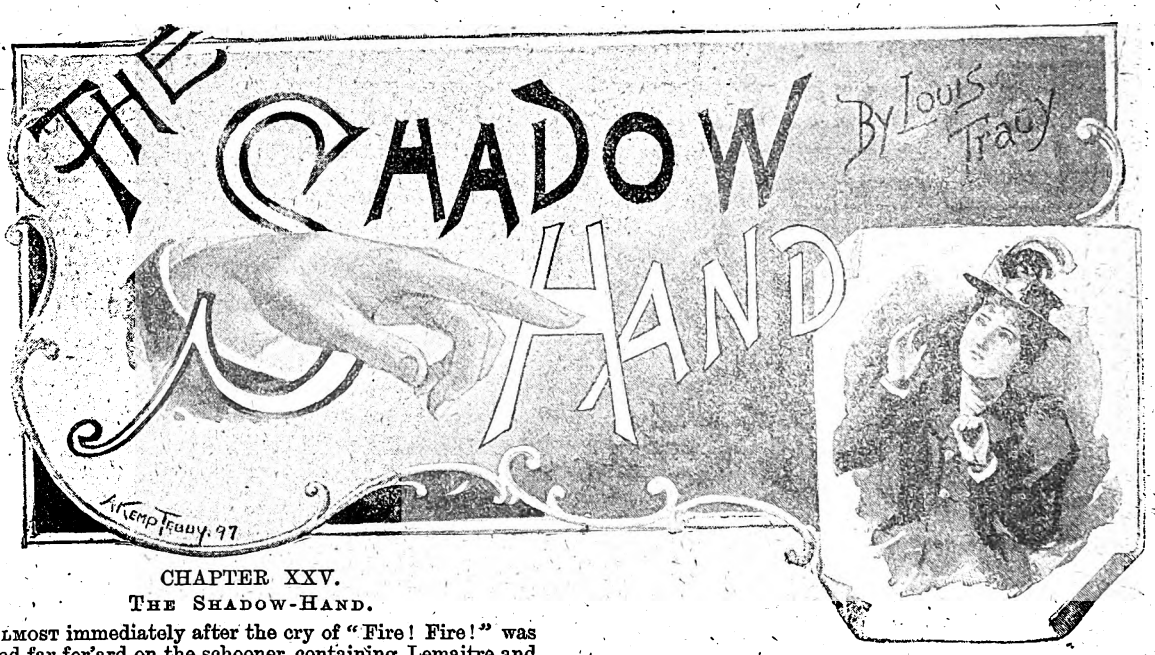

CHAPTER XXV.

The Shadow-Hand.

Almost immediately after the cry of "Fire! Fire!" was raised far for'ard on the schooner containing Lemaitre and Cécile, the whole oil-laden ship might be said to burst into flame. The schooner carried a cutter on her stern-davits, and a light gig on her bow-davits. These, with frightful haste, the men managed to lower and bring round to the starboard side, amidships. There was an instant danger that the boats would be swamped, for now they were towering up on a level with the ship's beam, and now weltering far down under her copper-line, and at what moment the burning schooner would blow up and vanish before their eyes, no one knew.

The men tumbled pell-mell into the boats, one of the first to jump into the gig being the captain. Suddenly the huge form of Lemaitre, half-dressed, with wild eyes and rumpled hair, appeared in the glare, rushing up the companion-way towards the boats, and immediately behind him Cécile. The men stared at her, as though they saw a ghost. But without hesitation, without waiting for help, she leapt upon the cutter which was then nearest the ship, and already contained six men. She was caught by the strong arms of a stalwart bo'sun, and the cable of the cutter was at once loosed.

The difficulty was Lemaitre. The huge weight of his jump would swamp almost any boat if he alighted at all on her side. The remaining five of the ship's crew were already in the gig with the captain, and Lemaitre stood alone at the ship's side in an agony of hesitation, swaying forward and back. Suddenly he seemed to have gone mad. "Wait! Wait for me!" he bellowed. "I have forgotten!" He rushed backward toward the companion-way.

"Oh, the man's mad!" cried the captain. "Push off!"

Lemaitre by that time had dived down into the cabin. He was thrown back by the scorching breath of the flames, but with a rapid dash he rushed forward again, stifling under the reeky, flame-stained whirl of the smoke. He came to his cabin door, fighting hard for life, dashed in, and seized his overcoat. It contained the bulk of his fortune and the photograph of his murdered wife.

In hardly more than a minute from the time he had left it he was again at the ship's side. But he was no longer Lemaitre—he was Danton. The fire had singed away every particle of his disguise. As he stood there in the bright glare, Cécile, a cable's length away, her eyes fixed upon him, saw into and knew him—knew him utterly, and the secret of his life. The gig had just pushed off. He made a wild leap and fell into the sea.

But his hand caught the gunwale, and the men managed to draw him in.

As the oars of the two boats began to ply, and they moved apart, Cécile stood up unsteadily, lifted her voice shrilly above the screaming wind, and sent forth these words upon the night:

"*Edith is the daughter of the woman you murdered!*"

And Armand Lemaitre heard them as distinctly as though a thousand spirits had shrieked them into his ear.

* * * * *

They were not many miles from the coast, and though every moment in danger of foundering, before night of the next day the cutter, with Cécile, made for a small fishing town called La Piblouette, where her crew were kindly treated and carted to Dinan, where they took train for Calais. The gig, further south with the captain and Lemaitre, was dashed upon a reef near the coast-wall, and foundered. Lemaitre, who had taken no part in the labour of rowing, was practically fresh, and saved himself by swimming. He reached the sands under cover of night. The others were drowned.

If Lemaitre had planned these details in order to wipe out his identity, he could not accomplish them more effectually. The world henceforth must believe him dead.

The first thing which Cécile did on reaching Calais was to telegraph to Jack Heathcote in Paris. Poor Jack, having no notion where she was, was dying of desolation.

"Edith," she wired, "may be at D.'s château near Avignon. I go there straight to look. You come too. Search hotels of Avignon for me. Don't know names."

While she was travelling south from one point, from another Mr. Hawke was also speeding by train to seek Danton. Hawke had had a great misfortune—one drunken night he had run through nearly £5,000 at the gaming-table, and was now nearly penniless. He had last heard from Danton from the château, and having written lately and received no reply, he was anxiously hastening after fresh supplies, half afraid that Danton had given him the slip.

He reached the château in the forenoon; Cécile towards

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evening. Jack Heathcote had not yet arrived at Avignon. Cécile, with hurrying heart, walked through the park, up the vast low terraces of the lawn to the wide-fronted old house. Was she about—at last—to see Edith? The first words which she heard from a servant in the hall drove the blood to her heart: Edith had been there—and had gone!

"Where to?" asked Cécile.

"To Italy, I believe, mad'moiselle."

"What part?"

"I do not know at all."

"And no one is here but servants?"

"Dr. Danton is here, mad'moiselle."

"Dr. Danton—*here?*"

She could not believe her ears. Pieces of the gig, in which Lemaitre was supposed by all France to have perished, had been picked up on the shore.

"He is here, mad'moiselle. He arrived early this morning on foot."

"Did he wear his own clothes?"

"His own clothes? Certainly."

"The reason I ask is because I know that he has lately suffered shipwreck. Dr. Danton—is a friend of mine, you know. When I last saw him he wore a mauve-coloured overcoat. Had he that on when he arrived?"

"I think so — yes, decidedly."

"Where is he now?"

"In his bedroom."

"Is that on this side of the house?"

"Yes. The central room of the suite opening on the corridor on the first floor, just overhead."

"Well, will you announce me? I wish to see him. But I cannot wait, tell him: if he keeps me waiting two minutes I must run away, and come back to-morrow."

"I *fear* he won't be able to see you to-day. He is very strange, unwell. But I will announce you. What name?"

"Mademoiselle Huguenin."

The servant led the way to one of the rooms of Danton's suite above, and left her. The sending of the false name in to Danton was merely a trick of Cécile's to get rid of the servant; and when the latter came back to say that Dr. Danton could see no one that day, Cécile was nowhere to be seen.

"She was, truly, in a hurry to be off!" said the servant.

But what was the matter with Lemaitre? Had he triumphed so far on every hand only to come home to die of the vengeance of the murdered dead? Had he seen a vision? Had he caught a glance into hell?

"Do not leave me, Hawke—be a good, kind friend to me, Hawke, won't you? Do not leave me, man! I will brain you if you move a step from me——"

As he chased rapidly to and fro in the room he clutched continually at Hawke's sleeve. He walked like a drunken man, with bare feet, in shirt and trousers, one brace fallen over his arm. His eyes had, in them the far-away stare of a state of trance, as though he saw some awful invisible thing continually before him. His sharp white teeth chattered.

"Edith is the daughter of the woman you murdered," he said continually over and over—"the daughter of the woman you murdered—of the woman you—— Ah, Julie! Julie! Spare me, good Julie! Do not look so——"

"Come, mate, pull yourself together!" Mr. Hawke kept saying. "Who would have thought, now, of ever seeing *you* with the D.T.'s!"

Cécile, concealed behind a huge escritoire in the drawing-room was thinking that Lemaitre, at last, beyond the tricks of chance, had achieved his ends. His past existence was buried. The crew of the cutter, she knew, had not even noticed that when he came to the ship's side a second time he was a man stripped of a disguise. The cutter's crew would be utterly unable to identify Danton with Lemaitre; and the gig's crew had perished. She was the only living witness in the world; in addition to her there was the overcoat, and there was the photograph in its pocket. And it was the coat and the photograph that she had determined at all costs, at whatever peril, to get at once—that night—if Lemaitre had not already had the cunning to destroy them.

Cécile shrank, in blanched terror, backwards.

Unfortunately, the coat and photograph were no more. Danton, in a paroxysm of his new frenzy, had, soon after his arrival that morning, consigned both to the flames. At every point, therefore, he was the master of events.

Cécile waited till every sound in the house was still. The room in which she stood was utterly dark. She reasoned that, as the coat was worn only that morning, it would now be found merely hanging on a peg, not put away anywhere. When she thought that it was about midnight she crept from her hiding-place. She had carefully noticed the position of the bedroom. Her heart beat fast, but not with fear.

Suddenly, as she stepped from behind the escritoire there was a sound—a sudden light blinded her—and before her, framed in a doorway, stood Dr. Lemaitre, looming huge in a long, white night-robe, holding a lamp in his hand.

Cécile shrank, in blanched terror, backwards. His face was toward her. Were his dreadful eyes searching her in her crouching panic? No—his eyes were closed.

He was fast asleep. But on his convulsed and distorted visage was a look of such ghastly horror that the girl for a moment could not bear the sight. She turned her face away.

With long, slow, spectre-like stalk he came straight toward her. She could have shrieked aloud in the tension of her affright. But when Lemaitre came near, instead of touching her, he moved a chair to the leaf of the escritoire, sat down, and took pen, ink and paper. All the time he was looking upward, upward, with closed eyes, as the blind look upward, with eyeballs groping for the light. A low, continuous, whimpering murmur came from his lips.

He commenced to write, with closed eyes still poring upward upon the vision he saw. Every word he wrote he repeated aloud with his lips. Cécile crept behind him, overpeeping his shoulder.

"Julie," he wrote, "take your hand from mine. I will write as you will—but take your hand from mine. God! how purple is your murdered face, Julie! And your hand—your hand, Julie—ah, take it from mine; it is colder than

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a thousand deaths. I will write as you say; I murdered you in a train between York and Scarborough in England; I cast your body into a ravine. I was seen by a man called Hawke, who was concealed beneath the seat of the carriage. I have kept him in my pay. I told your Edith, your daughter—yours, Julie—ah, that was a bitter fate, my wife! —I told her that Hawke was her father, not knowing who her mother was. I caused her to fly from her home. And she is now at the Casa Calvo, near Lake Como. I have finished. I have confessed. I am ready to die.—Armand Lemaitre."

Cécile stood behind Lemaitre, and behind Cécile stood

He was close upon her.

another crouching figure, watching her. It was Hawke. He had been sleeping on a sofa beside Lemaitre's bed, and waking up and missing him, had come out, and stood staring bewildered at the sight he saw. He soon realised, however, what was happening; Lemaitre was asleep. Who the girl was he could not guess; but he felt that she was an enemy.

Slowly he drew from the pocket of his trousers a large knife, and crept nearer. Some of the words murmured by Lemaitre he heard. That document in the hands of the police would mean ruin for himself. As Lemaitre ended, and Cécile put out her hand to take up the sheet, Hawke, with a cry, with uplifted knife—rushed forward to stab her.

Hawke's cry saved Cécile. She, too, glancing backward, uttered a scream—and dodged the blow. The paper was in her hand, and she darted for the door. Hawke was after her. Outside the darkness was not quite complete owing to the light from the open door. Cécile dashed down the great staircase. "I'll pin you like a fly, you little beast!" panted Mr. Hawke. He was close upon her; half-way down the stairs he was so near that he snatched a handful of hair from the back of her head. The rest of the stairs Cécile cleared at one leap. This was a feat impossible to heavy Hawke. Yet he rolled and plunged downward at an agile rate, bent upon nothing less than murder.

Cécile flew towards the front portal. But this was precisely the point for which she feared. If it were bolted? She knew that a moment's delay meant the loss of all. As she rushed along, her fingers struck out against a chair near-by. She seized, and placed it quickly in Hawke's way. The darkness was now utter, and the next moment Hawke was on his chest on the marble floor.

Cécile reached the front portal; to her joy it was not bolted, only locked. She drew back the spring, and by the time Hawke had come up, she banged the door in his face, and started running over the lawn.

But he was still close behind her with his uplifted knife; and now there was light from the moon. Her wind began to fail; and the longer he ran, the fresher seemed Hawke. He gained slowly on Cécile, once more he put out his hand, and grabbed at her hair. She uttered a cry of despair.

They were then running close by a hedge-row of tamarisk. The next moment Mr. Hawke was lying flat on the ground, stunned by a blow on the head from a heavy stick.

It was Jack Heathcote's stick. He had been waiting by the hedge, looking at the house. All the inns of Avignon he had searched for Cécile in vain; then had concluded that she was at the château with Edith. He had come out late to see her, had found the house closed, and had loitered a little by the hedge.

Cécile lay, gasping, on his breast.

But she held in her hand the confession of Lemaitre.

It was useless, however, as far as he was concerned. They found him in the morning near the spot where he had written it, lying on the floor, with horribly black and twisted face, dead. His heart had burst.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Battle.

Away in the desert, about this very time, a great battle was fought.

It was the 28th of August, in the afternoon. Some officers stood chatting together before a tent-door. Their skins were tanned; they had just returned from a hot day's riding under the grilling Egyptian sun.

"What is the meaning of the enemy's tactics?" asked Pendragon. "They are massed in overwhelming numbers, yet they do not move at all."

"I have a fancy that something should happen before long. Graham will soon madden them to action," answered Arthur, mopping his wet brow. "Wolseley is hardly the man to lose time when he feels that he can strike; and the troops are getting well up to the front now."

"Lord!" cried Jack Lascelles—"will that tea never be ready? My throat feels like the dustbin of Africa."

The troopers were busy unsaddling horses, and providing them with forage, while the regimental messmen were hard at work preparing refreshment for the soldiers. They had just come back to camp from a long ride over the glaring, burning desert.

The camp was pitched just south of Mahsameh, and consisted only of cavalry. The infantry division, under General Graham, was at the moment engaged in holding the enemy in check at the Kassassin Lock, on the Sweet-water Canal. Musgrave's regiment had only that morning arrived at Mahsameh from Tel-el-Mahuta; but he, Pendragon, and Lascelles had been selected for service on the staff, and were thus, for the time being, serving with the main body of cavalry, consisting of the Household Cavalry, the 7th Dragoon Guards, and a battery of the Royal Horse Artillery. These formed, for the present, the entire cavalry brigade under General Drury Lowe.

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They had advanced upon the enemy that morning, only to be ordered back again, when the Egyptian attack, with a much superior force, had necessitated a retirement from the rather exposed position held by the cavalry troops.

The heat had been almost insupportable during the hours of enforced inaction. The sun glistened down upon the arid, leafless waste of desert sand. Storms of sand and dust raised by the hot sirocco swept the desert like breaths from an open furnace.

The Egyptian tactics throughout the early hours were inexplicable: though massed in large numbers, and well supported by cavalry and artillery, they had delivered no real assault. General Graham had concluded that the cavalry brigade might be relieved from further toil that day. Canvas afforded the only possible shelter, and the cavalry towards afternoon accordingly fell back upon Mahsameh and camp.

"Yon's t' officers' mess," said Tom Wilson, standing near, with three horses' reins thrown over his arm. "A'd have some tea now, sir; A doan't think thoo'll have much time to drink it in."

"No, Tom?—and why not?" asked Arthur.

"I hear something. Hark!"

"Do you hear anything, Lascelles?"

"No, I don't think so."

"I do," said Tom.

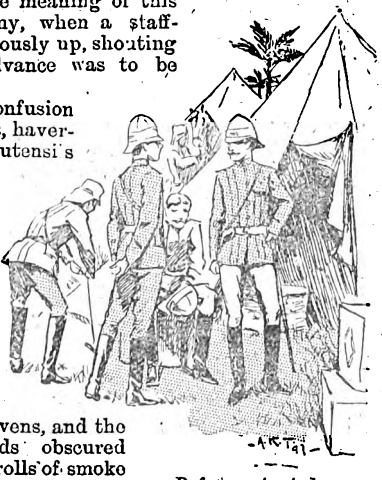
"Do you, Pendragon?"

"No—yes, I do! A faint booming."

Presently all heard it; it had deepened into a dull roar of heavy guns in the direction of Kassassin.

A determined attack was being delivered on Graham's small force, which was composed of the 46th, the 84th, some companies of marines, and a troop of mounted infantry—about 1,800 all told.

The officers returned to the mess, and were washing the dust from their throats with copious draughts of tea, discussing the probable meaning of this move by the enemy, when a staff-officer galloped furiously up, shouting that a general advance was to be made at once.



Before a tent door.

A scene of wild confusion followed. Mess-tins, haversacks, and cooking utensils were flung and bundled about in all directions, before the troopers flew to saddle their already tired horses; but in ten minutes the brigade had formed, and was proceeding to the front at a smart trot.

The blazing sun still rode in the heavens, and the hurrying sand-clouds obscured everything, though rolls of smoke and deep red jets of flame were visible through the sandy murkiness of the air, while the ear could detect the deep roar of the conflict now proceeding. After a weary ride, the cavalry took up a position on the right of the fighting line. The sun set beyond the sand hills, leaving a deep crimson glare; but the dust, which rolled in one enveloping coverlet over the scene of action, rendered any idea of what was going on impossible.

The Duke of Cornwall's Regiment and the Marine Artillery were bearing the brunt of the attack, the former regiment having thrown forward a fighting line of skirmishers in extended order. Later on the York and Lancaster, which had been held in reserve, deployed to take their share in the defence of the position. The enemy kept up a continual murderous cannonade, firing salvoes of four guns with shell and shrapnel.

General Graham sent word to General Drury Lowe that "he could do no more than hold his position and attack the enemy's skirmishers."

A shot entered the breast of Arthur.

The cavalry commander at once made his decision. Though his brigade consisted of wearied men and horses, he knew that he could depend upon them. But his plan was desperate. It was nothing less than to make a sudden dash upon the enemy's rear, against unknown odds, in the deepening darkness.

Sir Baker Russell, acting as Brigade-Major, gave the word, and the body of cavalry moved off quietly to the right, unseen by the enemy. They were soon hidden by the sand-hills, and urged their horses at a quicker pace.

Once, as Arthur turned his head, to his surprise he noticed somewhat behind him, Tom Wilson. The last light was just then fading. He called Tom to him.

"What is the meaning of this, Tom? Why are you not in camp with your regiment?"

"A'm going into action, sir."

"But that is not an answer to my question. You must not do mad things of that sort. Return at once!"

Pendragon came riding towards Arthur just then, and Tom fell back among the mass of horses nimbly treading over the dry and yielding sand. But Tom did not fall far back. He had the behests of a higher power than Arthur to obey—the behests of Cécile Delisle.

It was quite dark when the cavalry brigade dashed in one wide storm upon the enemy's rear; but the scene was soon lit up by a vast red vault of glare, like the dawning of day in Hades. A scene of frightful carnage followed.

Captain Musgrave, with his helmet shot away, with torn clothes, with snow-white hair, with sword hewing its advancing way into the thick of peril, would have seemed to anyone to be courting death. But he was simply careless of life. His whole soul was intent upon one thing only—the slaughter of as many Egyptians as two arms could kill.

He was on foot. His horse was dead. Behind him, also on foot, was Tom Wilson. For every forward step that Arthur took, Tom took one.

At last it was clear that the enemy were in flight. The indefinable instinct of victory began to be felt by the British troops. The throng of battle grew less dense.

Arthur, rushing across a small open space upon a scimitar-brandishing Bedouin, slipped in a pool of gluey blood and fell. The Egyptian made a slash at him which must inevitably have ended him. But Tom Wilson had thrown himself above him. The blade passed slanting through Tom's right shoulder and cut his lung in two. He dropped at once, and in a moment Arthur was bending over him.

"I told you, Tom—ah, my boy, you have died for me!"

Tom opened his mouth to speak, but could not. Arthur bent low down, listening. Tom tried again, and this time a rasping sound escaped his lips.

"Tell Cécile——" he said.

He stiffened and was dead.

At the same moment a shot entered the breast of Arthur and he fell upon the lifeless body of Tom Wilson.

(The end of this story will appear next week.)

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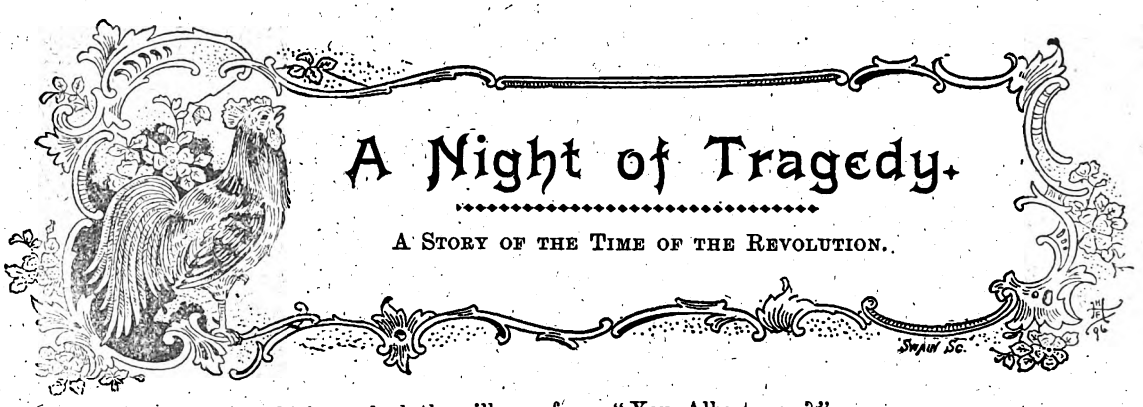

A Night of Tragedy.

A Story of the Time of the Revolution.

On the wooded heights which overlook the village of Hericourt-en-Caux, at the close of a September afternoon in 1800, a lady of youthful appearance was sitting on a stone bench beside the door of an old castle.

All was silence around her.

The only noise which broke the stillness of the evening was the murmuring of a little brook which flowed at the bottom of the valley. Twilight veiled earth and sky in haze, and slowly the night came.

The woman was seated with her hands folded over her knees, in an attitude of deep reverie. Of what did she dream? When it is known that she was twenty-eight years old, and consequently must have passed through many joys and sorrows, we may well believe that her dream was of past memories, and if we remember that the French Revolution ended in suffering, we can understand why the captivating beauty of her face was made gloomy in this time of sadness.

Suddenly she was aroused from her meditations. She heard a footstep on the gravel, and pulling herself together, not wishing to be seen so sad and dejected, in a voice bearing no trace of sorrow, she cried:

"Is that you, Clement?"

And as no one answered, she got up, went to the side whence proceeded the voice, and looked out. Alone on the deserted road, a man advanced towards her.

For a moment she stared at him.

He was tall, broad-shouldered, alert, and vigorous, clad in a brown open coat with a blue waistcoat, and wearing boots of Russian leather. His hat was of black felt. There was nothing that would attract attention in his appearance but his face, the proud and noble expression of which showed that he was of good birth, and made a striking contrast to the disorder of his soiled clothes, the want disclosed by the worn-down-at-heel appearance of his mud-bespattered boots. While his bearing and features were those of a gentleman, his attitude, on the contrary, resembled that of one of those vagabonds who, for some years past, had over-run all the roads stopped the vehicles, and molested the travellers, and who were a witness of the weakness of the police and their inability to establish security in France.

Surprised by the appearance of this unknown, the young lady asked:

"What do you want, sir? Who are you?"

But instead of answering her question, he asked another in a supplicating tone:

"Am I so changed in eight years, dear Clary, that you don't know me?"

The girl bent forward to see him better, and, agitated and trembling, she cried:

"You, Albert, you?"

"Yes, I, Albert de Saint-Frémont."

"But what are you doing here, you poor thing?"

"Seeking refuge for a few hours. I am an outlaw, a fugitive. Suspected of having taken part in a conspiracy, followed, surrounded by police-spies, I left Paris two days ago hoping to reach St. Valery and find there means of crossing to England. But the journey has been hard. I have travelled without rest and have scarcely eaten. I am worn out; I can't go any further. I remembered that this castle was on my road, where formerly I was received as a friend, a *fiance*, that the beautiful young girl who lived there with her parents had promised to wait for me, and I came, not to remind her of her promise, from which time, a long absence, and my misfortunes have released her, but to beg for a temporary shelter. If you don't consent to receive me, Clary, I am lost."

She clasped her hands with a gesture of despair. She was moved with pity, and in a broken voice she murmured:

"To receive you is, alas! impossible. I am not alone here. My husband lives with me. He has been absent for some days, but is returning this evening, and if he finds you in his house he will betray you. He is a follower of Bonaparte."

Albert drew himself up:

"Your husband! You have married in spite of your engagement?"

There was reproach in his cry.

"Do not hate or blame me," continued Clary. "If I have sacrificed you, if I have feigned to have forgotten you, it was because I was compelled to. Yes, compelled, six years ago. My father, accused of treason, was arrested, tried by a Revolutionary Tribunal, and condemned to death. Resolved to save him or perish with him, I decided to go to Paris and beg for mercy. I knew none of the powerful men of the day, but some one recommended me to go to a member of the National Convention,—Clement Javarin."

"Clement Javarin. A terrorist, a regicide!" exclaimed Albert. "You dared to go to that scoundrel!"

"I had no choice. And then, he was our fellow-countryman, the deputy from our department; we had known him in happier times. For these reasons I threw myself on his mercy. At first he repulsed me sternly: then he yielded and consented to speak for us to Robespierre. I thought he would carry out his promise. Alas, I was greatly mistaken. On my second visit he declared he would only give us his protection on condition that I consented to marry him. 'You are beautiful,' he said to me, 'you are rich, and I like you. Be my wife and

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your father will be saved.' I protested, I stormed, I entreated, all in vain; he was inexorable. My father was released, and I became the wife of Clement Javarin."

"And your father accepted this sacrifice?"

"He didn't know until it was too late to prevent it. He didn't survive it. Some months after his release he died of grief, declaring that to save him I had vowed myself to perpetual unhappiness."

"You do not love your husband?" demanded Albert, who, his anger explained away, was the picture of grief and sympathy for his friend.

"Love him!" exclaimed Clary. "How can I love him when I am his victim? No, I don't love him; I hate him. But he loves me." And after a pause she added: "You understand, Albert, I couldn't protect you here. Oh, dear—oh, dear, what can I do?"

"Don't be unhappy," he said. "If my presence frightens you so I will go. Though painful, I must bestir myself. I can't see you worried, Clary," he cried suddenly.

He staggered and would have fallen if he had not leant against the wall. As for Clary, perplexed, bewildered, and undecided, she gazed at this spirit whose sudden return filled her heart with trouble and anguish.

"He loves me."

"Did you meet anyone on your way to the castle?" she asked at length.

"No one, and I don't think anyone saw me."

"Then come. I can only save you by one way. We will try it. May Heaven protect us."

"What are you going to do?" he asked.

"Hide you until to-morrow," she replied. "Come."

She offered him her arm, and putting his trembling hand upon it he let her lead him through the gloom.

They passed together the threshold of the castle and entered the vast hall at the end of which they could see, through a half-opened door, a room lighted by two lamps, where the servants were spreading a meal. By the light which came from this apartment Albert perceived, at the end of the hall, the beginning of a large staircase. A word from Clary made him understand that he had to reach this staircase without being heard or seen by the servants in the dining-room. Following the example of his conductress, he held his breath and walked on tip-toe.

"The most difficult part is accomplished," she said in a low voice, when they had arrived safely at the foot of the stairs. Then they cautiously mounted and in a moment were at the first landing. Clary hastened along, with Albert following in her footsteps. They crossed the landing, and opening a door which faced them, Clary ushered Saint-Frémont in.

"Wait patiently till I return," she whispered. "You are safe here."

Without giving him time to answer she shut the door behind her. He heard the key being turned in the lock. He was alone and imprisoned. At first he could see nothing, but gradually his eyes became accustomed to the darkness. He was in a luxurious room. In an alcove, under light curtains, he saw a big white bed; nearer to him a toilet-table, a mirror, a bureau, an embroidery-frame, a book-case, and a harp, and in the vases on the mantel-piece flowers and grasses. Seeing these knick-knacks, this comfort, and all the luxuries of life, arranged with touches of coquetry and grace by a woman's hand, he realised that, not knowing where to hide him, Clary had not hesitated to put her own room at his disposal.

At the thought that he was in her home, surrounded by the familiar tokens of her daily life, a great tenderness came over him, and the love which all these years had not been destroyed, but increased, awoke within him, as powerful, as strong and true as in the far gone time when it was his right.

Suddenly the key was turned in the lock, the door opened and was shut again, and Clary stood before him. She carried in a napkin some food, a bottle of wine, bread and fruit.

"It is all I could get

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Patting his arm round her, he kissed her.

without being seen," she said, arranging them on the table.

"Where are we?" he ventured to ask.

"In my room," she answered. "If Javarin finds us here he will kill us both, but he won't know you are in the house: he never comes in here. You will hide yourself, so that if by chance he did come in he wouldn't see you."

While she spoke she struck a match and lighted a candle.

By this pale light they looked at each other, and started, surprised at the embarrassment shown on each face.

Clary was the first to recover herself.

"I brought you here," she said, "because it is the only room in the castle in which it is in my power to give you a safe refuge. Anywhere else would have been risky. I give it you for some hours. No one will think of looking for you here."

"But you, Clary, where will you pass the night?"

"In a neighbouring room, where I will keep watch until the morning. Before the sun rises I will help you make your escape. You will have rested, and in a short time you will be at Saint-Valery."

"It was ordained then that I was to owe my life to you," he murmured. "Ah, Clary, how can I show you my gratitude?"

"How? By remembering me."

"To what end?" he groaned.

"Why despair?" she replied. "Who knows that the future will not make amends to us for the hardships we have suffered in the past and in the present?"

"You still love me, then?"

"I love you, and will love you as long as you love me."

"Ah, Clary, Clary!"

He stood up, holding out his arms, his eyes sparkling with the joy her words had evoked. But a noise which they heard from without rooted him to the spot. It was the sound of carriage wheels, of horses' hoofs, and the jingling of bells.

"It is Javarin," exclaimed Clary. She put her finger on her lips to imply the need for prudence, and going out, she shut and locked the door behind her as she had done before.

* * * * *

An hour later, in the spacious dining-room, the old member of the Convention and his young wife had finished their meal. Javarin had come straight to the table from his carriage without waiting to change his dusty travelling attire. He had travelled post-haste from Paris, stopping only to change horses, and after a hasty meal he promised himself a good night's rest after his weary journey.

The disorder of his dress, his ruffled hair, and his untidy appearance betrayed the vulgarity of the man. On his coarse features the signs of his brutal nature were even more visible than usual. His low forehead, his fat,

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heavy chin, his big round eyes, all revealed the disposition of a despot, the grossness of his tastes and his depraved instincts.

To see him beside Clary, so delicate and so gracious, made one wonder how such a charming woman could have been persuaded to marry one so unsuited to her.

For six years, however, she had lived with him, without complaint, hiding under her reserve the repulsion she felt to the man. Yes, she hated him, and only hid her feelings that by so doing she might, one day, have the chance of wreaking her vengence upon him.

The disparity of age between them only aggravated the dissimilarity of their tastes. At forty, Clement Javarin seemed to have buried all his better feelings and only lived to accumulate money.

"What does this mean?"

Already very rich, having added to the fortune which came to him through his wife, he dreamed of more, and welcomed the rise of Bonaparte, his idol, by whose elevation he saw a means of gain to himself.

But Clary took no part in his dreams or ambitions; she lived, retired, in the castle where she was born, and dreamt other dreams, had other ambitions, and treasured another ideal. She dreamt of liberty and love.

It was into this state of affairs that Saint-Frémont had stepped. At sight of him Clary had realised that he loved her still, and she put forth all her strength to save him.

During dinner Clary had been tormented by agonising thoughts of her loved one hidden away, of catastrophes which might befall and troubles which might come, but outwardly she remained calm and sedate, hiding her anxiety bravely.

To disarm suspicion she had simulated an interest in the return and the doings of her husband, and the events in Paris. Surprised by her unusual behaviour, Javarin talked of the attempt on the life of Bonaparte, the explosion of the "infernal machine" on his route, and the means the police were taking to find those accused of being implicated in the plot.

"They are pursuing them, they are hemming them in on all sides," Javarin said. "Already many of them have been arrested, soon all will be, and then they will be punished as they deserve."

"But do they know who they all are?" asked Clary.

"Those they have arrested have given the names of the others."

Afraid of betraying herself if the name of Albert de Saint-Frémont were mentioned before her, Clary asked no more questions, but showed an indignation equal to his own against the authors of this outrage. In spite of her marriage she had remained a Royalist, so Javarin was rejoiced to hear her utter such sentiments, and speak of Bonaparte as she did.

"I am glad to hear you do justice to the saviour of our country," he said. "If all the French were as open-minded as you, Clary, the dangers which threaten us would exist only in imagination."

"I am convinced of it," she answered, wishing to please him.

"Then suit your actions to your words."

"How?"

As she asked the question she left the

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table, he rose also, and coming towards her, took her hand, and putting his arm round her, he kissed her.

Feeling contact with him odious, Clary attempted to disengage herself, longing to tell him how she hated him and looked on him with loathing and disgust. But she suddenly remembered the refugee hidden in her room, and to save him, she not only remained passive in her husband's embrace, but returned his caress. Then to cut short this scene which humiliated her so, she repeated her question.

"You ask me to make my actions agree with my words, what do you mean?"

"That since you admire Bonaparte, you should go to pay your respects to him."

"I!" she exclaimed. "You would like me to go to Paris?"

"You won't be the first or the last to give homage to the Premier Consul. In offering yours, you will strengthen my influence over him. You will never regret it. Bonaparte is the man of the future; France is already at his feet. Promise to come with me the next time I go to Paris."

"If you think my presence is necessary to your interests I will go," she answered.

"Oh, that is good," he said joyously. "Believe me, Clary, I am deeply grateful. If there is any way in which I can show you how I feel about it, tell me; I shall be delighted to obey you."

Then feigning to be greatly impressed by his offer, she said:

"Grant me this boon at some future time. I cannot use it at present, but when the necessity arises I will claim it."

At that moment a servant entered, and Javerin asked:

"What is it? Who wants me?"

"The Mayor of Hericourt desires to speak to you outside, sir," answered the servant.

"The Mayor of Hericourt. Show him in."

The Mayor entered, accompanied by an individual in black, whom Clary didn't know, and two gendarmes.

"What does this mean?" demanded Javarin in an imperious way, "these gendarmes in my house!"

"Pardon me, M. Javarin," replied the Mayor, quite overwhelmed by the bold step his duty compelled him to take, "Monsieur will explain to you," pointing to the man in black, "he is from Paris and has his orders."

More and more surprised and excited, Javarin turned to the stranger.

"Speak, sir," he said to him, "for in truth I do not understand."

"You will understand, monsieur, I am commissioned by the head of police to look for the men who wished to assassinate the Premier Consul, and I have reason to believe that one of them has taken refuge here."

"Here!" cried Javarin in a tone which showed an incredulity equalled only by his evident amazement. "What folly! If he had come into my house I should know of it. My people would have told me, I can trust them."

Clary stepped forward and said resolutely:

"And I would have seen him myself. I sat in front of the castle all the afternoon, waiting for M. Javarin, who was to return from Paris. I only left at his arrival. No one could have entered without passing me."

"You hear, sir," exclaimed Javarin. "Do you imagine anyone would beg for shelter at the house of such a notorious upholder of the Premier Consul as I am? To come to the house of Javarin would be to give oneself up."

"These brigands are bold enough for anything. Just because your house would be such an unlikely place to be searched, they would think it a safe refuge."

The force of this argument struck Javarin:

"Yes, perhaps you are right," he said.

The police officer continued:

"He left Paris two days ago for Saint-Valery-en-Caux where he meant to embark. Hearing of his intentions from one of his accomplices, I was on my way to intercept him there when, in passing through this village, I heard of a stranger having been seen. On inquiry I recognised my man. When last seen he was at the entrance of your park. I desired Monsieur the Mayor to put these gendarmes at my service, and came here, knowing that you would second me in my efforts to capture this criminal."

Javarin bowed, and in a condescending voice replied:

"You have every reason to count on my zeal. General Bonaparte hasn't a more faithful servant than I. Everyone here is under your orders. What do you think of doing?"

"First of all I will search the park, and if he isn't found there, I'm afraid we must look through the castle."

"I will guide you myself, sir," replied Javarin. And turning towards the servants assembled round the door he gave his orders:

"Light the lanterns, let the dogs loose, and conduct Monsieur to the boundaries of the park, and show him all over."

All this time Clary was enduring the utmost torture. Hope of saving the man she loved was disappearing. She knew that after the search in the park, every room in the castle would be peered into, and how could she protect him from these people? No solution of the problem occurred to her. She saw, in imagination, Albert arrested before her eyes, imprisoned, tried, and shot.

"What can I do, what can I do?"

All at once she realised that she was alone with her husband. The police officer, accompanied by the Mayor and the gendarmes, had gone out. One could hear them calling to each other in the park, and the barking of dogs. Clary saw the peril that Saint-Frémont was in. She threw a despairing look to wards Heaven, as if taking it as a witness of the dire necessity which drove her to this last step, and going up to Javerin, she said:

"Listen to me. A few minutes ago, after I had promised to go with you to Paris you offered to prove your gratitude when the occasion arose. Prove it now, on this occasion, at once."

"This occasion!" he exclaimed in surprise. "Where? How?"

Then taking another step towards him she replied in a low voice:

"The man who you are looking for is here."

"Here! In my house?" he cried. "But who let him in without consulting me? Who gave him permission to enter?"

Not answering this double question, but clasping her hands, she repeated:

"He is here, and I beseech you to help me to save him."

* * * * *

Standing before her husband in an attitude of entreaty, Clary waited anxiously for him to speak. But he kept silence. It was terrible, more awful than a burst of fury.

"Why do you not speak, Clement?" asked Clary in

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A shot was fired and Javarin fell to the floor.

a voice broken by emotion. "Will you not grant my request?"

He gave no answer, but tried to make her utter the words which would betray her.

"So," he said, "you have sheltered this man, and you do not fear the risk to me of being taken for your accomplice? You cannot be ignorant of the law of the Premier Consul, that all who conceal conspirators shall suffer the same penalty as they do. You did not hesitate, you received him and hid him: and you only confess your imprudence to me when you know that he will be found. Why are you so interested in him? Do you know him? What is his name? Explain yourself, I'm waiting."

"He is the Chevalier de Saint-Frémont."

"Saint-Frémont? You have given refuge to him? Miserable woman, do you not know that he is the tool of Georges Crydoudel? And you ask me to aid you in saving him—him, the most violent, the most dangerous of the enemies of the Premier Consul. You thought that I would grant your request?"

"I think so still," replied Clary. "I will tell you my reason, and then perhaps you will understand me. Once, before I knew you or thought that I would ever be your wife, I was engaged to M. de Saint-Frémont. We were to have been married, when he emigrated, and I have not seen him since. But the memories that he awakened in me when he came to seek shelter under our roof prevented my sending him away. I hoped he would continue his flight to-night after a rest, but he is still here."

The frankness of this confession seemed to impress Javarin.

"Why didn't you tell me this six years ago when we married?" he asked.

"Because I did not wish to humiliate you further, when you refused to defend my father unless I married you, by telling you that I could never love you as I loved another, and that I was absolutely sacrificing myself."

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"But, perhaps, as you love this man, he loves you, too."

"I believe he loves me," replied Clary simply. "As for me, what do my sentiments matter to you? Ah, Clement, if you want me to forget him, save him. Save him. I beg of you, and I will forget him, so that all my life I will remember your generosity and be grateful with all my heart"

She had never looked so beautiful, and Javarin was touched.

He came across to her and said very gently:

"With all your heart, is that true?"

She looked him straight in the face:

"I have never told a lie," she affirmed. "Save Albert, and I will have no other wish but to please you."

He strained her to his heart.

"Ah siren, what do you wish me to do?"

"You consent?" she cried.

"I must, when your tenderness, which has been withheld for so long, is the prize."

She was rejoiced, and for a moment he felt her kisses freely given. Unhappily for her, in her frenzy, she had ceased to observe him. She did not see what his eyes betrayed.

"Where have you hidden him?" he asked.

"In my room."

"Bring him here."

"Here!" she exclaimed stupified. "But they will see him."

"No, they won't, they are far away in the park. We have plenty of time to send him safely away. Only, be quick. Give him one of my cloaks, and money if he needs it. Go, quickly."

She obeyed him, and disappeared. Then Javarin ran to the door which opened on to the park. A gendarme was acting as sentinel.

"Run and tell the officer that I want him here at once. I think we have what he is looking for."

He turned to the room, his eyes shining with joy.

"We are here," the voice of Clary said suddenly. She was there, and beside her Albert de Saint-Frémont.

"Come, sir," said Javarin. "I am going to take you to the park gates and show you your road, while my wife detains the people who are looking for you."

He dragged him, amidst many expressions of gratitude, to the door. They had only gone a few steps, however, when the officer, followed by his men, came hurrying up, and at the call of Javarin ran towards them.

"Too late" murmured the latter to Saint-Frémont, pushing him back into the room they had just left.

Clary, overcome by surprise and trouble, screamed. Convinced that ill-luck only had stopped her husband from carrying out his good intentions, she came towards him. But waving her aside he turned to the police officer and pointing to Saint-Frémont, said:

"There is the man for whom you are looking."

Then she understood.

"Wretch! Wretch!" She threw these words at him in a voice stifled by sobs. But he remained unmoved, only saying in a low voice to her:

"By confessing that you loved him you condemned him."

Meanwhile the gendarmes tried to seize Saint-Frémont. He, however, set them at defiance, placing his back against the wall and covering them with his revolver. But one of them struck his arm so heavily that it fell to his side, useless, and he stood before them defenceless.

"I hope, sir," Javarin then said to the officer, "that you will inform the Premier Consul of my zeal in his service."

"Justice will be done to you," replied the man.

"Tell him," Jarvin added, "that it was owing to me that you caught your man, and owing to madame."

A cry of horror from Clary greeted this awful accusation. Drawing herself up she denied the charge, but Jaravin repeated:

"It was she who delivered him to you. She wished to prove her devotion to Bonaparte."

At these words, which Saint-Frémont heard as he was being taken from the room, he turned. His angry eyes fell on Clary, who read the reproach in them. Suspected by him! That was more than she could bear. Javarin's words had aroused his suspicions, destroyed his faith in her.

He signed to the gendarmes to continue their way. She intercepted them. She would not let her lover go before she had justified herself. She entreated him not to believe Javarin, but she saw by his coldness that he thought her guilty.

Suddenly she ceased her protestations, they were all in vain. Mad with despair her eye caught the gleam of the revolver which had been forced out of Saint-Frémont's hand. She picked it up and, overcome by a desire for vengeance on Jaravin, she approached him.

"I will prove that I am not your accomplice," she said.

A shot was fired and Javarin fell to the floor.

* * * * *

Some days after the Chevalier de Saint-Frémont was brought before a court-martial and condemned to death, and was executed at Paris, on the plain of Grenelle.

As for Clary Javarin, at first arrested for the murder of her husband, she was soon liberated. Bonaparte, after due consideration, had decided that she should not be prosecuted.

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Busaco is, perhaps, the most picturesque of Peninsula battles. In the wild nature of the ground over which it raged, the dramatic incidents which marked its progress, the furious daring of the assault, and the stern valour of the defence, it is almost without a rival.

The French had every advantage in the fight—save one. They were 65,000 strong, an army of veterans, many of them the men of Austerlitz and Marengo. Massena led; Ney was second in command: both facts being pledges of daring generalship. The English were falling sullenly back in the long retreat which ended at Torres Vedras, and the French were in exultant pursuit. Massena added that he was going to "drive the leopard into the sea," and French soldiers, it may be added, are never so dangerous as when on fire with the *élan* of success.

Wellington's army was inferior to its foe in numbers, and of mixed nationality, and it is probable that retreat had loosened the fibre of even British discipline, if not of British courage. Two days before Busaco, for example, the Light Division—the very flower of the British army—was encamped in a pine-wood which a peasant had warned them was "haunted."

During the night, without signal or visible cause, officers and men, as though suddenly smitten with frenzy, started from their sleep and dispersed in all directions. Nor could the mysterious panic be stayed until some officer, shrewder than the rest, shouted the order: "Prepare to receive cavalry," when the instinct of discipline asserted itself, the men rushed into rallying squares, and recovered from their panic.

But battle is to the British soldier a tonic, and when Wellington drew up his lines, in challenge of battle to his pursuer, on the great hill of Busaco, his red-coated soldiery were at least full of a grim satisfaction. One of the combatants has described the diverse aspects of the two hosts on the night before the fight:

"The French were all bustle and gaiety; but along the whole English line, the soldiers, in stern silence, examined their flints, cleaned their locks and barrels, and then stretched themselves on the ground to rest, each one with his firelock within his grasp."

The single advantage of the British lay in their position. Busaco is a great hill, one of the loftiest and most rugged in Portugal, eight miles in breadth, and barring the road by which Massena was moving on hither.

"There are certainly," said Wellington, "many bad roads in Portugal, but the enemy has taken decidedly the worst in the whole Kingdom."

The great ridge, with its gloomy, tree-clad heights, and cloven crest, round which the mists hung in sullen vapour, was an ideal position for defence. In its front was a valley forming a natural ditch so deep that the eye could scarcely pierce its depths. The ravine at one point was so narrow that the English and French guns waged duel across it, but on the British side the chasm was almost perpendicular.

From their aëry perch on September 28th, 1810, the English watched Massena's great host coming on. Every eminence sparkled with their bayonets, every road was crowded with their waggons; it seemed not so much the march of an army as the movement of a nation.

The vision of "grim Busaco's iron ridge," glittering with British bayonets, arrested the march of the French; but Ney, whose military glance was keen and sure, saw that the English arrangements were not yet complete: an unfilled gap, three miles wide, parted the right wing from the left, and he was eager for an immediate attack. Massena, however, was ten miles in the rear. According to Marbot, who has left a spirited account of Busaco, Massena put off the attack till the next day, and thus threw away a great opportunity.

In the gloomy depths of the ravines, however, a war of skirmishers broke out, and the muskets rang loudly through the echoing valleys, while the puffs of eddying white smoke rose through the black pines. But night fell, and the mountain heights above were crowned with the bivouac fires of a hundred thousand warriors, over whom the serene sky glittered. Presently a bitter wind broke on the mountain summits, and all through the night the soldiers shivered under its keen blast.

Massena's plan of attack was simple and daring. Ney was to climb the steep front on the English left, and assail the Light Division under Crauford; Regnier, with a *corps d'élite*, was to attack the English left, held by Picton's division. Regnier formed his attack into five columns while the stars were yet glittering coldly in the morning sky. They had first to plunge into the savage depths of the ravine, and then climb the steep slope leading to the British position.

The vigour of the attack was magnificent. General Marle, who had won fame at Austerlitz, personally led the charge. At a run the columns went down the ravine; at a run, scarcely less swift, they swept up the hostile slope. The guns smote the columns from end to end, and the attack left behind it a broad crimson trail of the dead and dying. But it never paused.

A wave of steel and fire and martial tumult, it swept

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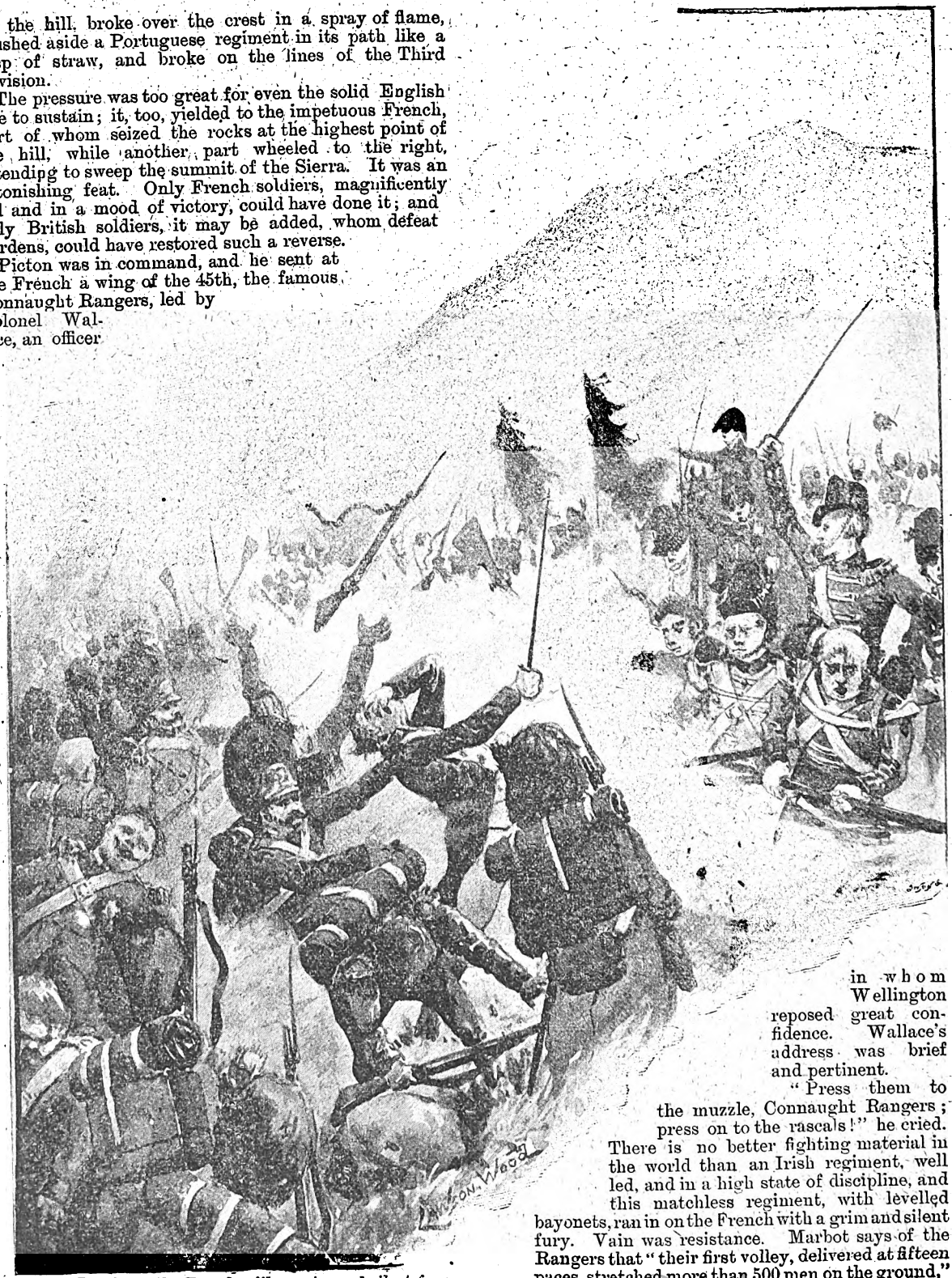
up the hill, broke over the crest in a spray of flame, brushed aside a Portuguese regiment in its path like a wisp of straw, and broke on the lines of the Third Division.

The pressure was too great for even the solid English line to sustain; it, too, yielded to the impetuous French, part of whom seized the rocks at the highest point of the hill, while another part wheeled to the right, intending to sweep the summit of the Sierra. It was an astonishing feat. Only French soldiers, magnificently led and in a mood of victory, could have done it; and only British soldiers, it may be added, whom defeat hardens, could have restored such a reverse.

Picton was in command, and he sent at the French a wing of the 45th, the famous Connaught Rangers, led by Colonel Wallace, an officer in whom Wellington reposed great confidence. Wallace's address was brief and pertinent.

"Press them to the muzzle, Connaught Rangers; press on to the rascals!" he cried. There is no better fighting material in the world than an Irish regiment, well led, and in a high state of discipline, and this matchless regiment, with levelled bayonets, ran in on the French with a grim and silent fury. Vain was resistance. Marbot says of the Rangers that "their first volley, delivered at fifteen paces, stretched more than 500 men on the ground,"



Ran in on the French with a grim and silent fury.

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and the threatening gleam of the bayonet followed fiercely on the flame of the musket.

The French were borne, shouting, struggling, and fighting desperately, over the crest and down the steep slope to the ravine below. In a whirlwind of dust and fire and clamour went the whole body of furious soldiery into the valley, leaving a broad tract of broken arms and dying men.

According to the regimental records of the 88th, "twenty minutes sufficed to teach the heroes of Marengo and Austerlitz that they must yield to the Rangers of Connaught!" As the breathless Rangers re-formed triumphantly on the ridge, Wellington galloped up and declared he had never witnessed a more gallant charge.

But a wing of Regnier's attack had formed at right angles across the ridge. It was pressing forward with stern resolution; it swept before it the light companies of the 74th and 88th Regiments, and unless this attack could be arrested the position and the battle were lost.

Picton rallied his lines within *sixty yards* of the French muskets, a feat not the least marvellous in a marvellous fight, and then sent them furiously at the exulting French, who held a strong position amongst the rocks

It is always difficult to disentangle the confusion which marks a great fight. Napier says that it was Cameron who formed line with the 38th under a violent fire, and, without returning shot, ran in upon the French grenadiers with the bayonets and hurled them triumphantly over the crest

Picton, on the other hand, declares that it was the light companies of the 74th and the 88th under Major Smith, an officer of great daring—who fell in the moment of victory—that flung the last down over the cliff. Who can decide when such experts—and actors in the actual scene—differ?

The result, however, as seen from the French side, is clear. "The French," Marbot records, "found themselves driven in a heap down the deep descent, up which they had climbed, and the English lines followed them half way down, firing murderous volleys.

"At this point we lost a general, two colonels, 80 officers, and 700 or 800 men.

"The English," he adds, in explanation of this dreadful loss of life, "were the best marksmen in Europe, the only troops who were perfectly practised in the use of small arms, whence their firing was far more accurate than that of any other infantry."

A gleam of humour at this point crosses the grim visage of battle. Picton, on lying down in his bivouac the night before the battle, had adorned his head with a picturesque and highly-coloured nightcap. The sudden attack of the French woke him, he clapped on cloak and cocked hat, and rode to the fighting line, when he personally led the attack which flung the last of Regnier's troops down the slope.

At the moment of the charge he took off his cocked hat to wave the troops onward; this revealed the domestic head-dress he unconsciously wore, and the astonished soldiers beheld their general enflamed with war-like fury gesticulating martially in a night cap! A great shout of laughter went up from the men, as they stopped for a moment to realise the spectacle; then with a tempest of mingled laughter and cheers, they flung themselves on the enemy.

Meanwhile Ney had formed his attack on the English left, held by Crauford and the famous Light Division. Marbot praises the characteristic tactics of the British in such fights.

"After having, as we do," he says, "garnished their front with skirmishers, they post their principal forces out of sight, holding them all the time sufficiently near to the key of the position to be able to attack the enemy the instant they reach it; and this attack, made unexpectedly on assailants who had lost heavily, and think the victory already theirs, succeeds almost invariably. We had," he adds, "a melancholy experience of this art at Busaco."

Crauford, a soldier of fine skill, made exactly such a disposition of his men. Some rocks at the edge of the ravine formed natural embrasures for the English guns under Ross; below them the Rifles were flung out as skirmishers; behind them the German Infantry were the only visible troops. But in a fold of the hill, unseen, Crauford held the 43rd and 52nd Regiments drawn up in line.

Ney's attack, as might be expected, was sudden and furious.

The English, in the grey dawn, looking down the ravine, saw three huge masses start from the French lines and swarm up the slope. To climb an ascent so steep, vexed by skirmishers on either flank, and scourged by the guns which flashed from the summit, was a great and most daring feat—yet the French did it. Busaco indeed, is memorable as showing the French fighting quality at its highest point.

General Simon led Loison's attack right up to the mouths of the English guns, and in the dreadful charge, its order was never disturbed, nor its speed arrested.

"Ross's guns," says Napier, "were worked with incredible quickness, yet their range was palpably contracted every round; the enemy's shot came singing up in a sharper key; the English skirmishers, breathless and begrimed with powder, rushed over the edge of the ascent; the artillery drew back"—and over the edge of the hill came the bear-skins and the gleaming bayonets of the French!

General Simon led the attack so fiercely home that he was the first to leap across the English entrenchments, when an infantry soldier, lingering stubbornly after his comrades had fallen back, shot him point-blank through the face. The unfortunate general, when the fight was over, was found lying in the redoubt, amongst the dying and the dead, with scarcely a feature left. He recovered, was sent as a prisoner to England, and was afterwards exchanged, but his horrible wound made it impossible for him to serve again.

Crauford had been watching meanwhile with grim coolness the onward rush of the French. They came storming and exultant, a wave of martial figures, edged with a spray of fire, and a tossing fringe of bayonets, over the summit of the hill; when suddenly Crauford, in a shrill tone, called on his reserves to attack.

In an instant there rose, as if out of the ground, before the eyes of the astonished French, the serried lines of the 45th and 52nd; and what a moment before was empty space was now filled with the frowning visage of battle.

The British lines broke into one stern and deep-toned shout, and 1,800 bayonets, in one long line of gleaming points, came swiftly down upon the French. To stand against that moving hedge of deadly and level steel was impossible; yet each man in the leading section of the French raised his musket and fired, and two officers and ten soldiers fell before them. Not a Frenchman had missed his mark! They could do no more!

"The head of their column," to quote Napier, "was violently thrown back upon the rear, both flanks were

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overlapped at the same moment by the English wings, and three terrible discharges at five yards' distance shattered the wavering mass.

Before those darting points of flame the pride of the French shrivelled. Shining victory was converted, in almost the passage of an instant, into crushing defeat; shattered mass, with ranks broken, and colours abandoned and discipline forgotten, the French were swept into the depths of the ravine out of which they had climbed.

One of the dramatic episodes of the fight at this juncture is that of Captain Jones—known in his regiment as "Jack Jones," of the 52nd. Jones was a fiery Welshman, and led his company in the rush on General Simon's column. The French were desperately trying to deploy, a *chef-de-bataillon* giving the necessary orders with great vehemence. Jones ran ahead of his charging men, outstripping them by speed of foot, challenged the French officer with a warlike gesture to single combat, and slew him with one fierce thrust before his own troops, and the 52nd, as they came on at the run, saw the duel and its result, were lifted by it to a mood of victory, and raised a sudden shout of exultation, which broke the French as by a blast of musketry fire!

For hours the battle spluttered and smouldered amongst the skirmishers in the ravines, and some gallant episodes followed. Towards evening, for example, a French company, with signal audacity, and apparently on its own private impulse, seized a cluster of houses only half a musket shot from the Light Division, and held it while Crauford scourged them with the fire of twelve guns. They were only turned out at the point of the bayonet by the 43rd. But the battle was practically over, and the British had beaten, by sheer hard fighting, the best troops and the best marshals of France.

In the fierceness of actual fighting, Busaco has never been surpassed, and seldom did the wounded and dying lie thicker on a battle-field than where the hostile lines struggled together on that fatal September 27th. The *mêlée* at some points was too close for even the bayonet to be used, and the men fought with fists or with the butt end of their muskets.

From the rush which swept Regnier's men down the slope, the Connaught Rangers came back with faces and hands and weapons literally splashed red with blood. The firing was so fierce that Wellington, with his whole staff, dismounted. Napier, however—one of the famous fighting trio of that name, and who afterwards conquered Scinde—fiercely refused to dismount, or even cover his red uniform with a cloak.

"This is the uniform of my regiment," he said, "and in it I will show, or fall this day." He had scarcely uttered the words when a bullet smashed through his face, and shattered his jaw to pieces. As he was carried past Lord Wellington he waved his hand and whispered through his torn mouth: "I could not die at a better moment!"

Of such stuff were the men who fought under Wellington in the Peninsula!

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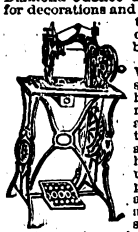

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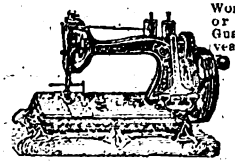

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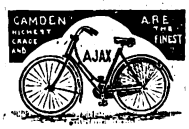

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Answers to Correspondents.

Come, now, the Fresh Air Fund does not seem to be exciting your interest and compassion this year as it has done in the past. How is this? Have you already subscribed to the Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund, or to the Indian Famine Fund, or to one of the other many excellent schemes for mitigating the sufferings of humanity? If so, you probably do not feel called upon to make a further donation. But, is not the F.A.F. an old friend of yours? Should you neglect it? There are over a hundred thousand children anxiously waiting, with tear-stained faces, for your little contribution. A few pence will be as appreciated as an equal number of sovereigns, for the spirit which prompts the giver in either case is the same. If you have already handed out all the spare cash you have to the Jubilee Celebration charities, send us your old clothes, your worn-out mail-carts, your last year's dresses, and they will be sold and the proceeds put towards the Fresh Air Fund in your name. All contributions will be acknowledged in *Pearson's Weekly*. Really, now, can't you find an old shilling to send?

Rustic, who recently came for the first time to London, was impressed with the number of people that stream into the City during the early part of the day. He wants to know how many enter London daily? ————According to the most reliable statistics, about 800,000.

G. B.—The reason March winds are injurious to people in a delicate state of health, is because they are generally very cold, raw, and keen. Their dryness also is very unfavourable to people whose lungs and throat are naturally sensitive.

G. H.—Yes, oysters are quite the most nourishing. A quart of oysters contains, on an average, the same quantity of nutritive substance as a quart of milk, a pound of very lean beef, a pound and a half of codfish, or two-thirds of a pound of bread.

P. M. wishes to know the one building which represents the greatest amount of human labour.————The Great Pyramid of Ghizah. There were about 100,000 men at work on it for over fifty years.

S. T.—The Italian army. The privates are allowed to sleep two hours in the middle of the day.

C. K.—Only one lady has ever been made a Freemason, and that was Miss St. Leger, daughter of Lord Doneraile, in about the year 1739.

R. W. H.—Women were not allowed to act upon the stage in England before the Restoration of Charles II. Previous to that time all women's parts were taken by men dressed as women.

T. L. H.—"Scotland Yard" is so-called because at one time a palace stood on the same site, which was built for the reception of the Scottish kings when visiting England.

S. B.—You can still see the "Doomsday Book" if you wish. It is kept under a glass case in the Record Office, Fetter Lane, London, E.C.

Rose.—The custom of wearing a wedding-ring came from the Romans. The reason they are placed upon the third finger of the left hand is because it is supposed to press a vein in that finger which communicates directly with the heart.

G. B.—The only reason I can give you for the formation of icebergs is that the intense cold causes the water to freeze. At any rate, I have never heard of any other version.

Dairymaid. — A good cow should yield six pounds of butter a week in the summer, and three in the winter.

S. G. D.—Birds have a keener vision than any other animal. The "kestrel" possesses such wonderful powers of sight that it is able to see a mouse when it is itself at such a height in the air that it is invisible to the naked eye.

H. M. B.—Tea was introduced into England by the Dutch, in 1160. It was considered a great luxury in those days, as much as £10 the pound being sometimes paid for it.

Miss E. R.—The reason fair people become so much more easily freckled than their darker complexioned sisters is because of the transparency of the outer cuticle of their skin, which more plainly reveals the freckles left by the sun.

J. J.—No. The sea is not at the same temperature summer and winter.

T. S. B.—A man breathes eighteen times a minute on an average, this is not taking into consideration the rapidity with which a man breathes when running up hill to the station in order to catch his train in the morning.

A. F. C.—Æsop's Fables are said to have been written about 600 years before Christ.

G. C. C.—The entire coast line of the globe measures 136,000 miles.

Captain.—I should recommend the use of nerve stimulants, such as a small cupful of very strong coffee to be taken about two hours before sailing, to prevent or mitigate sea-sickness. Many persons find comfort and relief lying down in their berths with a hot-water bottle to their feet, by which means sleep may be obtained, and with it a temporary abatement of the distressing giddiness and nausea.

R. E. H.—Only those members whose names appear in the lists of "Commons" are included in the Picture Puzzles.

H. T.—The world's navies employ about 1,700,000 men.

T. L.—It is quite right of you to point out what you consider mistakes, but at the same time you should be careful in the assertions you make. The present Earl of Darnley did not succeed to the title until 1896; the Earl of Dartney was not born until 1866, while Baron Henley succeeded to the title in 1841.

H. L.—The name of the heliotrope comes from two Greek words signifying "twined towards the sun." It has long been a belief that the flower of the heliotrope turns with the advancing day to face the sun. In some species of this plant this curious phenomenon does really occur.

A. D. S., while on a recent visit to Morocco, was very much struck with the number of blind men he saw about the streets of Fez, the capital of that country, and he writes to ask me if there is any reason assigned for this peculiarity.————The Moors are inveterate coffee drinkers. As you no doubt observed, many of the merchants sit in their bazaars drinking coffee continuously throughout the day. This pernicious habit is very injurious to the eyesight, and frequently completely destroys it at a comparatively early age, when persistently indulged in.

D. W.—In proportion to its size, Belgium is the most densely-populated country in the world.

S. Smith.—Your own surname is the commonest in England, then comes Jones, followed closely by Williams.

A tooth-brush, the handle of which is bent in such a manner as to enable the whole surface of the teeth to be got at, and the bristles of which have serrated edges, has been patented by Mr. C. M. Holloway, of Ferndale, Barrington Road, Crouch End. It is sold for 1s. 6d., post free.

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

NO. 435. FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 1ST, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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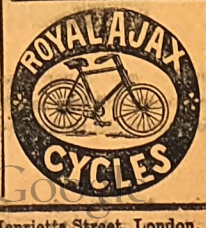

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 435.] For the Week ending May 1st, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

A BROKEN MASK

BY JOAN BARRETT.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARRIVAL OF A STRANGER.

EVERY pot and pan in the old-fashioned kitchen shone with great brilliancy, and some of them that had the good fortune to be suspended opposite the turned-up leaf of the oak table might have been pardoned if they imagined that their lustre being reflected in the well-polished board added to the beauty of the shining table.

Aunt Shales, the housekeeper at Honey-pots Farm, had been hard at work all the October morning, scouring and rubbing and cleaning, until Emily, her one much-tried assistant, had given unmistakable signs of rebellion which Aunt Shales had promptly resented.

"Some gals be born muddlers, and some be born fools," said Aunt Shales to her nephew's wife, a pale, dark-haired, wiry-looking woman, who had dropped in to take tea with her husband's relative. "In my 'pinion that Em'ly's a sight worse than either. She's got no more idea of rubbin' up a stick of furniture than that duck a-hangin' up over your head. To see her making believe that she's polishin' sets me all on a twitter. She rubs for all the world as though she thinks she's a-dustin' a peach. I'd rather be married forty times over—and *you* knows what married life is, Polly, and how tryin' the best of men can be when the fit takes 'em, which was too often the case with Shales—than have the knockin' under and the makin' of a good servant girl out of one flighty headed gal. Not as Em'ly'll ever be wuth the salt she eats, and many's the time I've told her so. But gels be like thrashin' machines—whatever you puts in 'em, out it all goes."

"I've got no cause to complain of my husband," said Polly, with a compression of her thin, thread-like lips. "*He* never goes about makin' disturbances in fam'lies and inventin' the Lord knows what, like some people as I knows of."

Aunt Shales opened the tea-pot lid and gently stirred its steaming contents with a spoon as she remarked suavely, but with an uneasy light in her small, twinkling eyes: "Oh, don't mention *her*, Polly. The very name of our John's 'Riar makes me feel like never openin' my Bible again. The ructions she've caused! And, as I says, I can't for the life of me see why. Oh, she's a bitter weed is John's 'Riar!"

"I don't say as John's 'Riar is free from blame," said Polly, going red in the face. "But there's them as is older than her and a deal wuss." She took a cup of tea from the tray and began to stir it violently. "I was in at Aunt Jane's last night," she added, fixing her eye accusingly upon her relative's fat, rosy face, "an' I heard from her as you'd bin tellin' as I said that Aunt Jane had never paid Farmer Strange for the pig she had of him come Christmas twelvemonth!"

Aunt Shales wrinkled her plump forehead

"*Oh, don't mention* her, *Polly.*"

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Aunt Shales opened the door.

in strong amazement, and looked the very personification of injured innocence.

"Lawks, Poll," said she. "Didn't you tell me so? Well I never; I could have sworn you did, my dear," as Polly burst out into an excited and indignant negative. "But, of course, if you says as you didn't, why you didn't, and that's enough. Oh, I never argifys about nothing, I don't."

"It's a pity as your mem'ry's such a short 'un," said Polly with a snort. "I'm sure that I was never so took in all my life as when Aunt Jane asked me what I meant by setting about Thorneydene as she was no better than a thief. You could have knocked me down with a feather! As if I, with six children and the baby down with the measles, have got any time for gossiping about Aunt Jane's affairs!"

"Course you ain't! If Jane wasn't an old maid, and had been blessed with a better head-piece—not as it's her fault, poor thing, that she's never married—and ain't much better than a fool, as you may say—she'd know that! But there, some folks they won't reason, and you couldn't knock sense into 'em, not if you tried with a sledge-hammer. So it wasn't you as told me about her owin' Farmer Strange for her pig!" exclaimed Aunt Shales in tones of dubious surprise and soft wonderment. She rested her double chin in one small, fat hand and stared with a fixed expression at a plate of steaming tea-cake. "Now I wonders who it was. I knows somebody told me on the very day that Em'ly broke one of the best chiney plates. It must have been 'Lizer's Nell, if you says as it wasn't you, Poll." She refused to hear the words of dissent that began to bubble from the younger woman's lips, and continued with the same placid serenity. "I knows I saw her the same afternoon 'cause she warned me against buying any chiney cement from Roger's shop. 'Tain't a bit of good,' she says. Nell's a rare 'un for getting a stack of wheat out of a single straw, she is."

"I dunno who told you, but I do know as I didn't, Aunt Shales," cried Polly very loudly this time, and growing redder in the visage and more fiery in the eyes. "I shouldn't wonder if Aunt Jane goes back from her word now, and don't give my poor little Lottie the corals she promised her for a Christmas box! I do wish as some people 'd stick more to the truth, and not go spreadin' things about folks as don't even know the meanin' of backbitin' and slanderin'."

"So do I, Poll," said Aunt Shales with great feeling. "The mischief as them people can do ain't to be believed, is it? Oh, you may make up your mind to losing them corals. Jane told me she shouldn't spend a brass farthing on any of your children after hearin' that. 'Tain't to be expected, is it now? Lawks, Poll, we should feel the same if we was in her shoes, shouldn't we——"

Polly deposited her cup with a vicious rattle upon the tray, and glared wrathfully at the smiling amiable face opposite her.

"Considerin' as I never said it——" she began at the top of her voice, when Aunt Shales rose, winked mysteriously, and proceeded to unlock a cupboard by the side of the fireplace.

"You ain't got no rum in your tea," she said. "A drop in the winter time is good for spasms——"

"I ain't got no spasms. What I was sayin' was that considerin'——"

"It keeps out the cold," said Aunt Shales sweetly, as she returned with a bottle and placed it by Polly's elbow. "As you was sayin'—Oh, I shall tell Jane as you says you didn't tell me, oh, I shall, Poll. Right's right all the world over, 'cept when it's wrong, as I says. An' seeing as we ain't here for long, and allays going about with one leg in the grave, as you may say, why, let's be happy while we can. Oh, I can't abide them backbitin' folks—help yourself, now, do, Poll. 'Tain't often as I takes a drop of anything, as you knows, but seein' as you've come to tea, and that Em'ly's bin worritin of me so——" She stretched out her hand for the bottle, and poured a very small quantity of rum into her tea-cup, eyeing the contents of Polly's cup, and then measuring the bottle with her eyes before replacing it upon the table.

"It don't do no good to say what you thinks, do it? An' to hear some folks talk, *an'* 'specially our 'Lizer's Nell, you'd think as she could have made the world better than God A'mighty and wanted no rest on the seventh day, too. I do declare they puts me out of all patience. 'Taint bad rum, is it, Poll? Brings out the flavour of the tea, don't it? Oh, I shan't buy no more tea at Rogers'. The last was half powder, and Mr. John did go on. I s'pose you've heard as he'll soon be in the Bankrupt Court?"

"What, Mr. Gillway!" cried Polly, quite forgetting her own grievance in the excitement caused by this news.

"*Mr. John!* I dunno nothin' about *him*. He's like the cobblers' wax—too close to squeeze much out of. No, I means Rogers. Oh, it's gospel truth, Poll."

"You don't say so, Aunt Shales! And him seemin' so prosperous, too——"

Polly broke off abruptly. Someone had given a vigorous knock upon the kitchen door. "Em'ly was upstairs cleanin' herself," as Aunt Shales expressed it. The two women exchanged glances in the almost darkened room.

"Light the lamp, Poll, while I sees who it is," whispered Aunt Shales, rising and going to the door.

Visitors, familiar visitors, at Honey-pots never knocked. They entered boldly without superfluous ceremony.

Aunt Shales opened the door. In the grey wintry light she saw a short, thin man, with a clean-cut face, and eyes of remarkable keenness. Even in the murkiness of the winter evening they arrested Aunt Shales' attention. The stranger was well dressed in black and wore gloves.

"I beg your pardon," he said, in a low, clear voice, "for disturbing you, but I am told you have rooms to let——"

"Rooms to let here!" interrupted Aunt Shales, peering up at the stranger in surprise and some resentment. "Oh, lawks no, sir. Mr. Gillway, my master, ain't likely to be

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wishin' to let no rooms. Who in the world could have sent you here?"

"I was inquiring for apartments in the village," said the stranger in his clear, penetrating voice, "and I was distinctly told that I should obtain lodgings at the big farm upon the high road to Leigh. Perhaps there is another farm close at hand——"

"Farmer Strange can't be goin' to take in lodgers, can he, Polly?" called Aunt Shales, turning her head towards the tea-table. "Greyhouse Farm is close agin our own. You can see its roof from the meadow yonder, an' our fields joins further on. Maybe it *is* at Gray-House after all, though it 'ud be a rare blow to Miss Kitty's pride if the farm's turned into a lodgin' house!" she added, turning now to the stranger.

He had advanced over the threshold of the kitchen with a soft velvety tread that bore some resemblance to the cautious movements of a cat, and his keen eyes roved round the apartment with an eager curiosity that did not escape the watchful Polly.

"What a delightful kitchen!" he exclaimed, and Aunt Shales beamed with gratified pride at the stranger's evident admiration of her copper vessels, the long snowy deal table, the equally spotless dresser, with its brave array of pink and white china, and the best oak table, with its turned-up leaf. "How very much I regret having disturbed you, and how sorry I am that it is out of your power to acccommodate me. You feel quite sure that your employer would not let me have a couple of rooms?"

"Oh, there ain't no doubt about *that!*" cried Aunt Shales, jerking her grey head. "He ain't fond enough of strangers to take 'em under his roof, nor bad enough off, I hopes, though, to be sure, I don't know nothin' about his affairs, seein' he's not one to make free with you, nor tell you nothin' himself, as some men will. Now, the Stranges, they be poor, for all as Mrs. Caffyn's the gals' aunt, an' their mother was the youngest daughter of Squire Hawthorn, an' came out of as good a house as you'll find in all Sussex."

"Your employer is not at home?"

"He's gone to Leigh to buy some sheep. But lawks, if he was here, sir, you couldn't get no furrader than I can send you. Mr. Gillway ain't the one to let rooms in his house. Little as I knows about him, I knows that much."

"Gillway! Gillway!" repeated the stranger. "What an odd coincidence that the name of your employer should also be the name of a very old and valued friend of mine. He had a son, a fine strapping young fellow—but of course your employer would not be a connection of that family, no, no, the idea is ridiculous!"

"'Tain't such a common name," said Aunt Shales, "an' Mr. Gillway's mighty close about hisself and fam'ly. He's a stranger in these parts, too. He got the farm through an advertisement in the *West Sussex Gazette* just six weeks ago. He's a young man, sir; Christian name, John."

"The name of my friend's boy! And what a strange circumstance—I happen to have a photograph of the lad in my card-case—I was greatly attached to them all, being a widower with no children of my own. Might I ask you, my dear madam, to look at the portrait and tell me if it in any way resembles your employer? A thousand thanks. What a very extraordinary affair."

Aunt Shales carried the portrait to the light of the lamp, adjusted her tortoise-shell spectacles upon her little turned-up nose, and peered carefully at the photograph of a thin young face with a firm, determined mouth, and big prominent chin.

The dark eyes bore a stern expression, strange to encounter in so youthful a face. It was the look of a lad who had discovered from the very outset that life was a hard battle in which he had determined to fight to the last, and to fight crookedly rather than not at all.

"Oh, it's him right enough. Just you squint at it, too, Poll. He looks a sight older now, sir, and more gloomy-like. Not as he seems over cheerful in the picture, do he? An' so he's the son of an old friend of yours, is he, sir? To what part might he belong, if I may make so bold as to ask, sir?"

"He was born in Devonshire," answered the stranger curtly, reading the great curiosity in Aunt Shales' face. He took the photograph from Polly's fingers, and replaced it in his breast pocket. "I will not keep you longer from your tea——"

"Oh, lawks, sir, sure-*ly* you'll stop an' take a cup, and wait till Mr. John comes home!" cried Aunt Shales. "I'm sure as he'll be glad to see a friend of his father's, unsociable and keep-hisself-to-hisself as he is——"

"I think not," said the stranger after a little hesitation. "Indeed, I almost think that it would be better if you and your friend will have the kindness not to mention my visit to Mr. Gillway," he coughed behind his hand, as he edged his

"Oh, it's him right enough."

way towards the door, followed by Aunt Shales. "You'll understand," he said very low, "painful family rupture; no desire to awaken old memories. Thank you, my good lady. I hope you will maintain silence——"

"Oh, if you'd rather as I don't say nothin', why of course I shan't," said Aunt Shales with mingled curiosity and disappointment in her round face. "What a nuisance them fam'ly ructions be, to be sure," she added, with a feeling sigh. "Causes a sight of unpleasantness, don't they, sir? Might it have been with Mr. John as you happened to have your little ——"

"Exactly. Thank you very much. I am glad that I came here instead of going to the other farm. I shall not make further inquiries for rooms now. Good-evening to you."

Aunt Shales waited in the open doorway until the

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stranger's form was lost in the gloom. As she closed the door with a resounding bang, she said to Polly:

"Lawks, Poll, what queer things do happen in this world! An' Mr. Gillway tellin' me as sharp as you please when I asked him the question as he'd no fam'ly! Not as I believed him, as you knows, for many's the time as I've remarked to you that a man don't lock up drawers in his writin' table for nothin'; nor yet turn the key in the locks of them two big boxes as he's got in his room. I've never seen them opened but once since here I've been, and then 'twas only when I happened to go into his room not knowin' as he was there, an' there he was kneelin' before one of 'em, an' he jumped up an' slammed down the lid as if he'd sin sudden death jumpin' out on him, instead of me comin' in at the door as innocent as any lamb unborn! Oh, I've allays said, and shall say to my dying day, as there's something queer about Mr. Gillway. Why, he never gets a letter like other Christian-folk, an' then the way as he looks through and through you, an' shets hisself up, an' stays that quiet as many's the time I've said to myself as I might jest as well have a funeral in the house. As I says, it does you good to open your lips. It's like taking in a bit of nourishin' food, ain't it, Poll? An' as for settin' as mum as that Chiney boy on the mantel-shelf, why I couldn't, not if you was to pay me in golden guineas."

"I can't say as I liked the look of *him*," observed Polly reflectively and with a nod of her head in the direction of the door. "He moves about too quiet, and he's too soft spoken to please me. I can't abide them buttery-mouthed folk."

"No more can't I, Poll," declared Aunt Shales. "He *was* quiet, now I comes to think about it. An' he didn't seem as though he wanted to let too much out of the bag, did he? I wonders who he was? Lawks, I might have asked him his name, mightn't I?"

The kitchen door opened with startling abruptness, and a young man strode hurriedly into the room. He turned a dark face lit by flaming, passion-filled eyes towards the door which he had left open. "Will you go?" he shouted, and as Aunt Shales and Polly rose from their seats in alarmed surprise, he stretched out one strong, vigorous arm and wrenched a hunting whip from its nail. "I'm trying to earn an honest living, and by Heaven, no words, no threats, that you can utter shall turn me back from my purpose!"

Striding towards the door he cracked the whip in the air. Aunt Shales heard the sound of hurrying footsteps that died away upon the bricked court-yard which stretched in front of the kitchen.

John Gillway listened for a moment with an ugly look upon his strong, masterful features. Then, slamming the door, he tossed the whip with a loathing gesture upon the floor.

"Bring my tea in the gun-room; there is a fire there, I hope," and, as Aunt Shales nodded, he added in the same curt tone of exasperation, "put a plate of meat on the tray; I shall want nothing more to-night."

Without deigning to notice his housekeeper's visitor, who had dropped a couple of hasty courtesies during his speech to Aunt Shales, he strode from the room.

Polly waited until she felt sure that he was not within hearing. Bending over the table, where Aunt Shales was now arranging a small tray, she whispered:

"Did you ever! Do you think he was talking to *that* man, Aunt Shales?"

Aunt Shales pursed up her lips and cut with great carefulness a very delicate slice of ham, which she placed between two pieces of well-buttered bread.

"It's best not to think at all, Poll," said she. "As I says, still waters runs deep, an' if you lets nothin' out, why nobody short of an Ananias an' a Sapphiry rolled into one can up an' say as you did. Mark my words, Poll, the least one says is the soonest mended, an', as I've said and shall say times without number, I *do* like them as can keep a quiet tongue in their heads."

In the little gun-room, John Gillway stood before the almost dead fire, and stared with sombre eyes into the grey and white ashes. The ferocious expression in his dark face was not pleasant to see.

"I might have known that I should be tracked down and unearthed," he muttered between his set teeth. "I've expected it; the marvel is that I have hidden myself from him for so long."

CHAPTER II.

The Loves of Kitty Strange and John Gillway.

Greyhouse Farm stood upon the edge of the broad common. It was an old-fashioned, oddly-built dwelling, very plain and homely, but exceedingly comfortable for those who did not object to low ceilings and narrow, short doorways in their bedrooms. It had a commodious garden, with a broad gravel path flanked upon each side by mahonia bushes, roses and arbutus, and beneath the sitting-room windows there was a pretty lawn dotted with funnily-shaped flower beds. The remainder of the garden was occupied with vegetables and fruit trees, which the broad hedges of mahonia and shrubs did their utmost to screen from visitors' eyes. Upon the left-hand side of the garden was the farmyard, with its long row of pig-styes, its cow-house and stables, and at the back of the house lay a rick-yard where fowls and ducks and geese and wobbling, self-important turkeys lived their short lives.

There were a good many buildings in the rick-yard. It had a boiler-house, where the dead pigs were scalded before passing into the hands of the butcher for cutting up; a long wood-house, where Diana and Kitty Strange had kept their rabbits when they were children; a meal-house, stacked with sacks of oil-cakes and bins of meal; a chaff-house, where the farm lads cut up juicy mangel-wurzel and yellow swedes for the cows; and a big new cart-shed that Farmer Strange had built expressly to accommodate the smart little dog-cart which Mrs. Caffyn, his rich sister-in-law, had given to Kitty upon the girl's last birthday.

Once upon a time, long, long before George Strange was born, a part of this large yard had been an orchard. A few fruit trees still remained, rising here and there between the fat, bloated ricks like grey-headed survivors upon a battle-field. The front of the house was certainly pretty. It had a rose-covered porch, with a quaint little seat upon each side, and the flowers climbed right up to the girls' bedroom window to nod "Good-morning" and "Good-night" to them.

Kitty Strange was very proud of the fact that there were three large sitting-rooms in the old farm house. She called them "dining-room," "drawing-room," and "morning-room," but her father always spoke of them as "parlours," although in the early days of his marriage to his pretty, weak, repining little wife he had tried hard to adopt her style of vocabulary.

Mrs. Strange, as Aunt Shales had stated, came from one of the oldest and proudest families in Sussex. She had fallen in love with handsome, stalwart George Strange in the hunting field, where a man's fine figure and manliness are shown to the best advantage.

George Strange adored Miss Hawthorne for a long while in secret, until one day the girl was thrown in the field and his love betrayed itself in his passionate anxiety for her safety. He knew full well the utter folly of asking haughty old Squire Hawthorne for the hand of his prettiest daughter, and, finding that Dorothy was willing to run away with him, he sold his little estate, eloped with her, and after their marriage brought her to Greyhouse.

Mrs. Strange was of too romantic a temperament to find happiness in the humble position of a not very prosperous farmer's wife. She often cried over the "mistake" that she had made, and poor remorseful George Strange blamed himself even more severely than did his wife for inducing her to consent to an elopement. Her family disowned her.

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She wrote many times to her father and mother pleading for forgiveness; it was never granted, and it was not until she was dying that her sister, Mrs. Caffyn, the widow of a wealthy Irish barrister, condescended to visit her. Mrs. Caffyn was shocked to find that Dorothy was dying.

In her remorse she offered eagerly to do all that she could for the two tiny twin girls who were soon to be motherless. Mrs. Strange begged her to adopt them; to take them far away from the farm, and, above all, to prevent their marrying men in their father's position.

Mrs. Caffyn was childless. If she was worldly, she was good-hearted, and she fell impulsively in love with the two pretty children. She never suspected that Farmer Strange would raise any obstacle to her adopting them. But when Dorothy had been lain to her long rest in the elm-shaded churchyard, and the children were still piteously asking: "When will Mummy come back?" Good Mrs. Caffyn found upon making her proposal that the farmer was most unreasonably indignant at the idea of being separated from his little ones. At first he refused to hear more about the matter, and it was not until his sister-in-law had accused him of selfishness, and had pointed out the many advantages that the children would enjoy with her that a compromise was effected.

Farmer Strange suggested that Mrs. Caffyn should take the children to live entirely with her until they were old enough to be sent to school. Their holidays were to be passed at the farm. When their education was completed, they should spend six months of the year with him, and the remaining six with their aunt. At the age of twenty-one, the girls themselves should decide with which relative they preferred to live entirely.

She stood by the kitchen window.

Mrs. Caffyn laughed in her sleeve when she agreed to the proposal. She felt confident that her neices would have no hesitation in casting in their lot with hers. What girls would prefer to live in a lonely farm-house with a middle-aged father, where only one maid was kept, and where there was an absolute lack of society, to being petted and waited upon by a devoted aunt and her servants, and enjoying every luxury that wealth could provide? Of course, the girls would live with her.

Mrs. Caffyn told herself that she really felt quite sorry for their poor stupid father, who actually seemed to think that he stood an even chance with her in winning his daughters' love.

Kitty Strange was thinking of her approaching return to her aunt, as she stood by the kitchen window one afternoon in January, and listlessly watched Diana feed a large group of poultry in the yard. She could not understand how Di could take such interest in those stupid fowls. Kitty disliked fowls—sometimes she declared that she hated everything and everybody at Thorneydene. Old Betty, the middle-aged servant, had addressed her once or twice, but had received no answer.

She made another attempt, pausing in the act of rolling out a "lardy-roll" upon the spotless pastry-board, to ask with plaintive shrillness:

"Is he comin' to tea, or ain't he comin', Miss Kitty? That's all I want to know before puttin' the lardy-rolls into the tins. It ain't worth while to bake extry if there's only ourselves to tea."

Kitty turned, wrinkling her white forehead into a petulant frown.

"What are you talking about, Betty?" she asked crossly.

"I want to know if that Mr. Gillway's comin' to tea or not?" retorted Betty.

Kitty flushed to the roots of her dark curling hair as she answered:

"How should I know?"

"If you don't know, I dunno' who should," said Betty, rolling her pastry with unnecessary vehemence. "I shan't make extry," she added. "So if he *do* come he can just put up with what's goin'."

Kitty shrugged her shoulders and turned again to the contemplation of Diana and the fowls. She was not very fond of old Betty, who really had a bad temper, poor soul, and who had been at the Grey House ever since the death of Mrs. Strange.

So little did Kitty care for the woman, that she had once entreated her father to send Betty away and to substitute, in her place a young girl who would be willing to wear those pretty white caps, and dainty frilled aprons which Betty had looked upon so scornfully when Kitty had once brought some back with her after a visit to London.

Farmer Strange had resolutely refused to accede to Kitty's request. It was seldom that he denied any whim of Kitty's, but he was firm in his determination that Betty should remain at Grey House as long as she cared to stay.

The kitchen clock struck four. Kitty glanced hesitatingly at its square face, looked again at Diana, who was now talking to a couple of shaggy sheep-dogs, and then went quietly from the kitchen to her bedroom.

"I'd better meet him," she said to herself. "I must get it over somehow or other, and the sooner the better."

It was pretty to watch Kitty as she coquettishly arranged a very becoming hat upon her dark curls. The mirror framed a charming face with eyes so blue and bright that they seemed to reflect a nature of transparent honesty. Kitty was considered a beauty by most of her acquaintances, and no one concurred more fully in that opinion than Kitty herself. She made a careful toilette, buttoning a long pair of new gloves as she descended the stairs, and peeped into the kitchen.

"Tell Diana that I've gone to the post," she said to Betty.

Betty nodded, scanning Kitty with her sharp, almost colourless eyes.

"You've made yourself fine to go to post," she observed.

Kitty shut the door without answering. She had never disliked Betty so much as she did at that moment.

"A hateful, prying old thing!" she muttered angrily, as she passed through the garden and went out upon the common.

The air was chill and raw. A keen wind blew a few dead brown leaves before her as she hurried along, and a great bank of black fringed clouds told that rain was coming.

"I wish," said Kitty, "that I had never seen him. He is so unlike any of the others."

She posted her letter to Mrs. Caffyn and slowly turned

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her steps in the direction of a little copse where she knew John Gillway was waiting impatiently for her arrival.

Kitty had not mentioned his name to Mrs. Caffyn. Her letter had been filled with joyful ejaculations at the prospect of her speedy release from bondage in the monotonous desert of Thorneydene. Kitty never made many confidences, not even to Diana, who, being of a reserved disposition, was not at all likely to betray them.

She quickened her steps when she approached the wood. It would never do for John to see her lingering. He was already jealous and suspicious, and without cause, she thought resentfully. Kitty felt angry with John. She was vexed because she regarded him as being responsible for the predicament in which she was now placed. But how was John to know the sensations which ruffled her, when she met him with her sweetest smile and even held up her face for a kiss?

"Oh, Kitty," he said, "you *have* been a long while! I began to think that you were never coming!"

"I ought not to have come," she said. "I am behaving very wickedly—I don't know what ever Di or dad would say if they knew."

She raised her blue eyes with the saddest most self-reproachful look in the world to the man's dark face, and he flushed with eager hope as he cried:

"Why shouldn't they know? Why won't you let me tell them?"

"Because I daren't. In the first place, dad has made up his mind that neither Di nor I are to marry—or to be engaged even—before we are twenty-one. Oh, I could never let you speak to dad, John; you don't know what a bad opinion he would have of me when he found out that I had been meeting you secretly for the past six weeks. I—I—should die of shame."

"But I saw you first of all in your father's house. And it is all my fault! You would not have met me like this if I had not begged you," said Gillway. "I think that you exaggerate the difficulties of our position, Kitty. Even if your father refused to consent to our engagement at this present moment, he would know that we loved each other, and that would do away with all this bothering concealment that worries you so, my poor, sensitive little darling."

He bent to kiss her again. Kitty drew back and resolutely removed the arm which he had placed round her waist.

"Don't," she said. "I hate being—being courted like—like—a milk-maid!"

"Is this how milk-maids are courted?"

Kitty grew pale beneath his kisses. She jerked her head from side to side to avoid the touch of his lips.

"You are very cruel," she cried with a sob. "You know that I don't like it, and you only do it to show how masterful and horrid you can be."

Gillway released her immediately. His face clouded as he looked at her.

"You did not call me masterful and horrid a week or so ago, Kitty. Have you changed in your feeling towards me? Or"—he bent forward and took her hand—"have you heard anything about me?"

"As if I could hear anything about you when nobody knows who you are or where you came from," said Kitty pettishly.

"Then what has changed you?" he demanded with such fierce suspicion in his hard voice that she shrank and trembled before him.

"I have not changed, you silly John. I am only very miserable. Di and I have to go to London to-morrow!"

Gillway set his lips together. His sombre expression deepened, and a mistrustful look came into his eyes. They seemed to narrow.

"You must have known this yesterday, Kitty. Why didn't you tell me then?"

"Aunt's letter only came last night," she faltered. "Oh, John, don't look at me like that. You frighten me."

With a tender gesture, Gillway drew her hand through his arm. The hard suspicion died from his face at the distress in Kitty's voice.

"My darling!" he said in self-remorse, "forgive me. Be gentle with me, Kitty. I have found so much knavery and deception in the world, that—Heaven pardon me—I have grown to doubt even you! Don't tremble, dear. I'm a brute and a cad to behave like this toward you. As if you would break faith with me. Tell me again, Kitty, that you love me."

"I love you," she whispered, clinging to him not in affection, but in abject terror.

"You won't break your promise to me, Kitty? You will wait for me—and later on you will be my wife?"

"Yes, yes," murmured Kitty, hiding her pale face upon his shoulder.

"Thank God for the assurance of your love. It ought to drive the demons from my heart," said Gillway. "My little Kitty!"

"If—if—I were to break my word," she asked without raising her face, "what should you do, John?"

"Kill you, I think."

She shivered and clung yet closer to him.

"Not really? You couldn't be so wicked, John, though you do look so black and ugly and stern. And if I—married?"

"If you married me, it would be all right. I'd move Heaven and earth to gratify every caprice and to please you. But if you married another man——" he hesitated and smoothed her hair with loving, gentle fingers. "What a mad suggestion," he added. "The idea of your ever belonging to anyone but me!"

"It does seem absurd, doesn't it, John? Still, supposing that I—I—*did* marry some other man—would you forgive us?"

"No, by Heaven, no!"

"You wouldn't do us any harm, you revengeful thing!"

"There would be no harm too deadly that I would not do to the man. You don't understand, Kitty. I have never loved any other woman but you—except my mother."

Kitty raised her head, withdrawing herself softly from his arm.

"Is she living, your mother?"

"No. Why have you asked me all these questions Kitty? There is no one waiting in London for you?"

The cloudy suspicion was returning once more to his face. Kitty laughed as she shook her head.

"On my honour, no—at least, not to my knowledge. Of course, there may be a dozen or so of inconsolables anxiously looking out for my advent. You are frowning again, sir. I never knew anyone so unreasonable and jealous as you are in all my life. I wish you would look in the glass every time that you feel disagreeble."

"Why?"

"Because the sight of your ugliness would show you how terrifying you are in that condition. I could imagine you capable of murder when you look at me with such a ferocious expression."

Gillway passed his hand over his face and rubbed it as though to brush away the expression to which Kitty objected.

"I'll be good now," he said. "It's too bad of me to spoil our last few minutes together by giving way to my jealous feelings. Are you really going to-morrow? Can't you stay longer?"

"Oh, no," she answered with a sigh. "Di won't hear of it. She is determined to start to-morrow," and to herself she added, "and so am I."

"You would stay if your sister would?"

"Of course—only," she added uneasily, "it is not in her power to alter the plans that dad and Aunt Lulu made between them. Poor Di can't do anything except submit. And I must do the same, too."

"I shall come up and see you. In what part of London does your aunt live?"

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Kitty hesitated. Her heart was beating rapidly with nervousness. It would not do to tell John Gillway a direct lie. She stifled the involuntary temptation.

"At Prince's Gate. But we shan't be there long. Aunt has a lot of invitations to country seats. We are only going to stay in town while we are buying new clothes, you know, and very likely we shall go to Italy after Christmas. But,

"Di will be so cross with me if I bring you back."

of course, I shall write to you," she added quickly. "And if there is a chance of our meeting anywhere, I'll let you know. It would be such an awful disappointment if you came to London and didn't see me."

She drew out a dainty little gold watch.

"I must go home, John. It is past their hour for tea."

"I am coming back with you," said Gillway.

"I don't think you had better. Dad won't like it. He likes to be alone with us upon our last night with him."

"Poor old chap!" exclaimed Gillway with compassion. "How he must miss you! Oh, he couldn't mind my having tea with you, Kitty. It isn't as if I proposed staying all the evening. Besides, he asked me to drop in whenever I liked."

"Di will be so cross with me if I bring you back," objected Kitty, rubbing her soft cheek with a caressing movement against his hand. "What nice white hands you have for a farmer, John. I think it was your being so utterly different to all the men of dad's acquaintance about here, that made me like you. And then you know such a lot about music, and books and theatres and foreign countries, too! Do you know that you have never told me one little, teeny, weeny word about your past, sir? And I am dying with curiosity to know all about it, and what induced such a fine gentleman to buy a pokey little farm, and hide himself——"

"Hide!" interrupted Gillway harshly. "What do you mean, Kitty? I am not hiding!"

"Now, don't get cross again," she said smilingly. "You are full of thorns, John. Say good-bye to me like a good boy, and perhaps, only perhaps, mind, I'll send you a letter somewhere before Christmas comes."

"You had better. If you don't, I shall come after you. I shall expect a letter—let me see, you go away to-morrow, Tuesday—very well, on Thursday I must have a letter, Kitty. If not——"

"Don't frown again! I never saw anyone like you. If I don't write, John?"

"I shall come up and discover the reason of your silence."

Kitty looked at the strong, masterful face with half-admiring, half-shrinking eyes. She laughed, and the laugh hid her fear.

"I had better not write in that case," said she, "for I shall want to see you dreadfully."

"Oh, Kitty!" the man cried brokenly. "How can I let you go! If you only knew how far you have crept into my heart!"

"And you into mine, dear John."

"Let me come home with you? Every moment is precious to me now——"

"No," she answered with a pretty movement of sorrowful decision. "I mustn't make Diana angry. We must be very careful not to let her suspect our secret. Do you ever think what a horrid life Aunt Lulu and Di would lead me between them in London if they only suspected that—I loved you, John? You must be reasonable and wait until I am my own mistress."

"And then?" he asked, drawing her again to him and kissing her. "We will never be separated, please Heaven!"

Kitty went home through the fields, burning with shame at her weakness. She had intended to break with John Gillway, and she had been led by fear to make him solemn promises of fidelity.

"Oh, I do wish I had never met him!" she said to herself, clenching her little hands. "I am afraid of him!"

And Gillway as he retraced his steps to the lonely farm house, where Aunt Shales was waiting tea for him, looked up at the darkening skies with reverential and grateful eyes.

"Thank God for the love of a good woman," he murmured. "Heaven alone knows what would have become of me had I not met with my little Kitty. I must have gone to the bad! I know that I shall go wrong if I lose her."

(To be continued.)

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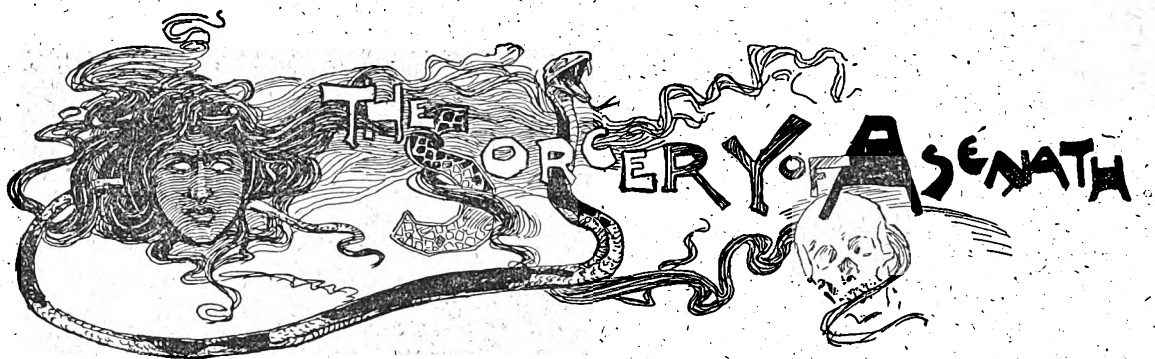

People often ask me why I gave up a promising business career and devoted myself to travelling, in which I find no pleasure; exploring, for which I have no taste; and archæology, which is to me the most tiring of pursuits. The question has never been answered, save by the statement that there is no reason to give, which involves the telling of an incredible story.

There are two or three to whom I would like to tell it. If they survive me they shall know—to that end these pages.

It is my conviction that whatever intelligent man has known he has tried to record in some way—that living truths, new to us, may be gleaned from the stone tablets of races extinct for ages. For such a truth I am searching. One man found it, but he is dead. His spirit I have called up, as the woman at Endor called up Samuel, and questioned it. He told me that the knowledge had sent it to the world of shades before its time, and had put power into the hands of an evil one, who had bidden it never in any place to reveal to any mortal what it knew.

"Even yet I must obey her," said the spirit of Paul Glen; "but what you seek is written."

As yet I have not read. Many strange things have I unearthed, but never this that I seek.

Now, I will write my story. You who read it may believe it or not, as you see fit. I know that it is true.

Floated to the middle of the pathway.

It is many years now since I went to South America to visit my sister Helen. I had not seen her since the day of her marriage, three years before, till she met me at the door of her own home and welcomed me in her old sweet and quiet manner. It seemed to me, at the first glance, that her face had aged too much, and that a certain fine expression—a suggestion of latent determination—had over-developed and marked her with stern lines. From the first moment, too, I feared the existence of a trouble in her life, of which her letters gave no hint.

She seemed, though, cheerful enough. She led the way into a great room that was shaded and cool, and full of the scent of lilacs. With a motion of her hand, she dismissed three or four black maids, whom she had been assisting or instructing at some sewing work, and they went out, courtesying and showing their white and even teeth at the door.

A fourth did not leave, but retired to a far end of the room, and went on with the sewing. I noticed what a tiny garment she was making, and what a sharply cut silhouette her face made against the white curtain by which she sat.

Helen chatted away, apologising for her husband's absence, asking a host of questions, and planning some pleasures for every one of the days of my stay with her. I lay back in my chair, with a feeling of languid content, and listened. When Helen suggested sleep and refreshment, I declined both, feeling no need for anything but her presence and that delicious room, the atmosphere of which was laden with rest as with the scent of the lilacs.

The black woman sat directly in the line of my vision, and I remember now that my gaze never strayed from her. I noticed, idly at first, then with interest, the regularity of her features, and the grand proportion of her head and bust. Her hair, brownish in colour, with dull copper tints, was as straight as my own, and she had hand and arm so perfectly moulded that, except for their black skin, they might have been those of a lady of

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high degree. But it was the pride, speaking from every line of that dark face, that most attracted my notice. There was in it, too, an exultant sense of power, and it was the most resolute face, black or white, that I ever saw.

Presently I began to feel that it required an effort to keep the thread of what Helen was saying, and to reply. Her voice seemed to get faint, then to come in snatches with an indistinct murmur between them, at last not at all, though I knew she was still speaking.

I was not unconscious, but perception was contracted and concentrated upon one abnormal effort. From me a narrow path of light stretched down the room to the black woman. She seemed to expand and to grow luminous; a vapour exhaled from her, floated to the middle of the pathway, and there assumed her own form almost nude, perfect like her face in its every line, motionless as if carved from ebony, but with fierce, impure eyes that looked straight into mine, and from which there seemed to be no escape.

Their gaze begot an overwhelming sense of disgust. My soul shuddered, but my body could not move. The evil face smiled. A cloud floated over the form of ebony, slowly passed away, revealing one like polished ivory, but the eyes changed not.

How long their gaze held me motionless and helpless I do not know. Suddenly, something white shut out the vision, and my sister's voice, now harsh and loud, struck upon my hearing like a lash. Instantly the room assumed its ordinary appearance, the scent of the lilacs greeted me as if I had newly come into the atmosphere, and Helen, in her white dress, stood before me trembling.

The negress at the window looked at us both with insolent amusement. It was to her that Helen spoke.

"How dared you!" she exclaimed; "oh, that I could punish you as you deserve."

The girl smiled and slowly drew her needle through the cloth in her lap.

"Go out to Lucas," commanded Helen. "Go."

The girl drew herself up, and her face took on an expression of sullen defiance. It seemed for an instant that she would not obey. She clenched her hands, and I heard her teeth grate together. But she hesitated only a moment, then went slowly out of the room. Presently she passed by the window, pushing a heavy barrow full of earth. Lucas, the gardener, followed, carrying a large gad. In a minute or two they passed again, going in the same direction, and afterwards again and again. The girl was pushing the barrow round and round the house.

"That is the heaviest and most menial employment I can devise for her," said Helen; "I wish there were something worse. She grows more impudent every day, but this is the first time she has dared to exert her snaky power upon a white person in my presence. How did you feel while you were under that spell?"

"Now, Helen, for Heaven's sake don't imagine——"

"I imagine nothing," she interrupted, in a low voice. "I know that girl. She can do strange things. If ever human creature was possessed of a devil, she is."

"Why, Helen!"

She went on, without heeding my astonishment: "Every negro on the plantation, except Lucas, is mortally afraid of her. My birds cower in a corner of their cage if she approaches them, the gentlest horse we have will rear and kick at sight of her, and if she goes into the poultry-yard the hens cover up their chicks as if night had come. She has affected others as she did you. She has done worse. When I first came here, she was given to me for a maid; but, not liking her, I took, instead, a little mulatto girl, who was bright and smart then, but who is now idiotic through fear of Asenath."

I did not think it best to dispute with Helen, knowing her well enough to be sure that any argument I could adduce against her belief she had already weighed and found wanting. She was not a superstitious woman, nor a hasty one, but one whose very mistakes deserved respect, since she always took that course of action which she believed to be wisest and best, even if it were to her own disadvantage. I simply asked:

"Why do you not get rid of her?"

"I have tried, but something frustrates every effort

Lucas, the gardener, followed.

of that kind. Robert objects to sale—it is unusual on the plantation. We once offered her her freedom if she would go away; but she only looked as if she scorned the freedom we could give, and laughed in a way that chilled my blood."

"She seems very insolent."

"Insolent—that is a weak word! I sometimes think she is birth-marked with impudence as she is with straight hair."

"That hair, then, is a birth-mark? I thought it must be a wig."

"She was born with it and with an insane craving to be white. When a child, she used to scream and shriek over her blackness for hours at a time. Mother Glen whipped that out of her."

"It is a pity she did not whip out some of her other peculiarities."

"Mother Glen was much to blame for some of them. You knew Paul Glen, and what a strange, silent being he was—always absorbed in some mysterious pursuits, roving from one lost region to another, coming home now and then for a day and leaving, as if for a short time, to be heard of again after months of inquiry in Hyderabad, or Jerusalem, or the heart of Guinea. Well, after he came home the last time he made Asenath the subject of numerous psychological experiments. He could mesmerise anyone—what other gifts he had was not known; but he called mesmerism child's play.

"Mother Glen did not object to his making this use of the girl, because she did not wish to cross Paul and have him go away again. It is my belief that Asenath discovered, through some of his experiments, the existence of an occult power in herself. Before long she had Paul completely under her control. I had not yet come

here, but Mother Glen told me about it, and that any effort to break the spell made Paul completely furious. He taught her to read, and to sing, and obeyed her in everything—think of it. After a while he fell ill, but it was thought not dangerously. Asenath nursed him, and he would not eat or drink unless she bade him."

"That, though, may have been a mere whim, such as the sick often take."

She shook her head. "You have not heard all. Two of the servants—Mammy Clara and Belinda—declare that they overheard Asenath forbid Paul ever to touch food again, and tell him that she would pretend to bid him eat, but he must not do so. And it is certainly true that he at last refused all sustenance and died of starvation."

"What a horrible idea!"

"Shortly before Paul was stricken down," Helen proceeded, "he disposed of all his property—it was in securities of various kinds—and we have never been able to find out what he did with the money he received. Thousands and thousands of pounds took wing somehow. It was never brought here, so she could not have stolen it actually, but I am as sure that Asenath knows where that money is as I am that I live."

"Now Helen, be sensible, do."

"Mother Glen was a sensible woman, and she believed as I do. She said the girl was uncanny. Moreover she declared to me that Asenath had set out to conquer her as she did Paul, and that it was only by constant resistance that she prevented her from gaining her object. There was a psychic contest between them. Mother Glen's brain was in a condition of seige for months. It could not stand the strain. She was seized with paralysis and died. I blame Asenath for her death."

We followed again.

I did not say much in reply. My odd experience of a few minutes before puzzled me. Helen's account of the girl threw a weird light upon what I felt bound, as a reasonable man, to consider merely curious phenomena, subjective in character and due to some unexplained physical cause. I determined to say a few decided words to Robert Glen about the culpability of allowing his delicate wife to contend with such an annoyance, as Asenath, if not a sorceress, certainly was a fractious and troublesome servant.

"It is strange that Robert does not remove her," said I.

Helen's face flushed and was drawn by a momentary spasm. She looked at me in troubled silence as if she could not decide to say what she wished to tell me.

"I am afraid about Robert," she said at length, almost in a whisper; "there is something in that girl's demeanour to him that it sickens me to think of—and which I dare not try to explain, even to myself. It seems impossible that she can dare to think that he——" She went on hurriedly after a pause: "You see, he believes in no psychic powers and is not on his guard. He calls her unearthly pranks mere mischief that a few years' discipline will take out of her. Robert intends her to marry Lucas."

She spoke the last sentence quite loudly, and, as the girl and her driver were passing by the window, they overheard Lucas, a squat, stolid-looking mulatto, with a face like that of a satiated animal, chuckle and poke at Asenath with the gad.

The girl stopped. She threw down her burden, flung back her head, and turned upon Helen a wild and vicious stare. Her face, streaming with perspiration, was full of threat. She gasped for breath from emotion or the heaviness of her toil. She raised one hand, wiped her brow with its open palm, and flung the drops of sweat in a shower at Helen.

"May every drop burn you!" she said, between her laboured breaths.

Helen looked at her with quiet scorn. "Go on, Lucas," she said calmly.

Asenath shook herself like a chained animal. She ground her teeth and turned upon Lucas in fury, as if she would rend him. He did not quail, but raised his gad threateningly and pointed to the barrow-handles, and, after a momentary struggle with herself, the girl took them up and went on, panting under her toil.

"She shall continue that until she drops," said my sister.

"But, Helen, that surely is cruel."

"Not more so than drawing the fangs of a snake. I have discovered that she is physically powerless when physically exhausted. All the negroes on the place know this and are rejoicing now—they all feel more secure for knowing that she has been disciplined."

While she was speaking, I saw Robert Glen coming along the walk to the house. Helen saw him, too. Leaning out of the window, she called to Lucas and bade him take his charge "to the old barn." He hurriedly departed, driving the girl—who now seemed doubly unwilling to drag her load—literally like an ox, and very unsparing of the gad.

Robert greeted me cordially; but it was evident to me that there was a cloud between his wife and him. His ruddy face assumed a stern expression when he looked at her, and his voice had a hard tone when he addressed her. Her manner to him had an appealing, almost fawning, air, which it distressed me to see.

It was some days before I found a chance to speak to Robert on the subject of the girl, I had better have held my tongue, for he was nettled in an instant, shrugged his shoulders, and curled his lip.

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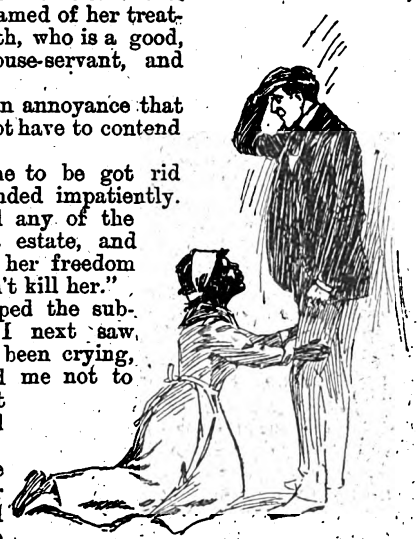
"You English people know nothing whatever about the management of slaves. Helen leads that girl the life of a toad under a harrow, because the other darkies say she 'hoodoos' them, and because my mother had some irrational ideas about demoniacal possession. I declare to you, Tom, that if I did not know Helen's delicate condition and nervousness were much to blame, I should be ashamed of her treatment of Asenath, who is a good, well-trained house-servant, and valuable."

"But she is an annoyance that Helen should not have to contend with now."

"How is she to be got rid of?" he demanded impatiently. "We never sell any of the people on this estate, and she won't take her freedom as a gift. I can't kill her."

Then I dropped the subject. When I next saw Helen, she had been crying, and she begged me not to speak to Robert about the girl again.



"Oh, Massa Tom, she am witched."

I saw no more of Asenath for some time, and learnt that she had been put steadily to work at the loom the day following my arrival.

One morning news came that the loom-house had been entered in the night, all the yarn carried off, the woven cloth cut to pieces, and the loom and wheels so shattered that new ones would be necessary. Even the walls of the building were half destroyed.

"This is some of Asenath's work," said Helen.

Robert, who had been annoyed by the news, now seemed additionally so.

"Pshaw, Helen!" he said sharply; "it would take the strength of several men to do some of this mischief."

"She has it at command. Lucas shall take her in hand again."

"No, we will have no more of that," Robert said sternly. "Now, hear me, Helen, I have told Lucas that if he obeys you in that respect again he shall be flogged within an inch of his life, and I mean it."

Helen's face turned very white, her hands fell into her lap, and she sat as if stricken helpless and hopeless. I hastened away to avoid hearing more, comprehending now what the trouble in my sister's life was, and with a presentiment of coming evil that it would be greater.

It was that very night, that, having strolled into the shrubbery to smoke my cigar, I fell asleep upon a rustic bench there and awoke to find it was late at night with the wind moaning as if a storm were brewing in the cloudy heavens.

As I arose to go to the house, something—that was not visible—seemed to come from every quarter at once and smite me. I felt a sharp, electric thrill followed by a sensation as if I had been flung from a height and raised up again, with some of my faculties benumbed by the fall. My hair stood up, but I felt no fear, only a passive wonder, mixed with expectation. Turning, I saw, by a transient gleam of moonlight, the girl Asenath, standing in the path near by, pointing at me with a long slender rod. The ray passed and left a black shadow there, which moved slowly away, beckoning to me. I followed.

The shadow led me out of the shrubbery and along the wide avenue between the two rows of huts occupied by the negroes, and ended at the big house. I had no will or thought but to follow it exactly. It stopped before one of the huts, and bent itself nearly double. I, too, bent over involuntarily, and every muscle of my body seemed to become strung. The perspiration started out of me, and my will was like a bar of steel ending in great fingers, which grasped something and pulled upon it with such force that my inner self was a-tremble with weakness when the tension relaxed, which it did at the opening of the cottage door and the coming out of a little lad—a mere child—who looked ghastly as one of the dead walking. He placed himself beside me, and together we followed the shadowy woman to another house, dragged at the invisible cords of another human soul, and brought it out into the night. It was a woman, this time in the scantiest of night-robes.

And so we went on, stopping at every door, and from every door someone came forth, except from that of Lucas. There, grasp as it would, the steel fingers clutched nothing and the door remained shut.

The woman Asenath muttered to herself, and all the crowd of followers muttered, too. With them, my own lips formed words, of which I did not then comprehend the meaning: "Soulless beast!" We went on beyond the quarters, stopped at the big house, and dragged at something that resisted with all its strength, which was weaker than ours, for it yielded at last, and came slowly, slowly down the steps and stood among us. It was my sister Helen.

Asenath laughed, and ghastly laughter broke from all, even from Helen herself.

I had no feeling of compassion for her, nor of fear for her or myself, but was simply a force which another exerted. The wills of those who followed Asenath were but strands in the cable of her power, and their strength was in her hands for good or ill.

We followed again—out of the plantation, through a forest of pines, over a bridge that spanned slow-crawling black water, past a fallen church surrounded by forgotten graves, to the top of a hill where there were stones laid in the form of a serpent—a great stone, like open jaws, forming the head. There Asenath paused and cast down her rod. She stretched out her hands, and in a moment we were formed into a circle about the rod.

And then once again those fingers of steel grasped something—something that all their strength seemed unable to move. Our breath came in gasps, our forms shook like the leaves of the aspen-tree, and in the heart was a fear, too great to be measured, of failure. Long, long the effort lasted—lasted until the will seemed to discard its own puerile strength and to fling itself upon the bosom of impersonal force, seize the reservoir of the universal will, and turn its power in a mighty stream upon the burden of one desire—one unyielding demand that the door be opened. And with that borrowed force came the sense of unlimited strength. Faith was born.

We stretched out our arms in gestures of which I can only remember that they were first those of invitation, then of welcome. Nature began to pulsate. There was a sound like the slow, regular beating of a heart, in the chambers of which we were inclosed. The inner life throbbed with it so fiercely that the blood seemed almost to leap from my body. All about us were the move-

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ments of awakening birds and insects; from afar came the lowing of kine, the crowing of cocks, and the crying of children, as if they were suddenly startled into fear.

In the centre of the circle appeared a square of strange light.

We looked upon it, and beheld a place of which the darkness and the light of this world are but the envelopes. We saw there, afar off, a vast crystalline globe, from which extended, in all directions, millions of filaments of clear light. The globe scintillated as a diamond does, and its sparks floated away upon the endless filaments of light. Nearer to us, moving about, were beings not human, and not resembling each other further than that they were all gigantic and all possessed of some human attributes. Some were beautiful, some hideous.

Upon some the writing was fantastic, as if put on in mockery. Upon others it shone with a clear and cruel radiance that pained the sight. Some bore it faded and dim, as if the pretension it set up had fallen like a leaf into the stream of the ages and been almost forgotten.

A great fear fell upon us all, so great that all, except the woman Asenath and myself, fell down and seemed as if dead. The woman trembled and murmured to herself, and again my lips formed her words.

"Is it worth while, when human desires are so poor, human life so short?"

Through that door there floated not a voice, for the silence was only broken by a faint, soft hum, like very distant music, but an unspoken command that impressed itself upon the spirit.

"Speak!"

Still the woman hesitated. Suddenly her lips moved again, mine following them:

"But only through this can he be won."

"I would have the desire of my heart," she said aloud.

"It is thine," was the silent answer; "to him who knocks at this door shall it be opened, and what he asks for there shall he receive, whether for good or ill. It is the law."

"I would be fair, like those who enslave me. All that she has"—she pointed to my sister—"I would take from her and have for my own."

"The power to obtain thy will is thine, whether thou be of the just or of the unjust. The spirit which commands shall be obeyed. It is the law."

"And is there a penalty to be paid?"

"Thy act is the seed from which its penalty shall grow."

The woman sighed.

"What penalty?"

"Thou knowest the law."

Sighing again bitterly, Asenath stretched out her hand. The square of light went out. Across the spot where it had been drifted an indistinct form which passed into invisibility on either side. Under their feet ran a serpent of fire, which leapt at the woman. She grasped it, and it seemed to become the rod she had cast down.

I remembered nothing more until I came slowly to myself, stretched upon the bench in the shrubbery, with the morning sun shining into my face. My limbs were stiff, my head ached, and my heart was heavy with a foreboding of evil. It was impossible for me to decide whether the experience of the night was a dream or a reality, but I was sorely troubled; I could not think of Asenath without a creeping of the flesh.

On approaching the house, I saw Robert standing in the doorway. My first glimpse of him set me to trembling with fear of evil tidings, he looked so agitated and distressed. When he perceived me, he wrung his hands and burst into tears.

"Oh, Tom!" he cried, "Helen is dying. She was taken with convulsions early this morning. She does not know me. The baby was born dead, and Helen cannot live. I must lose her! Oh, God, I must lose her!"

He ran through the hall and up the stairs like a wild man. I followed, but the heaviness of the shock was so great that it was but slowly and with a feeling as if the floor were rising up to my face. Asenath was moving stealthily about the hall. I bade her begone. She looked at me like a startled cat, but did not go. A black girl, coming down the stairs, passed me, and I recognised her as the first of the women who had joined our ghastly crowd the night before. She gazed straight before her, with wide-open, horrified eyes, and her face had the same pinched look the hall mirror had shown upon my own as I glanced into it involuntarily when passing it. At the top of the stairs, Belinda, Helen's poor little maid, flung herself at my feet and clasped my knees.

"Oh, Massa Tom," she cried, "she am witched. Go an' git d'witch t'—tak'—de spell off'n her. Nuffin'll save her ef yo' don't do dat."

As I stopped to put the poor creature aside, old Mammy Clara, her face streaming with tears, came up to me.

"Massa Tom," she said solemnly, "de good God hab tooken Miss Helen. She's in Heben wid her li'l baby."

The blow overcame me. It will be best to pass over that time. I shut myself into my room and bore my agony alone, I went once more into the room where Helen lay, and looked at her face. It was the face of one in peaceful rest, but it had aged twenty years in twelve hours. Her maids, directed by Mrs. Grayson, an old friend of the family, were ready to prepare her for the grave.

He threw himself at her feet.

"They think," whispered Mrs. Grayson, "that she had walked in her sleep. Her feet are scratched and torn, as if she had been among briars barefooted, and the doctors say that her convulsions probably came on from the shock of awakening. She was found at daybreak, unconscious, in the hall, and the outer door was wide open."

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I left the plantation a few days after the funeral, and for years neither saw nor heard directly from Robert Glen. I never could forgive his indifference to Helen's peace of mind while she lived, nor get over a certain disgust with which his lack of self-control at the time of her death inspired me. I never liked him, and, after that sad time, I had less regard for him than ever. I never told him the story I have written. He would only have pronounced me mad, and I did not wish to obtain that reputation for the mere sake of warning him.

Besides, I tried to believe the experience of that night a dream, but I found that impossible, and was always looking for a sequel to it. The sequel came in its appointed time.

Years passed away. At the outbreak of the Civil War, the Graysons came to England. From them I learnt that Asenath had disappeared from the plantation long before, and was supposed to have drowned herself in the black creek and to haunt the plantation in the form of a black-and-white snake. Dr. Grayson blamed himself for her death.

"Some of the Glen negroes," he said; "told some of mine that the girl was turning white, and that, with the exception of her face and hands, her whole body had changed its colour. Now I had heard of such cases, but never had seen one, and, in spite of what Buffon and other naturalists say on the subject, felt doubtful of the possibility of such a thing taking place. I rode over to Glen's one day to investigate the matter. Glen was not at home; but, presuming upon old friendship with him, I saw the girl and told her the object of my call.

"I wish you had seen her; she flew into an outrageous passion, calling me vile names; said there was not a white spot on her person, and that if I touched her it should cost me dear. Of course I paid no attention to her threats, and called that Lucas of Glen's to help me turn up her sleeves. Her arms really were white, but before I could half examine them, she broke away from us and tore out of the house.

"We followed, but lost sight of her in the shrubbery, and to this day she has never been seen again. The negroes say she drowned herself. Glen, when he returned, seemed to believe so. He took me to task in a most ungentlemanly manner for what had happened, and we have not been on speaking terms since. He has now gone abroad until this little squall blows over, I hear."

"I trust that he may—and longer," I said. The doctor chuckled a little and changed the subject. In secret, I said to myself:

"I don't believe the girl is dead, and I do believe that Robert Glen knows where she is. The sequel will come."

A year later, Robert returned home, bringing a wife with him. He wrote me a formal announcement of his marriage, to which I replied with equal formality.

It was rumoured that the new wife was rich in her own right; that she was of English parentage, but born and reared in Calcutta. Later, I heard that Robert's old neighbours had not taken to her at all, and that she had an ungovernable temper, being unable to keep any servant, except a couple of East Indian women, whom she berated continually in their own tongue, but who could not speak English enough to impart any information about their mistress to her neighbours.

The year after Robert's marriage, while in America, I accepted an invitation to spend a few days with the Graysons. Feeling that I owed Robert the courtesy of a call, I rode over to the plantation, not so much to discharge a social duty as to see the new Mrs. Glen, about whom I noticed, on the part of the Graysons, a marked reluctance to speak.

They edged away from the subject, when I brought it up, with nervous looks at each other.

Leaving my horse at the outer gate, I walked along the wide avenue nearly to the house. There was a spectral stillness upon the place. Sadness exhaled from everything, to be drawn in with every breath. The old servants were all gone. I had met the once sleek and stolid Lucas, now rheumatic and ragged, begging in the village.

Belinda was in the county asylum, and the others were scattered or dead. The scent of the lilac was gone from the air—the very bushes were rooted up, and lay, sere and dead, by little heaps of earth. A triangular cloud in the sky cast upon the earth a triangle of shadow, in the midst of which Robert Glen's home lay as if it were entranced. No sign of happy life met me; but as I turned aside to look at a certain bench in the shrubbery, a black-and-white snake ran over my foot.

I went no further. A woman was seated upon the bench—a fair woman, with hair like dull copper reflecting sullen fire, with a face and form perfect as those of the goddesses of old, a face which betokened an indomitable soul, which knew the secret of the power wielded by the gods. She was bending over her clasped hands, her face was turned aside in an attitude of eager waiting and wore a smile that transfigured it. Slowly approaching her, walking as a man walks in his sleep, came Robert Glen. He threw himself at her feet and laid his head upon her knee. She bent to him with a little rapturous caress, and both faces were as happy as those of the people in Paradise.

I turned and went away from the place, and entered its precincts no more. From that hour I was self-devoted to one purpose—to seek the knowledge that should open the door to her degradation and destruction. In the midst of her success, and in the height of her pride, she should turn black as she was in the day when Lucas drove her. I swore it. So should my friends and my sister, whom she robbed and slew, be avenged.

MARIE ROBERTS.

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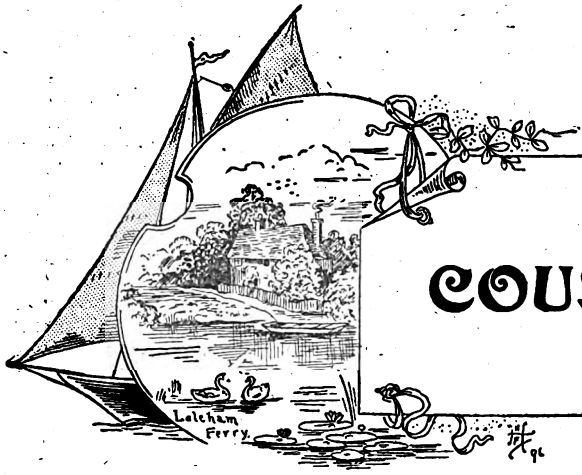

COUSIN GIDEON.

No, I'm not a spiritualist; I never was educated well enough to study the occult sciences, as you call them. But I had an experience some years ago which, perhaps, *you* can explain, as you believe in such things. I have only told it to a few friends, and they looked as if they thought I was telling lies. But I'm a truthful man, and never told a lie in my life except once, and that was when I told my wife that she was the only woman who had ever attracted me. I owned up to that lie during the honeymoon. A friend of mine met us, and not knowing I was married, he clapped me on the shoulder and cried:

"You know how to find the pretty ones, my boy. Ha, ha! *That's* all right!"

But it wasn't all right. However, that was soon settled.

Well, I was going to tell you about Cousin Gideon; and I may say here that I can bring witnesses to prove that it's true. He wasn't my cousin; that was the name he went by in our neighbourhood. There were two cousins, Gideon and Simeon, both old men. Their mothers were Jewesses, I believe, but their fathers were not, and the cousins were nothing in particular that I know of.

They were in very different circumstances. Simeon was always well dressed; his clothes were of good material, and fitted well. Gideon was poor; he wore a greasy frock-coat, threadbare, torn, and much too long for him. It was given to him by some kind neighbour. The heels of his boots were worn so much on one side that I used to wonder sometimes how he managed to walk in them.

He had a room in the cottage of a man I knew a mason. It was sheer benevolence on the part of this man, for I don't suppose Cousin Gideon paid any rent. He earnt a little somehow, but hardly enough to keep body and soul together. Simeon occupied a house in a good street, and had a lot of fine people come to him. That was to borrow money, not for his society. He was an ugly little man, with ears like a bat, a yellow skin full of wrinkles and blotches, dirty grey hair, and swollen, cracked lips. Only twice did Simeon call on his Cousin Gideon while alive, and I am going to tell you about those visits. If they happened to meet in the street, Simeon passed his poor relation without making a sign.

Cousin Gideon had two or three pieces of furniture which he had inherited from his mother. One of these was a chest which must have been centuries old; it was a massive thing, beautifully carved, with a big, strong lock and a heavy key. The lock and key were very ornamental, and the whole thing was what you might see in an exhibition of antique furniture. This chest was worth a fair amount of money; Gideon knew that, but he had never attempted to part with it.

Simeon knew the value of the chest, and that was the object of his visit. He wanted to purchase it, not to assist his relative in any way, but because he thought he could do a good stroke of business. He knew people who would give a lot of money for it, and as Gideon was certain to be in great straits in the winter time, he believed the poor man would jump at the offer of a few pounds. So he climbed up the narrow staircase into the back room—a miserable place with sloping roof, broken walls, and a window that would not shut properly—and he stood before Cousin Gideon and offered him five pounds. But the owner wouldn't hear of it.

Simeon offered five shillings more, and ten shillings more, and kept raising the price; but the more he offered the more determined Gideon seemed that he would not sell. At last he told Simeon flatly that he would sooner starve and freeze than let him have it; and the money-lender went away reviling and swearing, while Cousin Gideon, usually such an inoffensive old man, danced and laughed with unaccountable energy.

Only a few days afterwards the old man fell ill. He became delirious, saw his own shadow on the wall, and talked all sorts of stuff about the old chest and Cousin Simeon and what not.

I went to see him, and sat up with him an hour or two just to give my friend a rest. The mason was a widower, and Gideon wanted attention in the daytime, to say nothing of better food, so I advised my friend to call on Simeon and tell him. And Simeon made his second call.

I was there when he came. He made his way to the bed, sat down on the edge, and looked at the sick man, who was half conscious, half delirious.

"Well, Cousin Gideon," he said.

The sound of his voice seemed to bring Gideon to himself with a start.

"What do *you* want?" he asked.

"He, he! What do I want?" sniggered the money-lender. "I've come to see how you are, *dear* Cousin

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Gideon. He, he! You'll sell me the chest *now*, won't you? You have no use for it. The money will buy you medicine and food and get you a fire." He got off the bed and went to the chest. "The money will make you quite well again. If you don't sell the chest, you'll die of cold and hunger and—— Yes, you will!"

Gideon raised himself slowly in the bed. His breath came with difficulty, his eyes glowed like red-hot coals.

"You shall never have it!" he said passionately. "Never! You have seen me hungry, thirsty, cold—many times—and you have never helped me! You know that my mother was the sister of your mother; you know that my mother performed the last offices for your mother before she was laid in her coffin——"

"He, he! Don't take on so, Cousin Gideon. I'll see that the same is done for you—I will! But you'll sell me the chest? It will give you food to keep you alive. Besides, it will come to me anyhow after your death, because I'm the next of kin!"

"Never!" screamed Gideon, his passion giving him strength. "And if you dare to lay a finger on anything of mine—*even if I'm dead, I'll stop you!*" And he fell back exhausted.

A shivery feeling went over me at his last words. Simeon looked at him contemptuously, glanced at the chest, and went out.

The end came that night. My friend and I were both in the room. Gideon had been talking wildly; suddenly he lifted himself on his elbow, and pointed to the chest.

"I told him—I told him——" His eyes glowed again. He strove to say something else, but it ended in a wild cry, and he fell back dead!

The third day after Gideon's death was a holiday, and we had arranged to bury him on that day. No news had been sent to Simeon, but in the morning, just as the man had come to screw down the coffin, in came the old rascal.

"So he's dead, eh? Well, he was very foolish. I offered him money for it, and he wouldn't take it. It would have saved his life. I told him so! How much will the funeral cost? What? Too much, a great deal too much! I suppose I must pay it." (We hadn't asked him; we had done it as cheaply as possible, on purpose.) "I shall have to take the chest for it!"

We didn't answer him, and he walked into the back-room where Cousin Gideon lay. We were in the front room, the door was wide open, and Simeon left the door of the back-room ajar. We had an idea at first that one of us had better follow him, but we decided to leave him to his own thoughts.

While we were waiting, we were startled by the sound of a voice in the other room. My friend, the mason, looked at me and I looked at him. It wasn't Simeon's voice! We listened again, and we both said "Gideon!" in a scared whisper. You may say we were mistaken, but we knew the tone of his voice too well. We listened again, and all of us in that front room heard these words:

"My mother was the sister of your mother; you know that my mother performed the last offices for your mother before she was laid in her coffin——"

We sat horror-stricken. Then we heard a cry that chilled us to the marrow—a cry such as I cannot describe. I hope I shall never hear such a cry again. Then the sound of a body falling. We rushed in and saw Simeon on the floor, bleeding from a wound in the head. We took him into the other room and sent for the doctor. When we went to the coffin again we found that there was a change in the position of the dead man!

What took place in that room? Simeon went mad, and is now in an asylum in Vienna. He constantly raves that Cousin Gideon rose from the dead and threatened him as he was touching the chest. He never says one single word on any other subject. Was Gideon only in a trance? Or what? I do not know, but perhaps you spiritualists can explain such things, or may be able to some day. I have related facts, for I'm a truthful man, and have only told one lie in my life—you know about *that*.

GEO. DAY

PICK-ME-UP,

The BRIGHTEST, SMARTEST and DAINTIEST

Penny Illustrated Paper

OF THE DAY.

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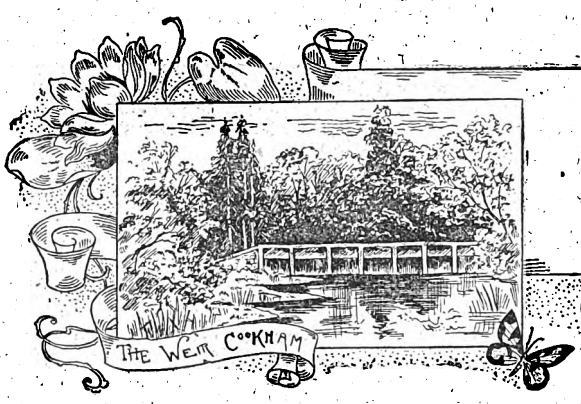

The Dead Wife.

Hélène had married Paul de Chavannes, a widower of thirty, and already father of two children. The younger was only a few months old when it became an orphan.

During three years the father and his little ones had mourned the wife and mother, the children dressed in black, Paul lost in the memory of the past. On all the walls of the house hung portraits, showing her living, some as a young girl, fair, with deep, candid eyes, others, the young wife in ball dress, or outdoor costume, covered in velvet and furs.

And in all—despite the smile of the fresh lips—the sunken eyes, bordered with lilac, told of hidden suffering, and seemed to hold a sad presentiment that all this happiness would be brief.

Since he had become a widower, Paul had never passed an evening nor taken a meal out of his own house.

Seated at table, between his babies' two tall chairs, he gazed sadly at the empty place in front. But that moment was not without its consolations. He suffered more when forced to go where duty and business called him, when he shut the door on the last "adieu" of the little voices.

Paul remembered that he did not leave with them a tender mother, watching their play and ever ready to sympathise in the sudden despairs and quick repentances of childhood.

So, against his own wishes, he began once more to think of building a home. His choice, made calmly and without passion, fell on Hélène, an old playmate, almost of his own age, quiet, and who, it was said, had remained unmarried because of some mistaken love of irreparable loss.

"Since Hélène has mourned," thought Chavannes, "her heart will be less exacting than another's, more open to pity. She will not expect me to pretend a passion which I can feel no more. She will appreciate my respect for her secret, my gratitude for the affection which she will bear for my children."

And he married Hélène, never dreaming that he himself was the man she adored.

So Hélène entered his house, in place of her whom she had so greatly envied.

Joy shone in her eyes and illumined her face. She forgot that Paul had wished less to take another wife than to give a mother to his own children.

"His heart," she thought, "has been so cruelly frozen by the bitterness of parting that he has no more confidence in love. That is all. The wound must be left to heal."

She had feared, on entering the house, to be confronted everywhere with memories of the dead woman—on the walls, in the decoration of the rooms, the arrangement of the furniture, the colour of the hangings—but with a delicacy which charmed his bride, the widower had effaced from his dwelling every souvenir of the past.

Hélène could have believed herself the first mistress of that house, had it not been for Paul's melancholy and the presence of the two children.

She forced herself to love them, caressed them with assumed tenderness, only wishing through them to reach their father's heart, now happy in spoiling them to please Paul, then miserable to think that in them he kept alive his love for his lost wife, and her heart jealously reproached Chavannes with an incurable sadness, a vague mystery in his conduct.

Wearied with this faith to a memory, to an intangible phantom with which she could not combat, Hélène began to wish her husband to fall under some other influence, which, if more dangerous, would at least be material. This wish gave a kind of comfort, and soon she began to believe it true. She set spies on her husband and found out that every day, at a certain hour, he visited a house, always the same. She went there.

The building, let in flats, had not the appearance of an office. Standing on the pavement, Hélène asked herself, with anguish, what secret was hidden behind the drawn curtains of the high windows. Sure of treachery, she felt so profoundly wounded that, for a moment, she thought of throwing herself under the wheels of a passing waggon.

But curiosity and anger proved the victors. She was consumed by an ardent desire to know—to avenge so many tears shed in secret—and, who could tell? perhaps to crush Paul with the shame of his deceit, with the magnanimity of a pardon from which would spring gratitude and love.

She crossed the courtyard, entered the concierge's lodge, and asked falteringly:

"Has M. de Chavannes been here?"

The man looked at Hélène with surprise. She thought: "He is bribed. My visit has been foreseen. He will tell me a lie."

But the concierge, after glancing at the clock, replied: "We have not yet seen him to-day, and now it is a little late for him to come. However, it is not impossible. If madame wishes to await him she must ascend to the

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second stage, first door to the left. My wife is lighting M. de Chavanne's fire."

Hélène went up to the second storey. All the left side of the building was occupied by bachelors' apartments. She said to herself: "Paul has hired an apartment here to receive a mistress secretly. I will go in and wait. Perhaps he or she will come. They will find me ready."

She was so overcome that she had scarcely strength to pull the bell.

"M. de Chavánnes," said she to the woman who opened the door, "will probably be here soon, or perhaps——"

She hesitated, then continued in a lower voice and very quickly:

"Or, perhaps it may be another person—a lady. Do not say that I am here. I want to surprise him," and she forced herself to smile, so as to reassure the woman, who retired.

When she was alone in the ante-room Hélène thought she was going to faint.

One minute she stood irresolute, holding the handle of the door. At last she entered.

Immediately she recognised the blue hangings fringed with silver, and the Louis Quinze furniture. It was the boudoir of the first Mme. de Chavannes. She had already seen it once, years before, when she had come with her mother to pay a wedding visit to the young wife, who, not being in good health, had received them there, reclining on a lounge.

She had not forgotten a single detail of that first and last visit. Here she found arranged, just as before, the table, the chairs, and the lounge. Near at hand, on a bracket, was placed a small mirror, and in a Sèvres vase a bunch of fresh violets. It was Paul doubtless who had brought them, and before that delicate token of affection for the dead, Hélène felt her heart seized with a jealousy far more violent than if she had indeed found there the proofs of a baser love.

She burst into tears and sank to the ground.

She wept for a long time, sobbing violently like a hurt child, her head leaning against the bed on which the other had died. She could hear the noises of the street, at the same time distinct and confused; the throbbing of her temples mingled with the tic-tac of the clock.

All at once she heard a sound of footsteps in the corridor, near the door. She felt a mad terror at the thought that perhaps Paul would come in to find her there, to reproach her bitterly with having sought out his secret, and sullied by horrible suspicions his love beyond the tomb.

She got up. The footsteps passed the door, mounted to the flat above, and were lost.

Her eyes fell on a portrait of her rival, which, pallid like an apparition, seemed to watch her grief.

For a moment Hélène regarded the portrait without anger. Its dead and pitying look fell from the picture into the heart of the sorrowful wife like balm. Hélène sat down at the table. In a drawer which she opened was a roll of paper, tied with blue ribbon. She opened it, and, with a beating heart, still shaken by her sobs, she read:

"Last pages of my diary."

And beneath these words, written by a hand trembling with weakness:

"These are the last words I shall ever write. I feel that the end is near. The doctor gives me no more medicine, my dear Paul never leaves me, and the other day he forbade my old nurse to enter my room because he found her weeping at the foot of the bed."

Hélène, leaning on the table, read greedily, her eyes burning with tears, her bosom heaving. She read—her anger turned to tender pity—the pages in which the dying woman expressed her love and her wishes for those she must leave behind. But all at once, under the reader's eyes, and through her blinding tears, the words became dim and confused.

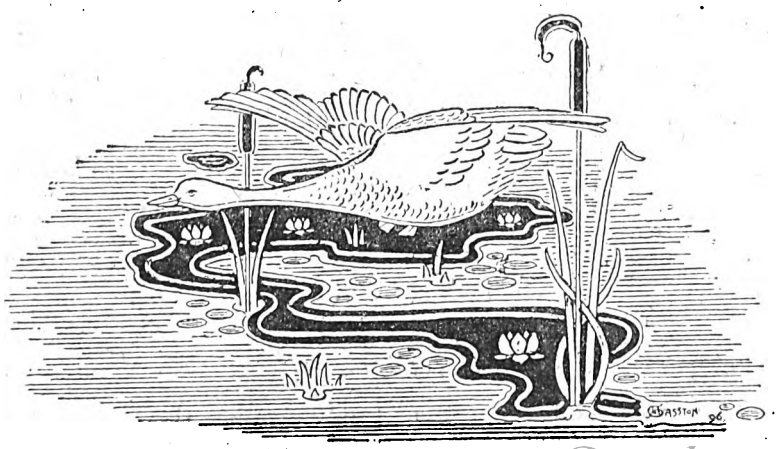
"Paul, my dear Paul," said the last lines of the diary, "you are too young to go through life alone, and above all, to bring up the babies I leave you. Some day, not too soon, but some day, you must take another wife. I wish it, I entreat it—only choose her such as I would have chosen, and oh! may she never quite banish me from your heart, and the memory of my little ones."

Hélène rose, shaking in every limb, and approaching the bed—the place where the dead woman had laid her head for the last time—she hid her face in the draperies and sobbed:

"Oh, no! I swear it—I swear it!"

Then she lowered her veil, and went out, after having, with trembling hands, removed all traces of her presence, so that Paul should never know of her visit.

G. M. Rigler.



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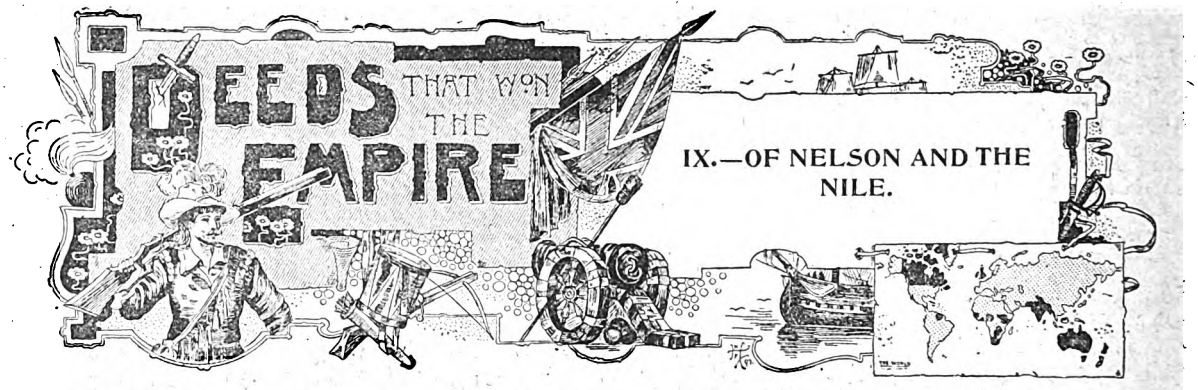

IX.—OF NELSON AND THE NILE.

Aboukir Bay resembles nothing so much as a piece bitten out of the Egyptian pancake—a crescent-shaped bay, patchy with shoals, stretching from the Rosetta mouth of the Nile to Aboukir, or, as it is now called, Nelson Island, that island being simply the outer point of a sandbank that projects from the western horn of the bay.

Flat shores, grey-blue Mediterranean waters, two horns of land six miles apart, that to the north projecting furthest and forming a low island—this, ninety-eight years ago, was the scene of what might almost be described as the greatest sea-fight in history.

On the evening of August 1st, 1798, thirteen great battle-ships lay drawn up in a single line parallel with the shore, and as close to it as the sand-banks permitted. The head ship was almost stem on to the shoal, which, running out at right angles to the shore, forms Aboukir Island.

The nose of each succeeding ship was exactly 160 yards from the stern of the ship before it, and, allowing for one or two gaps, each ship was bound by a great cable to its neighbour. It was a thread of beads, only each "bead" was a battle-ship, whose decks swarmed with brave men, and from whose sides gaped the iron lips of more than a thousand heavy guns.

The line was not exactly straight. It formed a very obtuse angle, the projecting point at the centre being formed by the *Orient*, the biggest warship at that moment afloat, a giant of 120 guns.

Next to her came the *Franklin*, of 80 guns, a vessel which, if not the biggest, was perhaps the finest sample of naval architecture in existence. The line of ships was more than one mile and a half long, and consisted of the gigantic flagship, three ships of the line of 80 guns, and nine of 74 guns. In addition, it had a fringe of gunboats and frigates, while a battery of mortars on the island guarded, as with a sword of fire, the gap betwixt the headmost ship and the island.

This great fleet had conveyed Napoleon, with 36,000 troops crowded into 400 transports, from France, had captured Malta on the voyage, and three weeks before had safely landed Napoleon and his soldiers in Egypt.

The French Admiral, Bruéys, knew that Nelson was coming furiously in his track, and after a consultation with all his captains he had drawn up his ships in the order which we have described, a position he believed to be unassailable; and at 3 o'clock on the afternoon of August 1st, 1798, his look-outs were eagerly watching the white topsails showing above the sea line, the van of Nelson's fleet.

Napoleon had kept the secret of his Egyptian expedition well, and the great Toulon fleet, with its swarm of transports, had vanished round the coast of Corsica and gone off into mere space so far as a bewildered British Admiralty knew.

A fleet of thirteen 74-gun ships, and one of 50 guns, was placed under Nelson's flag. He was ordered to pursue and destroy the vanished French fleet, and with characteristic energy he set out on one of the most dramatic sea-chases known to history. With the instinct of genius, he guessed that Napoleon's destination was Egypt; but while the French fleet coasted Sardinia, and went to the west of Sicily, Nelson ran down the Italian coast to Naples, called there for information, found none, and, carrying all sail, swept through the straits of Messina.

On the night of June 22nd the two fleets actually crossed each other's tracks. The French fleet, including the transports, numbered 572 vessels, and their lights, it might be imagined, would have lit up many leagues of sea. Yet through this forest of hostile masts, the English fleet, with keen eyes watching at every mast-head, swept and saw nothing.

Nelson, for one thing, had no frigates to serve as eyes and ears for him; his fleet, in sailor-like fashion, formed a compact body, three parallel lines of phantom-like pyramids of canvas sweeping in the darkness across the floor of the sea. Above all a haze filled the night; and it is not too much to say that the drifting grey vapour, which hid the French ships from Nelson's look-out men, changed the face of history.

Nelson used to explain that his ideal of perfect enjoyment would be to have the chance of "trying Bonaparte on a wind"; and if he had caught sound of bell or gleam of lantern from the great French fleet, and brought it to action in the darkness of the foggy night, can anyone doubt what the result would have been?

Nelson would have done off the coast of Sicily on June 22nd, 1798, what Wellington did on June 18th, 1815; and in that case there would have been no Marengo or Austerlitz, no retreat from Moscow, no Peninsular War, and no Waterloo. For so much in distracted human affairs may a patch of drifting vapour count.

Nelson, in a word, over-ran his prey. He reached Alexandria to find the coast empty; doubled back to Sicily, zig-zagging his way by Cyprus and Candia; and twelve hours after he had left Alexandria the topsails of the French fleet hove in sight from that port!

Napoleon's troops were safely landed, and the French Admiral had some four weeks in which to prepare for Nelson's return, and at 3 p.m. on August 1st, the gliding topsails of the *Swiftsure*, about Aboukir Island, showed that the tireless Englishman had, after nearly three months of pursuit, overtaken his enemy.

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The French, if frigates be included, counted seventeen ships to fourteen, and, ship for ship, they had the advantage over the British alike in crew, tonnage, and fire. In size the English ships scarcely averaged 1,500 tons; the French ships exceeded 2,000 tons. Nelson had only 17's, his heaviest gun being a 32-pounder. The average French 80-gun ship in every detail of fighting strength exceeded an English 98, and Bruéys had three such ships in his fleet, while his own flagship, the *Orient*, was fully equal to two English 74's. Its weight of ball on the lower deck alone exceeded that from the whole broadside of the *Bellerophon*, the ship that engaged it. The French, in brief, had an advantage in guns of about 20 per cent., and in men of 30 per cent. Bruéys, moreover, was lying in a carefully chosen position in a dangerous bay, of which his enemies possessed no chart, and the head of his line was protected by a powerful shore-battery.

Nothing in this great fight is more dramatic than the swiftness and vehemence of Nelson's attack. He simply leapt upon his enemy at sight! Four of his ships were miles off in the offing, but Nelson did not wait for them. In the long pursuit he had assembled his captains repeatedly in his cabin, and discussed every possible means of attacking the French fleet. If he found the fleet as he guessed, drawn up in battle-line, close in shore and anchored, his plan was to place one of his ships on the bow, another on the quarter, of each French ship in succession.

It has been debated who actually evolved the idea of rounding the head of the French line, and attacking on both faces. One version is that Foley, in the *Goliath*, who led the British line, owed the suggestion to a keen-eyed middy, who pointed out that the anchor buoy of the headmost French ship was at such a distance from the ship itself as to prove there was room to pass.

But the weight of evidence seems to prove that Nelson himself, as he rounded Aboukir Island, and scanned Bruéy's formation, with that swiftness of glance in which he almost rivalled Napoleon, saw his chance in the gap between the leading French ship and the shore. "Where a French ship can swing," he held, "a British ship can either sail or anchor," and he determined to double on the French line and attack on both faces at once.

He explained his plan to Berry, his captain, who in his delight exclaimed: "If we succeed, what will the world say?" "There is no 'if' in the case," said Nelson; "that we shall succeed is certain; who will live to tell the story is a very different matter."

Bruéys had calculated that the English fleet must come down perpendicularly to his centre, and each ship, in the process, be raked by a line of fire, a mile and a half long; but the moment the English ships rounded the island they tacked, hugged the shore, and swept through the gap between the leading vessel and the land. The British ships were so close to each other that Nelson, speaking from his own quarter-deck, was able to ask Hood, in the *Zealous*, if he thought they had water enough to round the French line. Hood replied that he had no chart, but would lead and take soundings as he went.

So the British line came on, the men on the yards taking in canvas, the leadsmen in the chains coolly calling the soundings. The battery roared from the island, the leading French ships broke into smoke and flame, but the steady British line glided on. The *Goliath* by this time led; and at half-past five the shadow of its tall masts cast by the setting sun fell over the decks of the *Guerrier*, and as Foley, its captain, swept past the Frenchman's bows, he poured in a furious broadside, bore swiftly up, and dropped—as Nelson, with that minute attention to detail which marks a great commander had ordered all his captains—an anchor from the stern, so that, without having to "swing," he was instantly in a fighting position on his enemy's quarter.

Foley, however, dropped his anchor a moment too late, and drifted on to the second ship in the line; but Hood, in the *Zealous*, coming swiftly after, also raked the *Guerrier*, and anchoring from the stern at the exact moment, took the place on its quarter Foley should have taken.

The *Orion* came into battle next, blasted the unfortunate *Guerrier*, whose foremast had already gone, with a third broadside, and swept outside the *Zealous* and *Goliath* down to the third ship on the French line. A French frigate, the *Sérieuse*, of thirty-six guns, anchored inside the French line, ventured to fire on the *Orion* as it swept past, whereupon Saumaurez, its commander, discharged his starboard broadside into that frigate.

The *Sérieuse* reeled under the shock of the British guns, its masts disappeared like chips, and the unfortunate Frenchman went down like a stone; while Saumaurez, lying himself on the larboard bow of the *Franklin* and the quarter of the *Peuple Souvrain*, broke upon them in thunder.

The *Theseus* followed hard in the track of the *Orion*, raked the unhappy *Guerrier* in the familiar fashion while crossing its bows, then swept through the narrow water-lane betwixt the *Goliath* and *Zealous* and their French antagonists, poured a smashing broadside into each French ship as it passed, then shot outside the *Orion*, and anchored with mathematical nicety off the quarter of the *Spartiate*. The water-line was not a pistol-shot wide, and this feat of seamanship was marvellous.

Miller, who commanded the *Theseus*, in a letter to his wife described the fight. "In running along the enemy's line in the wake of the *Zealous* and *Goliath*, I observed," he said, "their shot swept just over us, and knowing well that at such a moment Frenchmen would not have coolness enough to change their elevation, I closed them suddenly, and running under the arch of their shot, reserved my fire, every gun being loaded with two, and some with three, round shot, until I had the *Guerrier's* masts in a line, and her jib-boom about six feet clear of our rigging. We then opened with such effect that a second breath could not be drawn before her main and mizzen-mast were also gone. This was precisely at sunset, or forty-minutes past six."

The *Audacious*, meanwhile, was too impatient to tack round the head of the French line; it broke through the gap betwixt the first and second ships of the enemy, delivered itself, in a comfortable manner, of a raking broadside into both as it passed, took its position on the larboard bow of the *Conquérant*, and gave itself up to the joy of battle. Within thirty minutes from the beginning of the fight, that is, five British line of battle ships were inside the French line, comfortably established on the bows or quarters of the leading ships.

Nelson himself, in the *Vanguard*, anchored on the outside of the French line, within eighty yards of the *Spartiate's* starboard beam; the *Minotaur*, the *Bellerophon*, and the *Majestic*, coming up in swift succession, and at less than five minutes' interval from each other, flung themselves on the next ships.

How the thunder of the battle deepened, and how the

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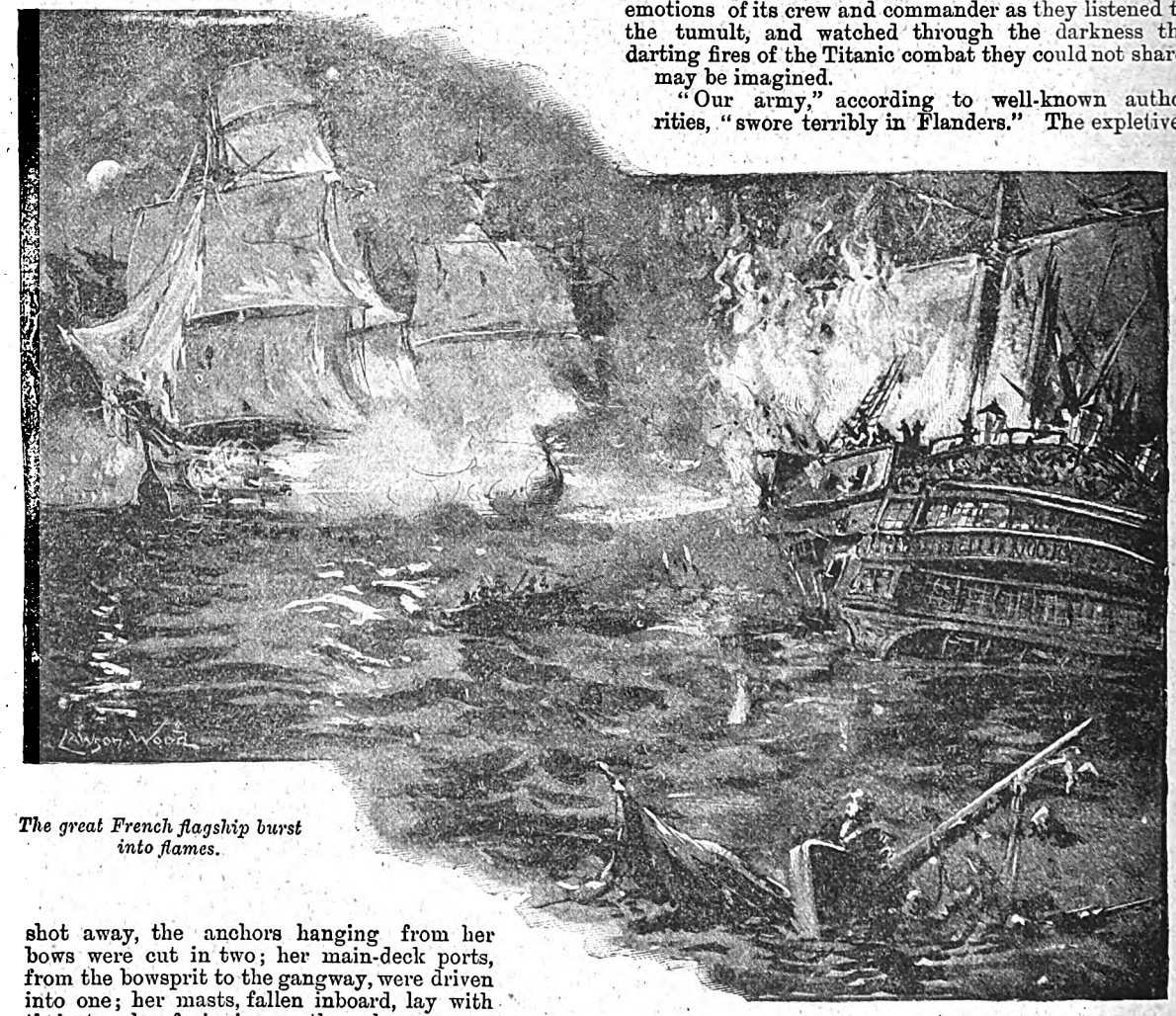
quick flashes of the guns grew brighter as the night gathered rapidly over the sea, must be imagined; but Nelson's swift and brilliant strategy was triumphant. Each ship in the French van resembled nothing so much as a walnut in the jaws of a nut-cracker. They were being "cracked" in succession, and the rear of the line could only look on with agitated feelings and watch the operations.

The fire of the British ships for fury and precision was overwhelming. The head of the *Guerrier* was simply



The great French flagship burst into flames.

shot away, the anchors hanging from her bows were cut in two; her main-deck ports, from the bowsprit to the gangway, were driven into one; her masts, fallen inboard, lay with their tangle of rigging on the unhappy crew, while some of her main-deck beams—all supports being torn away—fell on the guns.

Hood in the *Zealous*, who was pounding the unfortunate *Guerrier*, says: "At last, being tired of killing men in that way, I sent a lieutenant on board, who was allowed as I had instructed him, to hoist a light, and haul it down as a sign of submission."

But all the damage was not on the side of the French. The great French flagship, the *Orient*, by this time had added her mighty voice to the tumult, and the *Bellerophon*, who was engaged with her, had a bad time of it. It was the story of Tom Sayers and Heenan over again—a dwarf fighting a giant. Her mizzen-mast and main-mast were shot away, and after maintaining the dreadful duel for more than an hour, and having 200 of her crew struck down, at 8.20 p.m. the *Bellerophon* cut her cable and drifted, a disabled wreck, out of the fire.

Meanwhile the four ships Nelson had left in the offing, were beating furiously up to add themselves to the fight. Night had fallen by the time Troubridge in the *Culloden* came round the island; and then, in full sight of the great battle, the *Culloden* ran hopelessly ashore! She was, perhaps, the finest ship of the British fleet, and the emotions of its crew and commander as they listened to the tumult, and watched through the darkness the darting fires of the Titanic combat they could not share, may be imagined.

"Our army," according to well-known authorities, "swore terribly in Flanders." The expletives discharged that night along the decks and in the forecastle on the *Culloden* would probably have made even a Flanders veteran open his eyes in astonishment!

The *Swiftsure* and the *Alexander*, taking warning by the *Culloden's* fate, swept round her and bore safely up to the fight. The *Swiftsure*, bearing down through the darkness to the combat, came across a vessel drifting, dismasted and lightless, a mere wreck. Holliwell, the captain of the *Swiftsure*, was about to fire, thinking it was an enemy, but on second thoughts hailed instead, and got for an answer, the words, "*Bellerophon*; going out of action, disabled." The *Swiftsure* passed on, and, five minutes after the *Bellerophon* had drifted from the

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bows of the *Orient*, the *Swiftsure*, coming mysteriously up out of the darkness, took her place, and broke into a tempest of fire.

At nine o'clock the great French flag-ship burst into flame. The painters had been at work upon her on the morning of that day, and had left oil and combustibles about. The nearest English ships concentrated their fire, both of musketry and of cannon, on the burning patch, and made the task of extinguishing it hopeless.

Bruéys, the French admiral, had already been cut in two by a cannon shot, and Casabianca, his commodore, was wounded.

The fire spread, the flames leapt up the masts and crept athwart the decks of the great ship. The moon had just risen, and the whole scene was perhaps the strangest ever witnessed—the great burning ship, the white light of the moon above, the darting points of red flame from the iron lips of hundreds of guns below, the drifting battle-smoke, the cries of ten thousand combatants—all crowded into an area of a few hundred square yards.

The British ships, hanging like hounds on the flanks of the *Orient*, knew that the explosion might come at any moment, and they made every preparation for it, closing their hatchways, and gathering their firemen at quarters. But they would not withdraw their ships a single yard.

At ten o'clock the great French ship blew up with a flame that for a moment lit shore and sea, and a sound that hushed into stillness the whole tumult of the battle. Out of a crew of over 1,000 men only seventy were saved! For ten minutes after that dreadful sight the warring fleets seemed stupefied. Not a shout was heard, not a shot fired. Then the French ship next to the missing flag-ship broke into wrathful fire, and the battle awoke in full passions once more.

The fighting raged with partial intermission all through the night, and when morning broke Bruéys' curved line of mighty battle-ships, a mile and a half long, had vanished! Of the French ships, one had been blown up, one was sunk, one was ashore, four had fled, and the rest were prizes.

It was the most complete and dramatic victory in naval history.

The French fought on the whole with magnificent courage; but, though stronger in the mass, Nelson's strategy and the seamanship of his captains made the British stronger at every point of actual battle. The rear of the French line did not fire or lose a man.

The wonder is that when Nelson's strategy was developed, and its fatal character understood, Tilleneuve, who commanded the French rear, and was a man of undoubted courage, did not cut his cables, make sail, and come to the help of his comrades. A few hundred yards would have carried him to the heart of the fight.

Can anyone doubt whether, if the positions had been reversed, Nelson would have watched the destruction of half his fleet as a mere spectator? If nothing better had offered he would have pulled in a wash-tub into the fight.

Villeneuve afterwards offered three explanations of his own inertness: (1) He "could not spare any of his anchors." (2) "He had no instructions!" (3) "On board the ships in the rear the idea of weighing and going to the help of the ships occurred to nobody."

In justice to the French, however, it may be admitted that nothing could surpass the fierceness and valour with which, say, the *Tonnant* was fought. Its captain, Du Petit-Thouars, fought his ship magnificently, had first both his arms, and then one of his legs shot away, and died entreating his officers not to strike.

Of the ten French ships engaged, the captains of eight were killed or wounded. Nelson took the seven wounded captains on board the *Vanguard*, and, as they recovered, they dined regularly with him. One of the captains had lost his nose, another an eye, another most of his teeth, with musket shots.

Nelson, who himself had been wounded, and was still half blind as a result, at one of his dinners offered by mischance a case of tooth-picks to the captain on his left, who had lost most of his teeth. He discovered his error, and in his confusion handed his snuff-box to the captain on his right, who had lost his nose.

What was the secret of the British victory? Nelson's brilliant strategy was only possible by virtue of the magnificent seamanship of his captains, and the new fashion of close and desperate fighting, which Hood and Jarvis and Nelson himself had created.

It is a French writer, Captain Gravière, who says that the French naval habit of evading battle where they could, and of accepting action from an enemy rather than forcing it upon him, had ruined the *morale* of the French navy.

The long blockades had made Nelson's captains perfect seamen, and he taught them that close fighting at pistol-shot distance was the secret of victory.

"No English captain," he said, "can do wrong who, in fight, lays a ship alongside an enemy."

It was a captain of Nelson's school—a Scotsman—who at Camperdown, unable just as the action began, to read some complicated signal from his chief, flung his signal-book on the deck, and in broad Scotch, exclaimed: "Up with the hellem an' gang in the middle o't." That trick of "ganging into the middle o't," was irresistible.

The battle of the Nile destroyed the naval prestige of France, made England supreme in the Mediterranean, saved India, left Napoleon and his army practically prisoners in Egypt, and united Austria, Russia and Turkey in league against France.

The night battle in Aboukir Bay, in a word, changed the face of history.

(*"The Fusiliers at Albuera" next week.*)

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TOLD BY THE DOCTOR.

II.—The Secret of an Old Garden.

CHAPTER I.

The Disappearance of Yseult Dunbar.

The old garden in Pulteney Street, behind St. James' Park, has always interested me. Lying secluded and unnoticed behind a tall, red-brick wall, it covers an extent of ground which in that fashionable part of London must be worth a king's ransom. I had often, in passing the end of the street, wondered what lay behind the wall; and when, one day, the door stood ajar, I could not resist the temptation to go a few steps out of my way in order to satisfy my curiosity. It was like a glimpse into an old world—the well-kept grass lawn, the yews benched round, and the moss-grown gravel path, of which I got a view through the open gateway.

I wondered what man could afford to resist, for the sake of this old-time retreat, the golden persuasion of the speculator and builder. I wondered all the more when I found later to what a quiet, unostentatious little house the garden was attached; and I often wished that I could get another glimpse of the old-world garden.

I little thought then that it was to be so intimately connected with one of the most interesting cases ever brought under my notice—a case so mysterious and perplexing at the time, that the particulars are perhaps worth repeating. I will endeavour to give them as concisely as possible.

On August 13th, 1891, there called upon me at my house in Cheyne Walk, a young man who gave the name of Frank Ogilvie, and whose appearance prepossessed me at once in his favour. He was too impatient about consulting me even to take a chair, but started at once on the question which had brought him. He had heard of me through the papers, in connection with the celebrated Dessalene case, with which my name was considerably mixed up, and thought of me as a person likely to take interest in a medical case which suggested villainy.

I asked him to be seated, and assured him of my willingness to give him any assistance in my power.

"Thank you!" he said, still standing. "I should very much like you to come and see Miss Yseult Dunbar, the young lady who was to have been my wife."

"Is she ill?" I asked. His reply startled me.

"They say she is dead."

I looked at my visitor keenly, wondering for a moment whether I had to deal with a maniac, driven from sanity possibly by the death of a sweetheart. It would not have been the first time that I have had such visitors invoking my assistance in the most fantastic exploits.

But it required little more than a glance into the young man's face to assure me that there was no mania in the present case.

Mr. Ogilvie evidently understood the meaning of my glance. He went on quickly to explain:

"Miss Dunbar is lying apparently dead; I believe that she is in a trance."

"How long has this continued?" I asked.

"Three days. On Monday evening she was in perfect health, apparently. On Tuesday afternoon I received a telegram in the City to say that she had died suddenly, and when I hastened at once to her house I found her as I have stated."

"But she has been seen by medical men. Do they pronounce her dead?"

The young man gave a gesture of disgust and contempt.

"She has been seen by Dr. Mitcheller, a decrepid old woman, with a will of water. He has been persuaded into signing the certificate of death, as he could be persuaded into signing anything or stating anything, by Yseult's guardian."

"The guardian wishes to avoid an inquest, I suppose?" I said; "it is the first thought with many people when a sudden death occurs in the family."

"He wishes to see Yseult buried as quickly as possible, rather," returned Ogilvie sternly, "alive or dead."

"Indeed; that is a serious accusation to make against any man. What reason have you for making it?"

My companion glanced at the clock on the mantelshelf.

I asked him to be seated.

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"If you would not mind coming with me at once," he said, "you will be able to see Miss Dunbar, I think, without any interruption from Mr. Gavin Temple, her guardian; and I can tell you all the particulars on the way."

I could see that the young man was dying with impatience to have my decision on the question, which was of such supreme importance to him—the fact of his *fiancée's* life or death; and I made no demur, therefore, to his proposal, but put on my hat and accompanied my visitor into the street. He signalled a hansom from the end of Oakley Street, and we were soon driving rapidly in the direction of Pulteney Street, where, my companion informed me, Miss Dunbar lived.

"Now," I said, as soon as we were seated, "let me have all the particulars of the case, please. Firstly, who is Miss Yseult Dunbar—an orphan?"

I supposed so, from the mention of a guardian. "Who is this guardian?"

"Gavin Temple—a cousin of her father's."

"In whom you have no confidence?"

"That I have not," said Ogilvie. "I have found him out to be altogether unscrupulous."

"You think he would have an interest in making out that the young lady is dead, even if she is not?"

"It would be very much to his interest to see her buried," said my companion bitterly. "Miss Dunbar is the only bar between him and an income of two thousand a year. The money was left by her grandfather, Lord Englon, in a rather eccentric will, Gavin Temple, her father's cousin and only relative, as far as I know, being appointed executor and guardian. According to the will, all the money and the property in Pulteney Street, which is very valuable, was to go to the guardian in case Yseult died unmarried."

"And the lady appears to have died just as she was about to marry?—a coincidence which is certainly suspicious in itself," I said.

I was ashamed of alluding so unsympathetically to the marriage when I saw the look of inexpressible pain which came into my companion's face.

"We should have been married in two days' time," he said brokenly. "The banns have been published, even."

"Do you think that this Gavin Temple has killed his ward?" I said. "It is best for us to speak quite openly to one another."

My companion shook his head.

"I have not thought so," he replied gravely. "From what I know of his character, I should say he would not take the risk of doing that. My idea is that Yseult has gone into a trance—she has done so before—and that Temple suspects it, and is anxious to get her buried before she revives."

"Excuse me," I said, interrupting him, "but the previous trances are important. Have you seen Miss Dunbar in a trance before?"

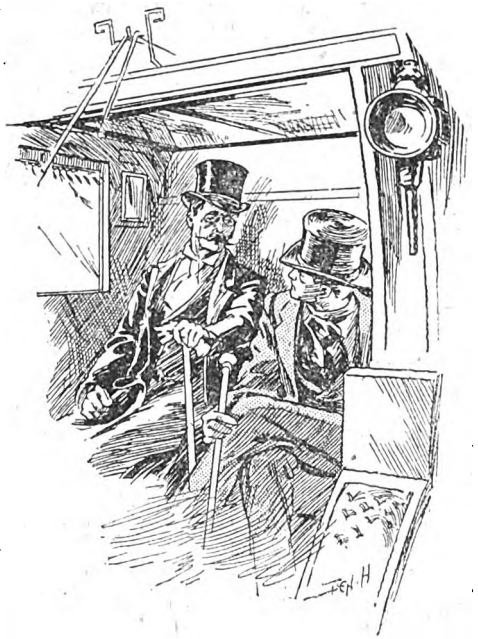
"No; I have heard about them only. When we became engaged, she thought it her duty to tell me that she had had these trances as a child. The last occurred, I believe she said, when she was eleven—that is, nine years ago."

"It is certainly a case in which great caution ought to be exercised," I said, fearing all the while lest I should raise undue hope in the young man's heart. "Has Mr. Temple fixed the date of the funeral?"

"Yes; for to-morrow."

"That is certainly too soon," I said. "Unless I find the clearest proofs of death when I see the lady, we will take measures to have the funeral stopped by reporting the case to the Registrar-General, if necessary. The certificate of death, of course, was out of order, if Dr. Mitcheller did not see the deceased until after death."

"Yes," replied Ogilvie, "that is why I was in such a



Driving rapidly in the direction of Pulteney Street.

hurry to get you to the house. I feared that if Gavin Temple had the least idea of what was going on, he might hasten the burial in order to circumvent us. For that reason I have kept a watch on the house every day since the trance commenced."

"If trance it is," I added, fearing that my words had made the young man too hopeful.

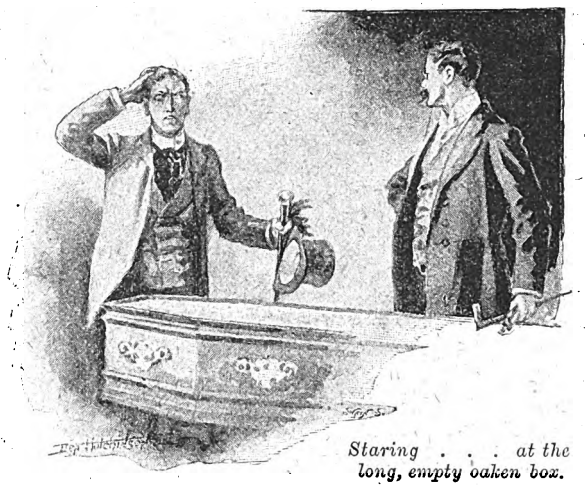
"Thank Heaven! we shall know in five minutes," he replied, as our hansom turned Buckingham Palace Road.

"Possibly," I said. "But you have not told me anything tangible against this man Temple. What makes you suspect him of so much villainy? If he has given proofs of it, I wonder that you allowed your *fiancée* to remain in his care."

"I blame myself every hour for it," said Ogilvie. "It seems madness to me, now I look back upon it. But any other course would have been difficult; and, in reality, I know little or nothing against the man. It is only what I feel and suspect. For instance, among Lord Englon's property when he died was a very valuable collection of gold ornaments, some of them richly jewelled, and all of them having a value even greater than their intrinsic worth on account of their age and rarity. Well, as soon as the old man breathed his last—six months ago now—the family jewels were found to be lost. They were bequeathed, with almost everything else, to Yseult. Now, of course, it is only suspicion, but I have always put down the disappearance to Gavin Temple. Certainly nobody else had his opportunities. He lived in the house, you know, as a sort of companion to Lord Englon, he and his daughter."

"Gavin Temple is a married man, then?" I asked.

"Yes, a widower. His daughter, Madge, as I said, lives with him in Yseult's house. They were to remain there until she married. The old man seems to have dated everything by his grand-daughter's marriage.



Staring . . . at the long, empty oaken box.

There is a locked trunk, too, in the place, which is to be opened on her wedding-day—or the day of her death. I suppose her guardian has opened it by now."

He broke off suddenly, overcome by the remembrance of his sorrow, and just then the hansom turned into the street with the tall brick wall, and to my suprise stopped at the green door which opened upon my old-world garden.

"Is this Miss Dunbar's house?" I said as we left the hansom and turned into the refreshing shade of the garden. "What a lovely place! I wonder at its preservation in such a valuable neighbourhood?"

"It was a matter of faith with the old lord to preserve it," answered my companion quickly.

We were crossing the lawn under the yews towards the house, and Ogilvie seemed consumed by nervous impatience to reach it.

"If Gavin Temple knows who you are, he will try some devilry to prevent your seeing Yseult," he said. "We will enter by the French windows of the drawing-room, which open on the garden, without announcing our presence, and I will take you straight up to her room."

"Yes, that will be best."

The drawing-room was empty; but in the passage outside, as we passed through, a servant in black went by. She started when she saw us, but my companion nodded reassuringly.

"Is Mr. Temple in, Mary?" he asked.

"No, sir; he has not been in since this morning."

"All the better; we shall not be disturbed," he said to me in an undertone, and led the way up the broad oaken stairs. Frank Ogilvie was acting under excitement, I could see, and I must admit that I was not quite as calm as usual. The young man's story had moved me greatly, and the thought that another few moments would decide whether I must encourage or dispel for ever the hope he was so fondly harbouring—the hope that his sweetheart still lived—made me feel nervous and agitated.

"This is Yseult's room. They have placed her body in the coffin already, in here," said my companion, stopping before a curtained doorway, and he turned the knob softly.

I followed close behind into the room, which seemed to be a lady's bed-room. The coffin stood at the other side of the bed on a couple of trestles. I was so impatient to see the body which it contained, that I passed my companion and walked quickly across the room. Then I turned quickly and faced him.

"I thought you said that she had been placed in the coffin?" I began, but my words died in my throat when I saw that Frank Ogilvie was staring in a strange, petrified manner at the long, empty oaken box. I thought for a moment that he was losing his senses.

Then suddenly his face changed and became inflamed with anger.

"They have buried her!" he cried in a voice of passionate anguish. "Oh, why did I leave her with him—the murderer—the villain!"

I tried to calm him.

"If Miss Yseult had been buried," I said quietly, "the coffin could not have been left here. Are you quite sure she has really been placed in it?"

"I saw her here to-day," answered Ogilvie, looking down into the empty casket. "They have buried her while I was away."

The thought that Miss Dunbar might have recovered from her trance—if trance it was—did not seem for a moment to occur to him, and I hesitated to hazard this explanation of her disappearance for fear of awakening in the young man's heart hopes which might be only doomed to disappointment, especially as the servant downstairs had made no mention of such a remarkable circumstance.

"You expostulated against the body being placed in the coffin?" I asked.

"Yes, most emphatically."

"Then perhaps your remonstrance has had effect, and the body been moved," I said, "until the fact is more certain that it is that of a corpse. Let us call a servant and inquire."

I crossed to the bell-pull as I spoke, and my summons was answered almost immediately by the girl whom we had met on entering the house. I undertook to question her, since Ogilvie seemed so hopelessly assured that there had been foul play, to show any interest. He stood by the empty box on the trestles, while I put my few interrogatories, watching the girl's face keenly while I did so.

There was really no doubting the completeness of her astonishment when she heard that the coffin was empty. She poked her head into the doorway, peeping over at the coffin across the room, as though she could not believe my words.

"Empty, sir? It can't be, surely!" she exclaimed. "Why, there hasn't been anybody in the room!"

"Look for yourself," I said. And the girl crossed the room to the open box.

Frank Ogilvie came over to my side.

"How cleverly the villain has managed it!" he said in a whisper. "The girl evidently has seen nothing of the removal."

"But, my dear fellow," I exclaimed; "you say that you saw the body this morning. Mr. Temple cannot have carried it out and buried it without a coffin in broad daylight."

"Then he has hidden it in the house. We will make a complete search at once."

"Is there nobody of whom we can make inquiries

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first?" I said. "Perhaps there may have been some honest reason for the removal."

"I am afraid not," replied my companion. "But I will ask Madge—Miss Temple, if she is in."

"You mean Gavin Temple's daughter?"

"Yes."

"Ask her, by all means. I am anxious to see her," I quickly replied.

Miss Madge Temple was a *petite* young lady of about twenty-six, with a pale little face, and small black eyes. Her eyes looked all the blacker through contrast with her light, colourless hair. She came at once in answer to the request which we sent by the maid, who, during our short conversation together, had been searching all over the room, as if she expected to find the coffin's occupant under the bed, or hidden in the wardrobe.

Miss Temple seemed fully as astonished as the maid had been at our news. She made the suggestion which had occurred to my mind, but which I dared not mention to Ogilvie, for fear of raising false hopes.

"You thought all along that Yseult was only in a trance," she said. "Perhaps she has recovered and got out of the coffin herself."

The young man shook his head sadly.

"Where could she have gone? Why did she call none of you?"

"And what did she put on?" added the maid. "I've looked in the wardrobe and drawers, and none of Miss Yseult's things have been touched."

"Let us have a look through the house, at any rate," I suggested; and as there was nothing else to do, we started in single file, visiting all the rooms in succession. In each room Frank Ogilvie remained to search thoroughly every place in which a corpse could possibly have been hidden. It was easy enough to see that he would not even consider the explanation of Yseult's disappearance which Miss Temple had suggested. He had made up his mind so thoroughly to expect some villainy on the part of that young lady's father, that it did not seem possible for the disappearance to be due to any cause but Gavin Temple's wicked machinations. The maid's statement that none of Miss Yseult's clothes had been touched was quite enough to dispel what faint hopes he might have had of his sweetheart's resurrection. He marched through the rooms, peeping into wardrobes and boxes with a dark frown on his determined face, and he did not speak a word during the whole search. Madge Temple followed him about with tears in her little black eyes, speaking to him now and then words which I could not catch, and which met with no reply.

Only once he spoke. It was when we entered what I suppose was Gavin's study. On the table stood an iron deed-box, bearing the name of *Miss Yseult Dunbar* in white letters. Ogilvie pointed towards it.

"He has opened it, I suppose?"

Miss Temple shivered before his glance.

"Yes," she answered, in a low tone. "The will said: 'On the day of her death.'"

Ogilvie made no reply.

The search was ended at last, and then we stood and looked at each other in bewilderment. Every room and attic in the place, I believe, we had examined, outhouses included, and not a trace of Yseult Dunbar was to be found, alive or dead.

"Please, miss, I can't stay another night in this house," said the servant, who had accompanied us throughout, getting whiter and more scared-looking every room we entered. "It isn't canny, miss; I shall have to go, if I lose my wages and character as well for it."

And uncanny it really did appear. I began to think that Frank Ogilvie must be right, and that the only explanation of this mysterious disappearance was to ascribe it to the cunning machinations of an interested and unscrupulous man.

CHAPTER II.

On the Track.

I was very much afraid, as I have said throughout, of encouraging in the young man hopes that were almost certain to be ill-founded; but I could not ignore altogether the possibility of Miss Yseult's recovery.

Suppose the lady had been merely in a trance, as Ogilvie seemed at first to imagine, and had recovered and left the house—how dressed I did not stop to calculate—I had to think what would be the most likely refuge to which she could have taken her way. I inquired of Ogilvie where his own residence lay; and when he informed me that it was within five minutes walk of Pulteney Street, I suggested at once that we should repair thither, in the hope of hearing some news of the missing lady. In my heart of hearts I hoped that we should find Miss Yseult herself there; but I did not suggest it to my companion. I was glad I had not done so when we arrived at the house, a substantial residence in Queen Anne's Gate, and found that nothing whatever was known of the mysterious occurrence.

Ogilvie's mother, a sweet, aristocratic-looking old lady, seemed deeply affected by her son's trouble. She took me aside at the end of our talking, and begged me to do all I could to find out the solution of his *fiancée's* disappearance. Of course, I assured her that now I had taken up the case, I should never rest until I knew all about it.

"You will not think it wrong of me, I know," she said hesitatingly, after she had thanked me, "if I mention to you, as I should certainly not do to anybody

Miss Madge Temple was a petite young lady.

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less interested in the case, my own suspicions. It is hateful to suggest suspicion of anybody to a third person; but in a case like the present it seems necessary,

Ogilvie pointed towards it.

and I can depend, of course, upon your receiving it as it is given?"

I bowed in silence, wondering what was coming. The old lady's voice sank almost to a whisper.

"Whatever foul play there has been in connection with poor Yseult's death," she said, "I am inclined to credit to Madge Temple, rather than to her father."

I was surprised. Miss Madge Temple had not struck me altogether in an unfavourable light. But very possibly Mrs. Ogilvie knew much more of her than I did.

"What motive would she have?" I asked.

"The same motive as her father. Whatever wealth he gains, of course, by poor Yseult's death, his daughter will share."

She stopped: but I thought there was more to come, and pressed for further information.

We were standing in a room furnished cosily as a library and study, which opened out of the hall, and Frank had left us, to make a hopeless search through the house.

Mrs. Ogilvie glanced over her shoulder, as though afraid that he would return and overhear, as she answered my questioning.

"Yes, she had other reasons. I am sure she was jealous of Yseult."

"She cared for your son?"

"I am afraid so."

I nodded gravely.

"The thought occurred to me when she followed him in his search over the house to-day, but I am fully persuaded that she knows nothing of the disappearance."

"Possibly not. Her father would not trust her with his plans on this very account, lest she should reveal them to Frank; but, from her conduct after Yseult's death, I have grave suspicions that her conscience is not altogether clear concerning it."

"Well, at present the one question is: Where is Miss Yseult Dunbar?" I said in a louder key, as Frank re-entered the room. "Had the young lady any other friends in London from whom we could make inquiries?"

Young Ogilvie shook his head.

"She had absolutely no friends," he said, "apart from us. Gavin has taken pains to make her life as secluded a one as possible. If a happy chance had not taken me to the house, she would have known nobody."

"Then whatever remote hopes we may have had that the young lady left the house herself alive must be abandoned," I said. "If she had recovered, and feared to remain in the house with her cousin, she would certainly have placed herself at once under the protection of your mother. I am afraid there is no room whatever for hope of that sort."

"I had no hope," replied Frank with tightened lips.

I was glad to hear him say it.

"We can do nothing now," I said, "until we have seen Gavin Temple." And both Mrs. Ogilvie and Frank agreed with me, although the former seemed rather afraid at the thought of the meeting between her son and the man suspected of tampering with his *fiancée's* life.

"I must track him if possible," said the young man, "and discover how he has spent the day. Dare I hope that your engagements will allow you to accompany me, Dr. Tavel?"

His mother's face brightened when I replied that till the mystery of Yseult Dunbar's disappearance was solved, I had no engagements. She had evidently begun to rely upon my exertions a good deal, and I made up my mind that I would prove myself worthy of her trust.

(*This story will conclude next week.*)

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Here you have the last batch of pictures. Write down the names in the spaces provided, fasten the five lists together, at the top left-hand corner (sending the lower half of the page only), put them in an envelope marked **Members**, and post in time to arrive at Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., by first post, Monday, May 3rd. Attempts arriving later will be disqualified.

It is to be hoped that each competitor will send some small subscription to the Fresh Air Fund—say twopence in stamps. The amount is limited only by your generosity. Do not stick the stamps on the attempt. Put them in a separate envelope.

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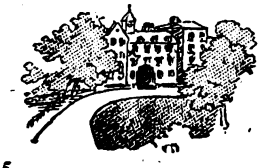

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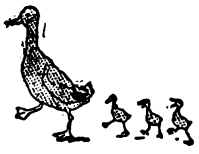

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No. 37.....

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Remember these Things.

Young People should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the surnames of the people, except in cases where the christian names are depicted.

Name.....

Address.....

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No. 40.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of M.P.'s.—Whitaker's Almanack, the London Post Office Directory, Hazell's Annual, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

Mr. Hawke Schemes.

The very day after the death of Lemaitre, Cécile and Jack Heathcote started for the Casa Calvo, on the banks of Lake Como. Cécile first telegraphed to Lady Hilton, who was then at Dieppe, telling her that she had discovered the whereabouts of Edith, and would bring her at once to Paris, where Lady Hilton should await her.

But when Cécile and Jack reached the Casa Calvo, Edith was not there. She had fled secretly from the house.

"I say, darling, when *are* we going to be married?" said Jack, in fresh despair. "Miss Wentworth is becoming too intolerably tiresome, you know."

"Be silent," answered Cécile. "On the same day that she is married you shall be my master, sir. Till then I hold the reins."

"But she isn't even engaged yet, is she?"

"Oh, yes, but it is a private engagement. Be silent!"

Meanwhile Edith had fled again, and was again as lost to them as ever. They could not even remotely guess where she was, not having any clue to the motives of her conduct.

Two hours after them, Hawke, with a red handkerchief bandaged aslant round his bruised forehead under his hat, also arrived at the Casa Calvo, in urgent haste to see Edith. Mr. Hawke was desperately in need of funds, and his ingenuity had contrived a scheme to fill his empty pockets. What had become of Lemaitre's money—where it was deposited—or where Lemaitre, if he had it in a lump, had hidden it, he could not conjecture. The money had, in fact, an hour before Hawke's arrival at the château on the morning of Lemaitre's return, been thrown by Lemaitre upon the same flames which burnt the coat and the photograph. For money the doomed and haunted man had had no longer any need.

Hawke was in quest of money. And he decided to get it from Captain Arthur Musgrave.

He had seen in an English paper that Arthur was severely wounded at the battle of Kassassin, and now lay in hospital at Ismailia. How much, Mr. Hawke wondered, would Arthur be willing to pay for Edith? Mr. Hawke knew where Edith was; Arthur did not; Hawke knew the secret which had banished her from her friends, and could now reveal it; Arthur did not.

"He's gone through a lot for that there girl," pondered Mr. Hawke; "he ought to be willing to put down something very handsome for her. If he is, I undertake to bring 'em together!"

But first he went to make sure of Edith herself, and open her eyes to the fact that he was not her father—and Edith was gone.

But whither? Neither Cécile nor Hawke had any idea where to turn next.

Cécile, however, was not anxious: she now knew the precise reason of Edith's flight from home; and that it was a reason not based upon facts. All she had to do was to put a message in the *Courier du Soir* which Edith appeared to read, saying that her father was, in actual fact, Ernest Wentworth: and at once Edith would cease to have reason to keep away from home.

Cécile at once telegraphed to the *Courier du Soir* the words which she wished inserted, and set out westward again with Jack. She reached Marseilles that night. Up to then she had no notion that such a battle as Kassassin had been fought. But during the evening a letter from Lady Hilton to the *poste restante* gave her the news of Arthur's wounding.

"Then that is where Edith is gone to!" cried Cécile. "She has gone, or is going, to Egypt to nurse him! Quick, Jack! See when the next boat leaves Brindisi."

Jack went hunting among the tables of the hotel, and found that the next P. & O. boat, the *Orient*, left Brindisi on the evening of the fourth day.

"We will meet her there, then!" cried Cécile.

"But are you sure of your ground this time?" said Jack. "The movements of Miss Wentworth don't in general seem very calculable——"

"Can't you be silent, then? She is going to Egypt, I tell you! She is! I divine it. Quick! Send a telegram to Lady Hilton, saying that Edith will be at Brindisi in time for the *Orient*, and I, too, and you!"

"But—suppose it isn't true, darling?"

"You have not, then, learnt to trust me a little? She has seen the news in the papers about Arthur's wound. That is what has happened!"

"But won't she also see your message in to-morrow's paper?"

"No—probably not. She has no longer any interest in papers. All her thoughts now are centred upon Egypt, and upon escaping Dr. Danton in case he should discover her flight, and pursue her. She does not know, remember, that Danton is dead."

At this time Inspector Wheeler had just arrived at Lemaitre's château, in hot search for Hawke. Cécile, half in fun, had telegraphed him information where Hawke might be found. Hawke, however, was gone. Wheeler made inquiries which sent him upon another expedition of urgent haste to the Casa Calvo, and here again Hawke had vanished.

"I'll pat that man on the back *yet*, see if I don't!" said Wheeler to himself. He had the belief that half the sorrows in the world were due to Hawke.

At the railway station he received information which led him to believe that Hawke had travelled to Genoa, and to Genoa Mr. Wheeler accordingly directed his course.

Genoa, in fact, was where Mr. Hawke really was. Nearly his last shilling was spent; and on the night after his visit to the Casa Calvo, he stood in a cell of a Jew pawnbroker's shop with his heavy gold watch and chain in his hand.

As he leant forward to scoop his money in over the counter he saw in the next compartment—Edith!

Her head was turned away; she did not see Hawke. Nearly all the afternoon she had been going to and fro between her mean lodging and the pawnshop, pledging everything of any sort of value that remained to her. The

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paper which she had seen had reported Arthur as dying. She was going to him. It was impossible that his head should die on another breast.

Her difficulty was to find money to pay her train fare and steerage-passage.

When she went out of the pawnshop, Hawke followed her with perfect caution. Her scanty luggage was apparently already at the station; for she walked straight in that direction. Hawke heard her take ticket for Brindisi.

"Oh, so?" he said to himself, "that's it, is it? You've found out, then, without your father's assistance? But suppose I put a spoke in yer little wheel, my lady? What if I claim you now as a father, my hearty?"

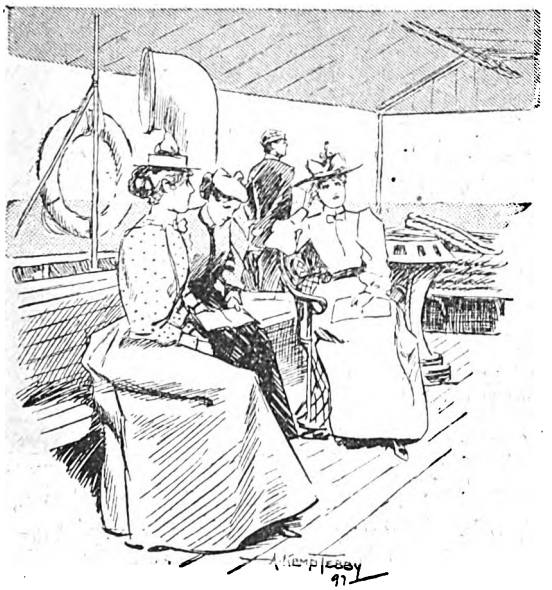
But he had a better thought. If he could get to Egypt before her. He was afraid of attempting to detain her here; she might be rebellious, or fly. There might be a row: he had an instinct that Wheeler was after him again. But if he could get to Egypt before her? If he could see Arthur, and bring Arthur away in the hope of seeing her, from the place where *she* expected to see *him*? Each would then be hopelessly lost to the other; and Mr. Hawke's idea for making them happy by bringing them together was something like ten thousand pounds.

"I think Musgrave could go that," pondered Mr. Hawke.

But to get to Egypt before her? He consulted time tables, and saw that she would probably leave Brindisi in the afternoon of the third day. If he could get the right craft he could do it. He, too, immediately took train for the south.

Brindisi at its best is a wretched town. In spite of the constant stream of people passing through it, the unenterprising inhabitants have hardly erected a building since the time it was a fishing village.

There is, therefore, not a very great choice of hostelries at the place. Edith had selected the cheapest at the end of the town. In the afternoon of her second day there, the



Beneath the deck awning.

door of her room opened without warning, and Cécile Delisle rushed into her arms with a wild and happy cry.

Lady Hilton, pensively smiling, stood in the doorway, and Jack Heathcote, and behind them Professor Queech, with Mrs. Queech, once Miss Newton. These last, travelling to Palestine in quest of data for the Professor's theories, had met the Hilton party *en route*, and had come on thus far with them.

"Edith, dear, I am very pleased—very pleased, my child—to see your face again!" said Lady Hilton, "and you went from us wholly for nothing, as we now know. How could you? Edith, Edith!"

Edith, trembling in every limb, seemed to herself as if just risen from the grave. Somehow, without understanding, she gathered that life, happiness, was to be hers again. She saw a film like tears in Lady Hilton's eyes, and wiped it gently away.

"I am yours now for 'ever!" she whispered; "but once more—only once—I must go from you."

"But why, dear?"

"I am going to Arthur! You will let me?"

"We are all going, dear, all of us here; even Professor Queech, whom you may remember, and Miss Newton, now his wife."

Lady Hilton retired to the outer room, and Cécile and Edith entered upon a debauch of caresses.

"But let one look at one's own soul! Why, you are no longer a girl—you are a woman! Edith, have you changed to me? Am I not still your chief?"

"I am a *woman*, you say. One cannot cease to love one's soul; but a *woman's* chief love must be a man, Cécile!"

She laughed gaily, for the first time for many months.

When the steamer arrived they discovered that one of the saloon cabins had been reserved for two Indian merchants, who were to join the ship at Suez; and that, to that point, this was at the service of the ladies. Jack and the Professor would be accommodated by the steward somewhere.

They took their seats as the sun set beneath the deck-awning on the afternoon of departure, gazing out over the water at the lessening shores of Italy.

Mr. Hawke, meanwhile, had made terms with the *padrone* of a fair-sized Maltese *speronare*, whom he met at Brindisi, and, with three days' start, was now well on towards the coast of North-Eastern Africa.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHEELER v. HAWKE.

EDITH had seen in the *Courier du Soir* that Arthur was grievously wounded, and likely to die. This, however, was not the case. Immediately after the battle of Kassassin, he was missed by Pendragon. On his return to Mahsameh, Pendragon, almost weeping, organised a search-party of tired troopers, and returned to the scene of action. They found Arthur lying insensible over Tom Wilson's body.

But the next day the regimental surgeon at Mahsameh said to him:

"Your breast-wound is not dangerous; I have got the bullet out. But I see that your ankle is much swollen. You will only bother us here. What I shall do will be to put you in one of the men-of-war launches, and send you to Ismailia, where you will be much better looked after than at the front. You will, moreover, be far cooler there, if you get a decent tent."

And to Ismailia Arthur accordingly went, and contrived to obtain very suitable quarters. He got the use of a house close to the canal, and had a large square tent pitched in the inclosed garden, overlooking the canal, where it was both cool and retired. After a couple of days' pertect rest, he felt much recovered.

He was sitting at his tent door on a balmy, sultry afternoon, his white head uncovered, his ankle on a canvas chair, and a look of gentle sorrow in his clear eyes, when from the direction of the canal, a stout short man approached; and Mr. Hawke, in his open frock-coat, but without the heavy gold chain of other days, stood before him.

"I know your face; who are you?" said Arthur.

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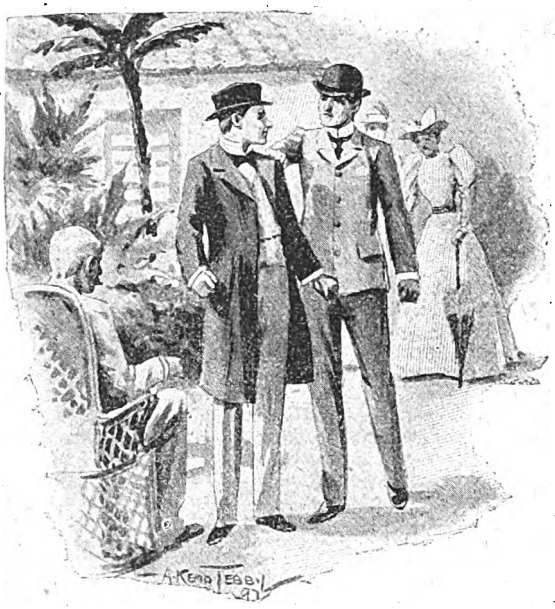
He had seen Mr. Hawke on that awful day, when he slept the Sleep of the Angels, at No. 11, Rue Taitbout.

"My name is—hem!—Hawke, sir."

"Where have I seen you before?"

"Oh, well, that's neither here nor there. I was a good



"Got *you, Hawke!*"

deal mixed up with Dr. Danton, you know. Danton's dead."

"Ah!—and what is it you want now, Mr. Hawke?"

"I'm come about Miss Wentworth. Are you in a fit state to travel at once?"

"I think so. Tell me: Miss Wentworth, you say?"

"That fetches him," thought Hawke. He added aloud: "I know where Miss Wentworth is. If you can arrange to leave here within the next half hour, I can take you to her."

"Where is she?"

"She's in Europe. But, of course, I am a poor man. I don't want to make b'lieve that I'm altogether what you'd call a philanthropist. If I take you to her, the figure would be five thousand as soon as we reach Italy, and five thousand when I bring you face to face."

"I see. You are a good disciple of Dr. Danton. Well, suppose I say yes: what guarantee have I, first, that you will keep your word, and, second, that Miss Wentworth desires to see me?"

"Well, don't you see, I'll keep my word for my own interest; and I can tell you for a fact that Miss W—— does want to see you. You see, the reason she ran away from home was a little fib which Danton—you know Danton's little ways—which Danton told her about her parents. Once she knows that that warn't true, she'll receive you with open arms, and everything will be first rate."

"Was this the object with which you came to Egypt?" asked Arthur.

"That wur just it."

"What did you come in?"

"A sailing boat from Malta."

"And you have her ready for the voyage back?"

"Yes—everything's ready, only waiting for you."

"All right, Mr. Hawke. I'll go with you. But remember, if there is any trick in this, you shall have a lesson which you won't forget."

"Oh, well, I don't say, mind you, that as soon as ever we get to Italy I shall take you straight away to Miss W——. I don't say that, you know. But I know where she is—and sooner or later——"

"All right, I'll go. You speak fairly enough. Just lend me a hand—my ankle is rather bad——"

But Hawke never lent him a hand. At that moment the garden gate opened, and a big, well-fed man, with fresh-coloured face, walked briskly up the path; before Hawke could look round, he felt a clap on his shoulder, and heard the words:

"*Got* you, Hawke!"

Every drop of blood left Mr. Hawke's face. He knew that voice.

But there was a ripple of laughter in the air—the sweet voices of women—petticoats fluttering at a run up the garden walk; and Edith was on the breast of Arthur; and Cécile's jubilee of mirth was ringing in the air; and tears were rolling down Lady Hilton's cheeks; and Professor Queech was saying to his bride, the Miss Newton of old:

"A most extraordinary thing, now; with reference to that, I can tell you, my dear, a fact not, I believe, generally known——"

And Cécile in her mad gaiety was crying:

"Oh, Inspector Wheeler, I *do* so congratulate you!—you have got him at last! you have got Mr. Hawke!"

And Mr. Hawke was saying:

"Well, he has; you have, Wheeler. Fair's fair. But I always did say I could outwit you, Wheeler. You haven't got the shadow of a charge to bring against me. You will have to pay my passage to England, which just now is a very fortunate thing for me——"

And suddenly Cécile was dragging Edith from Arthur, in order to ask him:

"But Tom Wilson! where is he?"

And there was Arthur's blank, and sad, and guilty face, with its white crown of hair, unable to utter to her the words she guessed.

And there was Jack Heathcote with his arm round her neck, trying to draw away her hands from before her weeping eyes; and she, with face hidden against the canvas of the tent, was crying and mourning, as mourners mourn and skirl over the beloved dead:

"Oh, Tom, my boy! Oh, Tom, my child, my child!"

The End.

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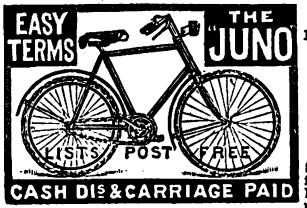

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Answers to Correspondents.

On page 571 will be found the last batch of sketches in the Picture Puzzle Competition. When you have solved all the sketches you can, put them in an envelope and send them along, to reach this office by first post Monday, May 3rd. You will notice the remarks about a small subscription to the Fresh Air Fund. I am sure that you will inclose as large an amount as you can possibly afford.

Young Shaver.—If you wish to have a fine, smooth beard and moustache when you are older, you certainly should not shave as much as you say you do, for this treatment tends to make the hair rough and coarse.

H. H. G.—In both Japan and Russia tea is provided gratuitously to their passengers by the railway companies. You should never send your manuscript rolled.

G. N.—The chances are less than you think. Only one couple in a thousand live to celebrate their golden wedding. However, I hope you will be spared to see September 27th.

Puzzled.—A "first foot" in the North of England is the person who first crosses the threshold of a house after the advent of the New Year. In Yorkshire a fair man, or a woman, be she dark or fair, is not allowed to be the "first foot," as the superstition runs that such an event would bring ill-luck upon the house throughout the year. If, however, a dark man is the first to enter the house, good fortune will follow the family.

D. C. B.—There are only two species of birds found only in the British Isles. These are the red grouse and the coal tit.

T. B. C.—As regards private fortune, our own Queen is the richest monarch in the world.

G. C. M.—Yes, the same kind of wire may be used for both telegraphic and telephonic purposes.

E. K. J.—The idea that it is lucky to find a horseshoe arises from an old superstition that a horseshoe was a protection against witches.

Tommy Atkins.—The bed of the French soldier is undoubtedly the most comfortable of all soldiers' beds. It consists of a wooden or iron bedstead, a straw bed, a wool mattress, sheets, a brown woollen coverlet, and an extra quilt for cold weather.

A. W.—A simple method of distinguishing between a genuine and paste diamond is to touch them with the tongue. The diamond will be much colder than the glass, as it is a much better conductor of heat.

H. H.—Salisbury Cathedral has a window for every day in the year. Wollaton Hall, in Nottinghamshire, and a house in the Isle of Wight, possess the same peculiar feature.

T. B. D.—The navy is a much older institution than the army. From the very earliest times England has possessed a navy, but the army as it is now was only established in the reign of Charles II.

G. H.—Pestalozzi was the original founder of the "kindergarten" system of training young children, although his pupil, Froebel, who carried on his work after his death, generally gets the credit.

J. W. B.—Go to a school of art, Government, if possible, learn drawing generally, and join the black and white class. When you feel competent do some *original* drawings and send them to suitable papers for approval.

H. T.—There is no truth whatever in the belief that a shark swallows its young in time of danger and disgorges it again when the danger is past.

Homo.—Your friend is right. It is no uncommon thing for people to wait in London for four or five hours in order to secure a good seat in a theatre; and on special occasions they will sometimes hang about the doors of a theatre from eight in the morning until half-past seven in the evening.

D. B. C.—Certainly, the force of gunpowder is much greater than that of steam.

W. E. W.—The ostrich is the largest bird in existence.

Margaret.—The period of English history known as the "golden age" was during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The time of Queen Anne was known as the "silver age," and the present is designated the "iron age" of England, owing to the hard, matter-of-fact commercial spirit which now prevails in this country.

S. S. B.—A "paraph" is the term applied to the flourish with which the majority of people embellish their signatures, in order to make forgery less easy.

S. G. D.—No, there are no snakes indigenous to Ireland.

F. W.—The use of the "side-saddle" for ladies was introduced into England by Anne of Bohemia, wife of Richard II. Previous to that time women rode in the same way as men.

W. D. F.—Chinese is, undoubtedly, the most difficult language to learn.

R. H. B.—There is no hard and fast rule as to the class of people entitled to put the black Hanoverian cockade on their servants' hats. At first it was purely a military distinction, but now any justice of the peace, officer of the militia, yeomanry, or volunteers, etc., can adopt it.

G. B. D.—Certainly birds teach one another to sing. In fact you cannot get a young bird to sing correctly unless it has had tuition from an older bird.

G. H. G.—Table-turning is due neither to a supernatural agency nor to electricity. It is merely the result of unconscious pressure on the part of the operators.

A. N. M.—Englishmen of the professional classes are the tallest men in Europe.

T. W.—Yes, rain does sometimes fall from a cloudless sky. Although this phenomenon is seldom seen in England, it is not uncommon in various other parts of the universe.

J. W. W.—Penny postage stamps cost the Post Office authorities about eightpence per thousand.

P. K.—The magnificent colours seen in soap bubbles are due entirely to the reflection of the light.

R. C.—You are quite right. The air is lighter during rainfall than it is in fine weather.

Mr. W. A. Shaw is the inventor of a new game. It is no common game. The apparatus required is similar in appearance to a tennis racket without the mesh, and with the top shaved off. There is a cup attached to each of the ends of the prongs, and one on a spring in the centre. A ball is propelled by the centre spring against a wall, and when it falls the object is to catch it in one of the other cups. The address of the inventor is 1, Houndsgate, Nottingham.

The coming celebrations in honour of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee will be a rare harvest time for purveyors of lamps. In all directions they are up to their ears busily inventing new designs of every description. Among the most charming are those of Messrs. Hearn, Wright and Co., of Chatsworth Road, Lower Clapton, London, E. They are willing to supply as many thousand lamps as you might like to have in the shape of the Queen's head. There is many a worse way of showing your loyalty than by scattering Queens' heads with candles inside them promiscuously all over your back garden on the auspicious night.

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A VERY DIFFERENT THING.

When a man has an attack of toothache, or sprains his ankle, or gashes his finger with a knife, he understands what ails him as well as the most eminent medical authority in the country would understand it. He may not be able to *treat* his trouble, but he knows *what it is;* and consequently suffers no mental anxiety arising from doubt and mystery.

But when he is overtaken by an illness which it is difficult or impossible to locate, which seems to affect half-a-dozen different parts of his body at once, so that he cannot say, "It is here," or "It is there," he is justified in apprehending something profound and serious. No wonder that under these circumstances Mr. Boorman could not tell what had come over him.

"In March, 1891," so runs his short account of it, "my health began to fail. I felt low, weak, and had no strength or energy. *What had come over me I could not tell.*

"I had a foul, horrid taste in my mouth, and no appetite. As soon as I had eaten, the food lay on my chest like lead. I was constantly spitting up a gaseous, sour fluid, and something would rise into my throat enough to choke me.

"I was much troubled with palpitation; my heart would thump and throb until I could scarcely bear it, and I had often to sit up in bed to ease the pain. I gradually got worse and worse until I was in a shocking state of weakness."

[If a person under such circumstances were to make up his mind he had what is called "heart disease," who could point the finger of ridicule at him for thinking so? If he were worried with apprehensions of sudden death from that cause, are *you* the man to say he was afraid of nothing? Not you, nor anybody else. And yet—— But let's have the rest of the letter.]

"I could hardly drag one leg before the other," continues Mr. Boorman, "and was so nervous that the least thing would startle me.

"I consulted a doctor, but his medicines did me no good, and in October (1891) I went to Bartholomew's Hospital, but was no better for their treatment. I afterwards went to the Bethnal Green Hospital, but with the same result. I had now got so low and weak that I despaired of ever getting better, and thought I was in a consumption.

"In January, 1892, I read of cases like mine having been cured by Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. I got a bottle of this medicine from Mr. Lucas, chemist, Talbot Road, and after taking it I found relief. I continued taking it, and in a month felt quite a different man.

"I could eat and the food gave me no pain; and slowly I gained strength. By-and-bye I was well and strong as ever, and have since kept in good health. Mother Seigel's Syrup has saved my life, and I wish others to know of it. You can publish this statement and refer anyone to me. (Signed) William Boorman, 61, Perry Street, Northampton, October 23rd, 1895."

What, then, was it that came over Mr. Boorman? In the light of the result, and the manner of the cure, I answer without hesitation —It was the dark foreshadow of the most common and the *most dangerous* disease known —indigestion, dyspepsia; the collapse of the body's power to keep itself up; the slipping from under him of the very foundation stones of his vitality. *That* was what had come over him.

Then why didn't he recognise it? Why didn't the doctors seem to recognise it? Why couldn't they "tell" what it was? Because it is the Prince of Deception, the counterfeit of all diseases *outwardly*, and the reality of all diseases *inwardly*. Because, having one nature, it has a hundred shifting symptoms. Its roots are in the stomach, and its branches run from head to heel.

When you feel the vague trouble that came over Mr. Boorman, recall these words and take Mother Seigel's Syrup, without waiting to wonder what ails you.

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NEW SERIAL BY JOAN BARRETT. START TO-DAY.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 436. FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 8TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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NERVINE

SHORT STORIES

No. 436.] [One Penny.

For the Week ending May 8th, 1897.

MY FRIEND MRS. MAWL.

Now this story has really nothing to do with me, but as I was mixed up in it a good deal, I think I might as well tell it. Nobody else is ever likely to, so here it starts:

You know the firm of Mawl, Butler and Co., don't you? Well, Mawl and I were great friends, we were educated together, and both fell in love with the same girl. Maizie Williams was her name, and very fond of her I was, but Mawl had a flourishing business, with offices in London and Paris, and was a tall, handsome fellow to boot—and she became Mrs. Mawl.

I don't blame her. She was passionately fond of gaiety, and my means would not have sufficed.

Mawl was one of those careless, good-natured, easy-going men who made friends everywhere, the very opposite to his partner Butler, who, with his green shifty eyes and red shaggy hair, somehow always reminded me of a fox. But he lived abroad, and rarely came to London, and so I saw little of him.

Mawl and his wife were a most devoted couple, despite the fact of her being a Catholic and he a Protestant. No matter how tired he was when he came home from business, he was always ready to take her to some theatre or gardens, and it was a wonder to me often how she could ceaselessly go the round of gaieties and never tire.

EDITED BY C. Arthur Pearson

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One evening I called at their house and found Mawl by himself. "Where is your wife?" I inquired.

"Don't you know that every so many months she goes into a convent and does penance for her sins?" he answered.

"I never knew that; since when has she done so?"

"Ever since we have been married. She asked me if she might, you know, when we were engaged, because her religion is rather against these dances and things that she goes to, and I couldn't very well refuse, although it is lonely here without her."

I thought the arrangement an odd one, and said:

"How long does she go for, and what does she do?"

"Goodness knows what she does. I never go with her. It is part of her penance to go by herself, and she visits the sick, or nurses in hospitals, or some such idea. It takes her about a month or six weeks sometimes to get through with it all."

"If I were you, Mawl, I'd get your wife to break out of that habit of going into hospitals. She might catch some illness, you know."

"I know, my dear chap, and I will try when she comes home. I expect her home to-morrow. She's at the 'Holy Sisters of the Sacred Heart,' in Paris, now, and I haven't heard from her for over a week, and then she always comes home."

"All right. I'll come in in a day or two, and see her when she has come back. Good-night!" and lighting my pipe, I strolled homeward to my lodgings.

It must have been a week afterwards that I suddenly ran into Mawl as I was going along the Strand. He looked intensely anxious and miserable, and passed by without noticing me; so I laid my hand on his arm and said: "Hullo! old chap, how are you?" He started as if I had been a ghost, then stared at me for a moment, and finally said:

"Have you anything to do?"

"Anything to *do?*" I repeated, surprised. "What do you mean?"

"I mean have you anything to do before Saturday?"

"Well, on Saturday, you know, I start for New York to see my sister married, but I have nothing to do until then. What's up?"

"Come in here," he said, drawing me into a café close by, "and I'll tell you."

We seated ourselves in a dark corner, and I ordered something. While I was speaking to the waiter I noticed Mawl's eyes were fixed upon me all the time in a speculative sort of way. He seemed as if he was trying to test me in some fashion.

"Now then!" I said presently.

"Well, it's like this," replied Mawl, lowering his voice. "My wife's gone!"

I stared at him in utter amazement.

"Yes—I believe I'm right—I got suspicious the night you left me—she had been away a much longer time than usual, and I wired the morning after to the convent to ask if she were still there. I got the answer that she had left more than a month, but sometimes called for letters. Now those were my letters. That was on Friday last. Well, late on Saturday I received a post-card, written in a disguised hand, which said: 'Your wife has been seen here, fetch her home at once—she is in great danger.' Now, I have been nearly mad since Saturday. I *can't* go myself, business is so bad that it would mean ruin if I left it for an hour. I have wired to Butler, but the fool is away as usual—he always is when I want him—and I know nobody I could trust with such a mission except you. Will you go to Paris to-night and find her?"

How could I refuse? I was singularly against acting the amateur private detective against my friend's wife, above all people; despite the fact that I knew his fears were groundless. It was only some religious freak that had caused Maizie to bury herself and her whereabouts in the great city of Paris.

"Why not tell the police?" I hazarded.

He shuddered. "No, I could not. The disgrace of such a thing would kill me. No; you go, for goodness' sake, and find her quietly, but *whatever* you do, don't send for the police unless it is absolutely necessary. I am so afraid she has been stolen or something, perhaps even worse. She is so innocent, and so lonely, that—oh, don't talk of it! I shall go mad if I don't find her!"

After this I decided to go, much as I disliked the undertaking, and next day found me in the gay city, wandering somewhat aimlessly about in search of the Convent of the Holy Sisters.

Down a dirty little back street and surrounded by high, grey stone walls, at last I found it. The Lady Superior knew Maizie well, she said; she frequently came and stayed there; "but never for more than a night or two," she added.

"And how long is it since you have seen her?" I asked.

The Lady Superior raised her hands. "Oh, a long time now," she said, "nearly a month. She left here to go and stay with her friends at Asnières, where she always goes."

I asked for the friends' name and address, but the good lady could tell me neither. She did not think she had ever heard the name.

I wired to Mawl for the information required, and his answer was to the effect that they had no friends living there, and he had no idea what I meant. So that clue was lost.

Next day I called upon Mr. Butler, the partner. He was still away, but expected back next day. I could do nothing, as Mawl had forbidden my going to the police, so I idly wandered about and wished myself well out of the whole business. It was a beautiful day, and having nothing better to do, I wandered into the Tuileries Gardens. The birds were singing and the flowers and trees in full leaf and blossom. In one corner I noticed a crowd of people, so strolling up, I wedged myself between to see what it was. It turned out to be a photographer taking pictures of the people, to be made into slides for the cinematographe. I stood and watched him, and when he had finished, he packed up his apparatus, and said to me: "You've come out well, sir—you were right in the middle all the time."

Next day I called on Butler again. He was very pleased to see me, and insisted on my having a whisky and soda and one of his famous cigars before he would hear a word about my errand. When, however, I told him what I was there for, his face fell.

He had seen nothing of her for nearly a month. She called on him one morning for some money, as she had done before, and gave him to understand that she was going to stay with some friends who lived out at Asnières, but who the friends were, or what was their address, he was unable to tell me.

I left him disheartened. Here was Friday morning, and no news of the missing woman.

I wired to Mawl, although I was sorry to have to do so. Some three hours afterwards I received his reply:

Wife returns home to-night: just had a wire.

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I spent the rest of that day as I had done the previous ones—doing nothing, but I was heartily glad Mawl had got his wife back again, as I was myself beginning to be afraid that perhaps some terrible death had overtaken her in some unknown part of Paris, where she was in the habit of going on her errands of charity. Saturday morning I rose early. As I was at breakfast a telegram was handed to me; it ran thus:

Wife returned safely; many thanks and a pleasant voyage.—Mawl.

That was all. No explanation, no anything. Truly the ways of some men and women are difficult to understand.

* * * * *

It must have been nearly a year after these events, when I was seated in my hotel at Chicago, that I received two newspapers, one dated some two months previous, and one about a fortnight.

The old one contained the following announcement:

Mawl.—On the 26th inst., at Heather Villa, Hampstead, the wife of W. Mawl, of a son.

The second paper read thus:

Mawl.—On the 14th inst., at Hastings, of pneumonia, the belored wife of W. Mawl, of Hampstead, aged 26.

I felt the tears rise to my eyes. My poor little sweetheart to die such a cruel death and so young, too! and then the thought of the bereaved husband came to me, and I sat down and wrote to him a few poor, ill-expressed words, which but inadequately conveyed to him what I really felt.

* * * * *

I jumped into a cab at Charing Cross and told the man to drive me to my chambers in St. James' Street. Crossing Piccadilly we nearly ran over a man. It was Mawl! but, oh, how changed. His tall figure was wasted and bent, and his black hair plentifully streaked with grey. He looked an old man, though scarcely more than thirty-five. He seemed pleased to see me in a quiet, absent sort of way, and seemed surprised when I told him it was eighteen months since I had been in London. He told me also that he was bankrupt, which fact astonished me, until I learnt that Butler, his partner, had absconded and left enormous debts in Paris which were charged to the firm.

Thinking to draw him out of himself I took him to dine with me, and afterwards we went to the new music hall that had lately been opened in Leicester Square.

The programme was of the usual order of music halls, and nobody took any interest until the theatre was darkened for a display of the cinématographe.

I settled myself in my stall and vaguely wondered what views I should see.

Sure enough—the Tuileries Gardens and myself as the centre figure!

A laugh burst from me at sight of myself with my habitual vacant stare on my face. But the laugh was frozen at its birth, for just behind me, arm in arm and evidently in low converse, walked a man and a woman side by side right across the picture.

They were Mrs. Mawl and Butler the partner!

I heard a gasp beside me, and became conscious that Mawl had staggered to his feet and was blindly making his way out of the theatre. I was obliged to follow him although it was difficult work, as the place was in darkness. Silently we got into a cab, and he told the man to drive to his house.

"I want you to see the boy," he said briefly, when I looked at him in some surprise.

Silently he opened the house door, and lighting a small lamp led the way upstairs.

In a cot in the nursery lay all that belonged to him of his erring but dead wife.

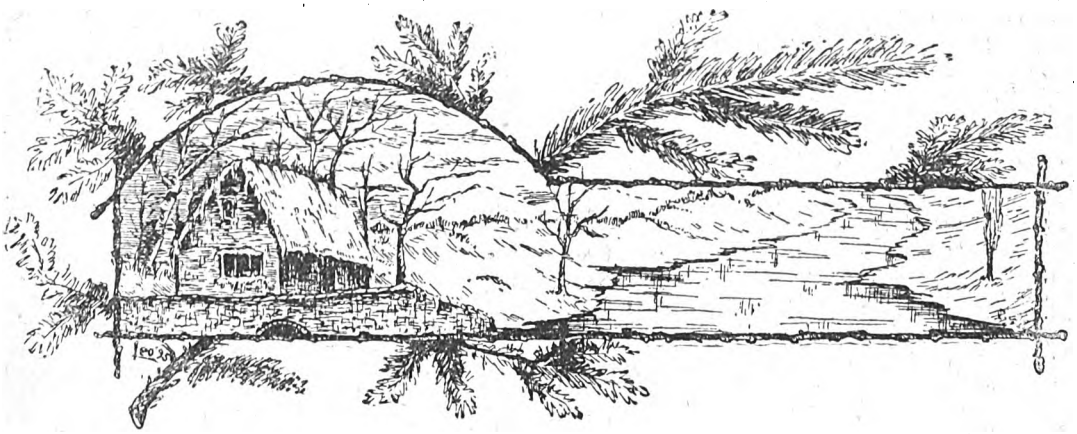
He was a chubby, fat boy, slumbering happily, with the finest head of red hair I have ever seen on any child.

"Poor little brat," I heard Mawl say. "There is no one to look after you—except you," turning to me. "You will look after him, won't you?"

I silently clasped his hand, and we then went out.

That night he shot himself.

Erroll Stanhope.



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Two Soldiers' Wives

A Stirring Story of the "Terrible Year."

This extraordinary episode took place shortly after Bourbaki's defeat in the Eastern provinces. His decimated and exhausted army had, after a terrible campaign, taken refuge in Switzerland, the brevity of the struggle alone saving some hundred thousand men from certain death. Hunger, the fearfully cold weather, and the forced marches through the snow-covered mountain paths, had more particularly affected the *francs-tireurs*, thrown out as forlorn hopes, without tents or provisions, with the vanguard when it was advancing towards Belfort, or with the rear when it retreated in the direction of the Jura Mountains.

Our little troop—which, on the 1st of January, numbered twelve hundred men—had dwindled down to two-and-twenty emaciated, tattered scarecrows by the time we reached the Swiss territory. Here, at last, were rest and peace, and, greeted by the inhabitants with kindly sympathy, we received every care and attention.

Life seemed to spring afresh in us, and even those who before the war had been rich and happy, declared that creature comforts never seemed so precious till then. Just fancy, we ate every day and slept every night!

War, however, was still raging in the eastern district of France, which by some oversight had not been included in the armistice. Besançon continued to present a bold front to the enemy, who retaliated by devastating the Franche-Comté. Sometimes, indeed, we would hear that the Germans were close to the frontier, and we saw the Swiss troops hurriedly start off to keep a watchful cordon between them and us.

At last we grew weary at heart; and, as our health and strength returned, we longed to renew the struggle. It gave us a feeling of shame and irritation to know that yonder, not more than nine miles from us, our unhappy country was overrun by the Prussians, who roamed about as insolent conquerors, while we were, at the same time, protected and rendered helpless by our captivity.

One day, our captain called five or six of us aside, and spoke long and angrily about it. He was a fine fellow, formerly a non-commissioned officer in the Zouaves; he was a tall, wiry kind of man, hard as nails, and during the whole of the campaign had cut out plenty of work for the Germans.

He was eating his heart out at this inactivity, and could not resign himself to the idea that he was a prisoner, and unable to do anything more.

"Good Heavens!" he said to us, "can you remain quiet when you hear that the Uhlans are only two hours' march from here? Does not your blood boil at the thought of those wretches stalking about like masters in our mountains, when five thoroughly determined men could easily kill off a file every day? As for me, I cannot rest—I must go there."

"But, Captain, how can we get there?" we said.

"How?" he replied. "Oh, that's easy enough. We have often got out of the woods more closely guarded than these Swiss forests. The day you choose to go into France I'll manage to get you there—never fear."

"Of course," we rejoined, "we might pass; but what could we do in France without arms?"

"Without arms!" he retorted; "we shall find plenty over there."

"You forget the treaty," objected another. "We should run the risk of bringing trouble on the Swiss if Manteuffel hears they have let prisoners recross the frontier."

"Come, come," said the Captain, "all these are poor reasons. I want to go and kill some Prussians, that's all I know. You do not want to; very well—only say so at once. I can go alone; I don't need anybody."

We protested; but as it was impossible to make the Captain change his mind, it ended by our promising to accompany him. We were too much attached to him to abandon him, for he never failed us in our need; so the expedition was decided upon.

The Captain had a plan that he had been cogitating for some time past. He got a friendly farmer to lend him a cart and five peasants' costumes. Two of us were then stowed away in a couple of chests in the vehicle, straw was thrown over us, and the whole laden with Gruyère cheeses which were supposed to go to be sold in France. The Captain, dressed up as a carter, told the sentinels that he was taking a couple of friends with him to protect his goods in case of robbers, and there seemed nothing out of the way in this precaution.

A Swiss officer appeared to cast a knowing look at the cart, but that was merely to impress his men. In reality, neither the officer nor the soldiers had any suspicion of the truth.

"Gee-up," cried the Captain, cracking his whip, and our three men calmly smoked their pipes and chatted together in the country dialect. Meanwhile I was half smothered in my box.

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"Gee-up," again cried the Captain, as the cheese-cart entered French territory.

The Prussians' lines were very badly kept, the enemy relying on the watchfulness of the Swiss. The Prussian sergeant spoke Northern German, our Captain the German dialect of the Swiss cantons, so they did not understand each other. The sergeant, however, pretended to understand, and allowed us to pass on. At last, as night fell, after seven hours of this strange journeying, we reached a small, half-ruined village in the Jura.

What was going to become of us? The Captain's whip was our only weapon, our clothes the peasants' smocks, and our sole food Gruyère cheese. We were rich in ammunition, for we had concealed some packets of cartridges in the middle of the big cheese, and had about a thousand, that is, two hundred shots apiece. But we required guns.

Luckily the Captain was both ingenious and daring, and his plans were well laid. While three of our party remained hidden in a cellar of the village, he and the other man went on in the direction of Besançon. The town, it was true, was invested; but it is an easy matter to enter a city situated in a mountainous country, by following the plateaux till within about fifteen miles of the walls, and then going on foot through the paths and ravines.

At Ormans, in the midst of the Prussian lines, they abandoned the cart, and in the night gained the heights above the river Doubs. The next morning they reached Besançon. There they found plenty of arms, and the commanding officer, General Roland, highly approving the Captain's daring adventure, gave him six rifles and uniforms and wished him good luck.

The Captain also found there his wife, for she had made the previous campaign with us, and had only been prevented following Bourbaki's retreat by an acute attack of illness. Now she had completely recovered her strength, and, notwithstanding the wretchedly cold weather and the numberless privations that were to be expected, she insisted on leaving the town with her husband. He was obliged to consent, and, accompanied by his wife and our comrade, started off at once. The return journey was most hazardous; they had to travel by night, in order to avoid meeting anyone, for the possession of six rifles would have aroused suspicion. After an absence of eight days the Captain and his two companions rejoined us, and our campaign began in earnest.

The very first night of his return, the Captain began proceedings. Under pretence of reconnoitring the country, he went down to the high road. I must mention that the village, which served as our fortress, consisted of a small cluster of poor, ill-built houses that had long been abandoned. They were situated on the summit of a deep plateau, surrounded by thick woods; the inhabitants were in the habit of cutting the wood and sliding it in large blocks down the abrupt slopes, called *coulées*, that run down to the plain, where it was placed in heaps, and twice a year sold to the contractors. Two huts, or, rather, small inns on the highway, marked the spot where the sales took place, and it was to this place that the Captain had gone down by one of the *coulées*.

We were on the look-out at the top of the ravine, and he had been absent about half an-hour, when we were startled by the report of a gun. The Captain had left strict orders that we were not to move unless we heard his bugle, so, notwithstanding our cruel state of anxiety, we felt obliged to wait motionless, with our rifles ready. A mortal hour passed, but not another sound reached us, not even a rustle in the copse. The Captain's wife grew terribly impatient; what could he be doing? Why did he not summon us? Was that an enemy's shot? Had it wounded or killed our chief, her husband?

These and many other were the questions we exchanged. We did not know what to think. As for me, I thought that either he must be dead, or his expedition prospering. I was only curious and anxious to know what he had done. Suddenly, a sharp, ringing blast resounded; but, to our intense surprise, instead of rising from below, it came from the village behind us. What could this mean? We all had the same idea. Evidently the Captain had been killed, and the Prussians were sounding his bugle to draw us into a trap. We, therefore, cautiously wended our way towards the houses, step by step, finger on trigger, hiding in the brushwood as we advanced.

The Captain's wife, however, in spite of our entreaties, dashed forward into the open, fixing the bayonet on her gun, for she fancied she would have to revenge her husband's death. We lost sight of her at the very moment when a second blast burst forth, and a few minutes later we heard her call out:

"Come on, come on; he is alive—it is he!"

We hurried forward, and at the entry of the village were met by the Captain, smoking his pipe: but, strange to say, he was now on horseback.

"Well," he said, "you see something can be done here. I am mounted now; I shot a Uhlan and took possession of his horse. There was a small troop of them at the inn, probably guarding the high road, but they were feasting and drinking freely. The sound of their voices guided me; the sentry at the door had not even time to see me before I made daylight through him, and, jumping on his horse, I dashed off, followed by eight or ten in hot pursuit. However, I took some cross-paths, and here I am, you see, only a bit scratched and torn. Now, lads, we must look out; those fellows won't rest till they find us, and we must greet them with bullets; each man to his post."

One man was placed as an advanced sentinel at some distance from the village, I was put at the entry of the street, the two others and the Captain and his wife occupying the centre of the village, near the church, the little belfry serving as watch-tower and fortress.

We had not long taken up our positions when we heard a shot, followed by another, then two, then three reports. The first was evidently from a chassepot; it could easily be recognised by the sharp crack, like that of a whip. The three others proceeded from the cavalry rifles used by the Uhlans.

The Captain was furious; he had given strict orders to the advance-post to allow the enemy to pass, and only to follow them if they came on in the direction of the village, and to rejoin me when the little troop should be closed in between the houses. Then we should have got them between two fires, and not one would have escaped.

"The devil take Piédelot," said the Captain; "the idiot has put them on the alert, and they won't dare to come on. Besides, I am sure he has managed to get hit, for we don't hear him call, nor return their shots. He has only got his deserts; he ought to have obeyed orders." Then, after a moment's pause, he muttered in his beard. "Poor fellow, he is so plucky, and shoots so well."

The Captain's conjecture proved true. We waited till evening, but no Uhlans put in an appearance. They had evidently withdrawn after the first attack.

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Unfortunately, we did not see anything of Piédelot—was he a prisoner, or dead? When it was dark, the Captain proposed to go and reconnoitre, and three of us started. At the place where the sentry had been posted we found blood, a broken gun, and the ground very trampled, showing that there had been a desperate struggle; but, although we searched the brushwood around, we could find neither wounded nor dead. We returned at midnight, without any news of the unhappy comrade.

"It is very strange," growled the Captain. "They must have killed him and hid him in the underbrush. It is impossible that he should have escaped. He would have called for help. I cannot make it out."

As he was speaking, a great red glare rose up in the direction of the inn on the high-road, and lit up the sky.

"Blackguardly cowards!" he screamed; "I'll wager that to revenge themselves they have set fire to the sale-houses. And then they will sneak off; one man killed and two houses burnt satisfies them. But we won't let them off so cheap. Come, my men, we will force them to leave their bonfire, and fight."

"If only we could rescue Piédelot at the same time, what luck it would be," said one of the men.

We started off, all five of us, full of anger and hope. In twenty minutes we had slidden down the *coulée*, and were within a hundred yards of the inn. The fire was at the back of the house, and the lurid glare over the roof was alone visible. We were advancing slowly, fearful lest we should fall into a trap, when we heard Piédelot's well-known voice. It sounded strange, hoarse, and loud, stifled and, at the same time sharp, as if he were screaming with all his might, while his mouth was stuffed full of rags! He seemed to be groaning and wheezing out the words, "Help! help!"

We cast prudence to the winds, and in two bounds were behind the inn. An appaling sight met our gaze.

Piédelot was being roasted alive! Fastened to the centre of one of the piles of wood, collected there by the foresters, he writhed in agony, while the flames licked him with their sharp tongues. To knock down the pile, scatter the firebrands, and cut his bonds, was but the work of a moment.

Poor fellow, what a condition he was in! His left arm had been broken, and he looked as if he had been beaten and thrashed all over. his whole body was so swollen, so black, so covered with blood.

Poor, poor Piédelot! How we longed to avenge him. How we thirsted for the blood of those villainous Prussians. But they had disappeared, leaving only their crime behind them. Meanwhile, the Captain's wife did her best to dress his wounds. After a few minutes he recovered consciousness.

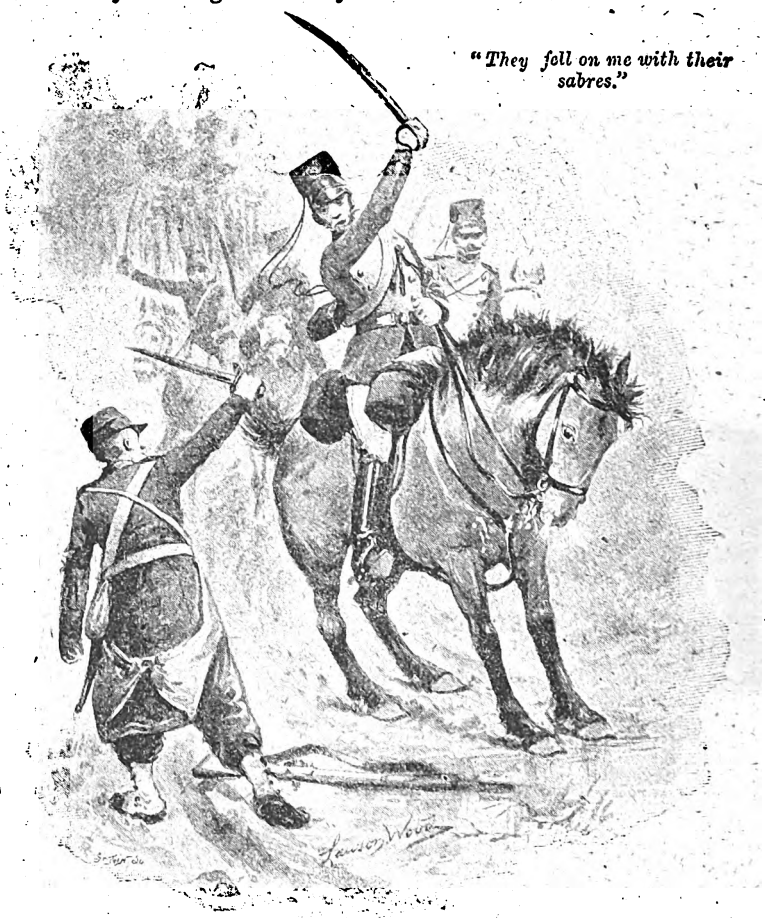
"Ah, Captain, is it you?" he murmured, and then he burst out: "Ah, the blackguards, the wretches. Twenty of them came to surprise us!"

"Twenty?" said the Captain.

"Yes; a whole gang of them! That is why I disobeyed orders, Captain, and fired on them. They would have killed you all, so I preferred stopping them. That frightened them, and they did not dare advance any further, they are such cowards. Four of them fired at me twenty yards, as if at a target; then they fell on me with their sabres. My arm was broken, and I could only use my bayonet with one hand."

"But why did you not call for help?"

"I took care not to. You would have come, and would not have been able to defend me nor yourselves—five against twenty."



"They fell on me with their sabres."

"You know very well," replied the Captain, "we should not have allowed you to be taken prisoner."

"I preferred that only one should be killed. I did not want to draw you there; it would have been madness."

"Well, well, we won't talk of that any more. Do you feel any easier, now?"

"No," said poor Piédelot, "I am choking. I know I can't live. The wretches tied me to a tree, and beat me, and wrung my broken arm till I fainted. But I did not scream; I would have bitten off my tongue sooner than cry out before them. Now, with you round me, I can say how I suffer; I can cry, and it does me good. Thank you, my dear friends, thank you."

"Poor Piédelot, we will avenge you."

"Oh, yes, I am quite willing you should do that. There is a woman among them—the wife of the fellow the Captain killed yesterday. She is dressed like an

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Uhlan, and she is the most cruel of them all. It was she who proposed roasting me, and she herself set fire to the wood. Oh, the brute—what pain—oh, my back, my arm!"

He fell down, gasping and writhing in a terrible agony. The Captain's wife wiped the perspiration from his brow; we cried like children with rage and despair.

I cannot relate the end. He died in about half-an-hour. But before he expired, he told us in which direction the Prussians had gone. We hurriedly buried him, and dashed away in furious pursuit of them.

"We will throw ourselves into the middle of the Prussian army, if it is necessary," said the Captain, "but we will avenge Piédelot. Let us swear to die sooner than let those fellows escape. If I am killed these are my orders—all prisoners taken, not excepting the woman, are to be shot on the spot."

"Not the woman," said the Captain's wife; "if you survive you will never shoot a woman, I know. But if you die in this attempt I will fight her single-handed, and kill her myself. If she kills me you may do what you like with her."

"We will roast her—tear her to pieces!" the others exclaimed. "Piédelot shall be avenged! Eye for eye, tooth for tooth!"

And with this we set off.

The next morning we fell unawares on an outpost of Uhlans, some twelve miles distant. Surprised by our sudden attack, they were unable to get to their horses or even to defend themselves, and, in a few minutes, we made all five prisoners The Captain examined them. From their answers we felt sure these were our fellows, and when we discovered one of them was a woman—the female torturer who martyred our comrade—we were savagely delighted. The four men were at once dispatched.

Then we discussed what should be the woman's fate. I must confess that we all wanted to shoot her, for hatred and thirst for revenge had deadened all pity in our hearts. We forgot we were going to kill a woman. It was a woman—the Captain's wife—who recalled us to our senses, and, by her advice, it was decided to keep the Uhlan's wife a prisoner.

Poor woman, she little guessed how cruelly she was to be punished for her pity.

The following day we learnt that the armistice was extended to the eastern district, and that we were therefore obliged to put an end to our little campaign. Two of our men, who belonged to that part of the country, went back to their homes, and only four remained, the the Captain, his wife, and two men. We came from Besançon, which, notwithstanding the armistice, was still beseiged.

"Let us remain here," said the Captain; "I cannot believe that the war will end like this. There are still brave men in France, thank Heaven, and it will soon be spring. The armistice is but a trap laid for the Prussians; in the meantime, another army will be got together, and some fine day we shall fall on the enemy. Then we shall be ready, and we have hostages; let us remain here." So we took up our winter quarters. The weather was terribly cold, and we hardly went out of doors.

Someone was always obliged to mount guard over the Uhlan's wife. She was very gloomy, and hardly spoke, except to lament her husband, whom our Captain had killed. She always cast angry glances at him, and we saw the thirst for vengeance that tortured her. It seemed to us a just punishment for the hideous tortures she had inflicted on Piédelot. Impotent revenge is a terrible grief.

Alas! we, who had known how to avenge our comrade, ought to have realised that this woman would know how to avenge her husband, and we ought to have been on our guard. It is true that at night one of us watched her, and at first the prisoner was bound by a long cord to an old oak bench fastened into the wall. But, little by little, notwithstanding her silent hatred, as she had never tried to escape, our vigilance relaxed, and she was allowed to lie down without being tied. There was nothing to fear, she was at the further end of the room, a man mounted guard at the door, and between her and the sentry the Captain's wife and the two other men slept. Besides she was unarmed and alone against four, it really seemed as if there could be no danger.

One night, while we slept, the Captain being on guard and the woman quietly crouched in her corner, seeming calmer than usual—indeed, she had that day smiled for the first time since her captivity—we were suddenly awakened by a terrific scream.

We jumped up, and, groping about, stumbled over a couple of bodies that were rolling and struggling desperately on the ground. It was the Captain and the Uhlan's wife. We threw ourselves on them, and the succeeded in parting them. The woman was laughing horribly, while the Captain seemed to be gasping. All this took place in the dark. Two of us held the prisoner down. At last we got a light, and then we saw, to our horror, the Captain lying in a pool of blood, with an enormous gash in his throat. His sword-bayonet had been plucked from his gun and stuck in the throat. A few minutes later, without having been able to utter a word, he died.

His wife did not shed a tear; she seemed choked, and, looking at the woman with a calm ferocity that was appalling, she stammered out:

"This woman belongs to me. You swore a week ago to let me kill her in my own way if she killed my husband; you must keep your word. Fasten her firmly in the fireplace, and stand her up at the back of the hearth, then you may go where you like, far away. I will take my own revenge. Leave the Captain's body. We will stay here, we three—he, she, and I."

We silently obeyed her and went away. She promised to write to us at Geneva, whither we were going.

Two days later I received the following letter, dated the day after our departure, and written from the old inn on the high road:

My Dear Friend,—I write to you, according to my promise. I am at the present moment at the inn, where I have just handed over my prisoner to a Prussian officer.

I must tell that the poor woman has left two little children behind her in Germany. She, too, had followed her husband, to whom she was deeply attached, unwilling to let him expose himself alone to the chances of war. She had left the children with their grandfather.

I have known this since yesterday, and this knowledge has changed my thoughts of vengeance to more humane ones. While I was insulting this woman, foretelling her the torments I was about to inflict on her, recalling to her poor Piédelot's fate, and preparing the same torturing death for her, she gazed coldly at me, and said:

"What have you to reproach me with, Frenchwoman? You think you are doing right in avenging your husband, do you not?"

"Certainly," I replied.

"Well, in killing him, I did what you are going to do in burning me. I avenged my husband, whom your husband killed."

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"Then," I retorted, "as you approve of vengeance, prepare to submit to it."

"I do not fear it," she answered.

And, in truth she did not seem to lose courage. Her countenance was serene, and she watched without a tremour while I piled up the wood and dry leaves, and feverishly poured powder from the cartridges to hasten the fire. For one moment I hesitated. But the Captain lay there, ghastly and bloody, looking at me with wide open, glassy eyes. I kissed his pale lips and returned to my work.

Raising my head unexpectedly, I saw that the woman was weeping. I was astonished.

"Oh, you are frightened," I said.

"No," she answered; "but when I saw you kiss your husband, I thought of mine, and all those I love."

She sobbed aloud; then she stopped abruptly, and said, in a faltering, almost inaudible voice:

"Have you any children?"

I quivered all over, for I well understood by her question that this poor woman was a mother. She asked me to look in a pocket-book that was in her breast-pocket. There were two photographs of little children, a boy and a girl, with the good, gentle little chubby faces of German children. There were, also, two fair curls and a letter written in big, awkward letters, beginning with the German word *Mütterchen*.

I could not restrain my tears. I unfastened her bonds, and, without daring to cast a look at my poor dead husband left there unavenged, I came down with her to this inn. She is free. I have just parted from her, and she cried as she bade me good-bye. I am now returning to my poor husband, to my dead love. Come as soon as possible, and fetch our two bodies. . . .

I started off in all haste. When I reached the village, I found a Prussian patrol guarding the little house. I inquired what had taken place, and was told that a captain of *francs-tireurs* and his wife lay dead there. I gave their names, proved that I knew them, and asked to be allowed to bury them.

I inquired what had taken place.

"Some one has already undertaken their burial," was the reply; "but you may go in if you choose, as you knew them. You can settle with their friend about the funeral."

I went in. The Captain and his wife lay on a bed side by side, covered with a sheet. I raised it gently, and saw that the wife had inflicted on herself the same wound that had killed her husband.

By the bedside, watching and weeping, was the person who had been mentioned to me as their friend.

It was the Uhlan's wife. H. P. B.

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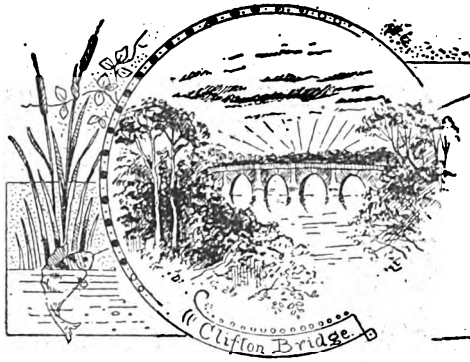

SKIPPER SIM.

Simson was only a middle-aged City clerk, of no particular attractions or accomplishments. He had passed his entire life amid the most humdrum surroundings, but the man's soul rose above them, and he lived a second life in the sphere of his own imagination.

This imagination of Simson's was only equalled by his ardent patriotism. He simply revelled in day-dreams, and was for ever picturing himself in all sorts of heroic attitudes and situations, invariably resulting in the advantage of his country.

He did not look the part of an ideal hero. In person he was short and thick, not to say stumpy; but under his eminently respectable waistcoat beat a heart of no ordinary dimensions, and his round face, fringed with its mutton-chop whiskers, though hardly of heroic mould, was of unusual kindliness.

Simson's life had been singularly uneventful, and the opportunity to distinguish himself, to make his name a synonym for conspicuous bravery, had never arrived. He had attempted to stop a runaway horse, be it admitted at peril of his life, but the playful animal swerved and butted Sim into a miniature lake of rich mud which the road-sweepers had considerately left. The only result was that Sim was severely reprimanded for his late arrival at the office.

On another occasion he beheld a stalwart specimen of the British working man belabouring his better-half at the road side. Simson's blood boiled; he dashed to the rescue, but while pluckily tackling the man, he felt himself assailed in the rear, and as he scorned to hit a woman, received a number of unmerited wounds at the hands of the very lady he had attempted to assist, and who thus indignantly repudiated his interference with "'er old man."

Sim bore the marks of the fray for weeks, but preserved a troubled silence when chaffed on the subject, for, alas, his wounds were not in front.

Fate, and the conversation of young Travers, who passed most of his spare time in a small boat, sailing over the broad reaches of the lower Thames, at length proved too much for Sim.

His long-looked-for opportunity would not come, so he decided to make one, and, with the determination which marks the great man, uprooted himself from the "digs" which he had occupied for fifteen years, and, in tow of young Travers, set out for a semi-marine watering-place within an hour's rail of the office.

As he himself said: "Was not the sea an Englishman's birthright? Was not every Briton a sailor born? And, if young Travers could sail a boat, why not he—Simson?"

Our hero, it must be admitted, did not make a very promising *début* as a British seafaring man. On the first Saturday afternoon he went afloat there was a brisk breeze blowing. Sim was adjured by his companions to "get out of the light before he hurt himself."

Sim attempted to expostulate, but his voice quavered, and he finally subsided into the scuppers, where he came to the conclusion that life was not worth living even for a Briton. Towards evening the breeze died away, and the little craft stole peacefully over the water, unconscious of her former vagaries.

Simson's spirits returned, and he even informed his companions in stirring song that "many a stormy wind should blow 'ere Jack came home again!" Sim's christian-name was Joshua, but that is a digression.

The rest of the boat's crew, of whom Travers was one, welcomed the change in their companion. They cheered him on by voice and gesture, and even pressed stimulant on him, as they said, to avoid the consequences of his former indisposition. Simson graciously accepted their offer, and his mood passed from the despairing to the hilarious.

On returning to the club-house he was hailed as the hero of the evening; his health was frequently drunk, and he returned thanks as often with increasing cordiality, till at length a certain sense of weakness in the knees precluded his rising any more. It was then determined to escort him to his new diggings, and accordingly, throned in a club arm-chair and draped in a billiard table-cover, he was borne forth, informing the world at large that "he was a pirate king, ha! ha!"

From time to time after this the faint echo of his exploits reached the office. Occasionally he himself turned up on the Monday, his honest face bronzed with the wind and sun of his Sunday cruise, bearing a little memento in the shape of a battered hand or a crushed finger-nail; for if ever a man had the faculty of damaging himself without provocation, that man was Sim. If the wind rose in the night, and the morning discovered some unfortunate craft parted from her moorings, and stranded high and dry, Sim had moored her. If the club were cruising, and a black squall swept down and left some vessel capsized or dismasted, the portly form of Sim might be descried struggling furiously to remedy the mishap. The times the man went overboard were without number, and regularly every Sunday the club front was thronged with loungers waiting to see him take his weekly header.

He would go on board in a semi-piratical garb, his good-natured face struggling between a desire to grin, and a determination not to appear ridiculous for once, and the effect was heightened by a red cotton nightcap which crowned his bald head.

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His craft was a half-decked boat of about two tons, named the *Briton's Pride*, and climbing into her with a fearful loss of dignity, he would proceed clumsily and laboriously to overhaul his gear before setting sail.

Then come several loud words of command, and the mainsail of the *Briton's Pride* soars majestically aloft, but not for long. A smart crack, a laugh this time from the loungers, and the folds of the fallen mainsail are violently agitated over the struggling skipper, who invariably managed to be under anything that fell.

Presently a prolonged shout of laughter from club-house and pier tells that Sim, with his habitual ill-luck, has missed his footing and toppled overboard, and the grinning lad, who acts as first-mate, is seen making prods with a boat-hook at his commander, who flounders helplessly alongside.

But in spite of duckings and bruised fingers, Sim was never known to turn back, but always managed to get afloat, and stay there in weather which drove many of the younger men to the comforts of the billiard-room. As the summer wore on, his cruising mania became more pronounced, and in proportion to his progress, he became more ambitious. Great was the astonishment at the club one Saturday evening when the squat form of the *Briton's Pride* was no longer to be seen at her moorings.

For twenty-four hours she was absent, and the club-men were seriously thinking of chartering a tug for a Simson's relief expedition when the familiar craft was discerned returning in the shade of night. Nothing could equal the pride of her owner who had managed to cram enough adventure into his cruise to furnish several Arctic expeditions.

From that day he hesitated no longer, and many a perilous voyage did he make to far-distant Whitstable with its leagues of mud; Herne Bay knew him, and the watches of the Foreland had seen his sail in the darkness of the night; and, oh! the pride of the man! The tales he told, and the vivid anecdotes that went the round of the office, when a solid ink-bottle stood for the Nore light, and the day-book represented the Swatch Channel, mistrusted of mariners.

Daily Sim grew more marine in flavour, persisted in wearing salt-stained serge in the City, and asked the young lady behind the bar for salt junk in his mid-day sandwich; well did his subordinates know that bellow of "All hands on deck!" for it meant that their leisure was finished and their skipper had his weather eye lifting.

Yet the cup of his happiness was not full. The elderly mariner with whom Sim lodged had spent many years in the sea-borne coal-trade, and many adventures had befallen him, so many that Sim never came to the end of them or heard the same story twice.

Did he attempt to tell of that nasty sea he encountered off the Chapman Head, straightway the ancient would plunge into a tale of some terrible hurricane which had burst on him in Yarmouth Roads "seven year ago come Christmas," and Sim could not choose but hear the yarn; but these periods of enforced attention only strengthened Sim's determination to do and dare himself, and this grew to a conviction which nothing could shake.

So the summer wore on, the autumn waned, and the butterfly yachts were dismantled one by one, and laid on the mud or towed to some quiet creek for the winter. But Simson could not tear himself from his favourite pursuit, and, in spite of warnings, continued his week-end cruises in fair weather or foul.

One Sunday morning he and young Travers put to sea in the *Briton's Pride*, taking with them an ample lunch, fishing-tackle, and Sim's lifebuoy.

The weather was fair at starting, but at mid-day a black east wind sprung up, clouding the sky with heavy mirk, and in half-an-hour the whole face of nature was changed, and the white horses were being driven sullenly against the strong tide, while along the shore the sea-birds croaked their dismal note of warning.

The dusk shut down, the Nore light threw its lurid gleam ever and anon across the troubled water, but there were no signs of Skipper Sim or the *Briton's Pride*. As yet, the club-men felt no particular anxiety at his prolonged absence, as there were many creeks and inlets along the coast where a small craft could find shelter if caught in a sudden gale, but a spirit of restlessness was abroad in the club, which prompted the most composed of members to tap at the barometer, and wander aimlessly to and from the windows overlooking the sea.

One sallow youth commenced a joke at the expense of the absent skipper, and was completely crushed by the fierceness with which his attempt was repressed. Old Scales started on one of his long-winded yarns of the days when he was "first luff" of H.M.S. *Rocket*, and at the end of a few minutes was astonished to find himself absolutely without an audience.

A door banged angrily, and a gust of damp wind swept through the smoke-laden room, a heavy footstep fell on the stair, and every member started to his feet expecting and fearing he knew not what. Into the room there lurched a smacksman in streaming oilskins, half supporting, half carrying a young man in the last stage of exhaustion, and this was the spruce and self-possessed Travers—this pale and bedraggled object, open-eyed with horror and gasping for breath.

A dozen hands helped him into a chair, and he sat helpless, the salt water streaming from his shivering limbs and forming a pool on the oilcloth. The men crowded round, anxiously questioning, but the lad could not answer till they forced brandy between his chattering teeth. "What had happened?"—"Where was old Sim?"

Travers groaned, and hid his face in his hands. "Oh, Heavens!" he sobbed, "I don't know; I'm afraid he's gone—he saved me!" and subsided into feeble crying.

There was an instant hush, an incredulous, nervous glance from one to another, then the questions broke out afresh, and the smacksman, who stood stolidly by, was the recipient of many—"Where had he found this gentleman?"—"What did he know of this?" There was a babel of voices, and each keen with anxiety; then the sonorous tones of Scales demanding silence.

The smacksman, sou'-wester in hand, passed a blackened, sinewy hand across his bushy beard, still glistening with the drops of spray, and in a gruff voice told what he knew.

"I was a-lyin' off the bank, waitin' for the tide. It had come over very dirty, and a strong squall was just a-passin', when I heerd a voice somewheres not fifty yards away. I sings out and heerd him again. 'Help!' he says; 'there's a yacht sunk and a man drownin'. Send a boat!' 'All right,' I says; 'whereaway?' But I couldn't rightly catch what he said; his voice was feeble and chokin'. Me and my mate launches the boat and tumbles in. Just then we hears the chap sing out again: 'Help! There's a man drownin' astern of you!'

"We made for him first, but when we got to where we judged the voice came from, we couldn't see nowt—he'd

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gone sure! so after a bit we pulls astern of the smack and finds this young chap in a life-belt, he axed us to fetch him here." With a shuffle of heavy boots and a sad shake of the head the fisherman finished. "Good Heavens! it can't be!" broke from the crowd. "Let's go and look for him!" But Travers looked up. "It's no use, you fellows," he said, shaking his head wearily: "we searched well before we came ashore. The poor chap had on sea-boots and oilskins, and made me take the life-belt while he swam for help, it was the only chance for me!"

They fetched dry clothes and blankets, and propped the lad up before the fire. He went on to tell in choking tones what every man dreaded to hear; how they had been caught in the gale off the Mouse Light.

For hours they had tried to beat back, with the boat half full of ice-cold water, and their blood nearly frozen in their veins. Simson had steered, while Travers handled the jib-sheets and tried to bale the water out, but the lad got paralysed with the cold, and his pluck failed him.

Again and again he gave up with the icy clutch of death on his heart, but each time the elder man cheered him up with voice and example. So they sailed on in the gathering darkness, old Sim doing the work of six men with a smile on his face, while Travers only begged that they might give up and get it over, and he did not spare himself in his recital.

"The cold got to my very bones, and how Sim suffered I can't tell you, for he forced on me every drop of the whisky, said he did not feel the cold, and, greedy brute that I was, I took it. At last we shipped a green sea, then another before we could bale, and the boat sank without rising to a third. I went down with her, and oh! the cold of that water. I didn't feel like struggling much, but Sim got me by the collar and put the life-belt over my head. He said he could see lots of smacks' lights, and they'd be sure to pick us up; but we were drifting further out to sea, out to certain death, when we passed a smack near—it was the last one.

"Sim told me to stick to the life-belt and keep up a good heart, while he started to fetch help. He gripped my hand, poor old boy, before he left me, for we both knew it was touch-and-go! I heard him hail the smack twice, his voice was feeble and the tide terribly strong, but they heard and answered him. Again I heard him clearly: 'It's all right, Travers!' then 'Good-bye!'"

J. R. Bagshawe.

Mrs. Smith's Jewels.

I was seated in my rooms one day in mid June, when Sergeant Drew, of the Scotland Yard Police, entered. I was not at all surprised, as we were on very friendly terms, and scarcely a week passed without my seeing him. On that particular day he seemed so full of importance that he almost forgot to shake hands.

"What's up?" I said, when the usual formula concerning the weather had been gone through, with little interest on either side, it must be confessed.

"Oh, a very interesting case has come under my notice, that is all," he explained, with dignified and pompous condescension.

I knew that he expected me to ask him about it, and I performed this duty with a langour fully justified by the heat. It needed no more to set him off, and he related his tale at an unmerciful length. After the first few sentences, I found it sufficiently interesting to keep me awake, which is saying a good deal.

"This morning," he began, "at about ten minutes to ten, a man came into the office in great terror. He said that he wanted police protection. I examined him carefully—you must allow that I am no bad judge of character—and I must confess that he impressed me favourably. He was between thirty-five and forty years old, and in build was slight. His complexion was freckled, and his straw-coloured hair hung limply about a face pale with terror. From his dress I judged him to be American, and it proved that I was right, as usual.

"'Against whom do you desire protection?' I queried.

"'Against—against my widow,' he stammered, 'and—and her husband.'

"'My good sir,' I said, 'I am afraid you are mentally deranged. Pray compose yourself.'

"'If you will allow me,' he said, 'I'll explain what I mean, but you must promise me not to use what I may tell you now as evidence against me at any future time.'

"I gave the promise, being very curious.

"'You see, it was in this way,' began the man, 'ten years ago I was married in the States to a Miss Groatson, and we lived together for more than five years. But we were gradually getting deeper and deeper into debt, and at last I made up my mind to leave her, and do the best I could for myself. I was dead sick of it all. I left a note telling her that I was about to commit suicide; I made off with all the ready money I could raise. Well, she believed me readily enough, and in less than two months she married again.

"'This time it was a Mr. Smith. They lived together for two or three years, unaware of my existence.'

"I here thought it my duty to put in a word of reproof.

"'You acted most reprehensibly,' I said, 'in allowing them to marry when you were alive.'

"'Well, you see, I didn't know they were married until they had been living together for above two years. I learnt it afterwards. I adopted an alias, and lived quietly enough in Philadelphia, having got a situation as stage manager at a pretty good theatre.

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"'Well, it happened one day that I had to go on to the boards before a crowded house to announce the delay of some star or other. In the very front row I saw my wife and her second husband. I judged from their dress that they were very well-to-do, and I determined I would have something out of them before long. They did not recognise me in the glare of the footlights. I sent a boy to follow them home, and he brought me word that they were staying at the Adelphi. The next day I went to see Smith, and told him I'd go to Europe and keep the fact of my existence a secret if he would give me £100,000.

"'He said:

"'"Look here, there is to be no blackmailing this time. Either you'll take your passage money and go, you scoundrel, or we'll fight."

"'He touched his pistol significantly, and, being a bit timid myself, I'd really no choice but to accede to his first proposal. He handed me over enough for a second class passage—the shabby dog—and I left.

"'I determined I would be revenged, so I thought out a scheme. I waited until the day before that on which my steamship was to sail, and then I went to the hotel and watched Smith and my wife out. Then I went in, and boldly asked for Mrs. Smith.

"'"She's gone out," said the waiter; "will you wait?"

"'I said that I would, and the man showed me into a well-furnished room.

"'"Look here," I said, slipping half-a-dollar into his hand, "I've particular reasons for not wishing Mr. Smith to see me. Can you put me anywhere where you are sure that he won't come?"

"'"Only in the lady's bedroom, sir."

"'"That will do as well as anywhere else," I said. "I'll answer for it that she won't be offended."

"'"This way, then," he said, and led me to it.

"'When he had left me I looked around, and saw, as I had hoped, a small morocco-covered box on the dressing-table. I saw it was a jewel-case, so I slipped it as it was into the pocket of the overcoat I wore, and after waiting for a few minutes, I went quietly off, and the next day sailed for Europe. I trusted that the fear of a scandal would prevent Smith from making any attempt to recover the jewels. I opened the box in the cabin the day after we had sailed, and found, as I had supposed, that it contained gems to all appearances very valuable.

"'I had nowhere to keep it except in a locked cash-box on my dressing table, so you will believe that I was very anxious. All went well, however, and we arrived at Liverpool in safety. I determined to go straight on to London, so that very night I left Liverpool. I dared not trust the jewels in my trunk, but carried them in my portmanteau into the railway carriage—a second-class.

"'To my surprise one of my fellow passengers from America got into the same compartment. He was my only companion. We talked together for a few minutes, and then I fell into a doze. When I awoke, my companion and the portmanteau were both gone!

"'I was wild, you may imagine, but I dared not apply to the police. The thing that made me come to you happened after I had got to London. I was looking at the shops in the Strand one day when a boy gave me this and ran away.'

"He gave it to me," said Sergeant Drew, and this was it:

If you do not send the jewels to me at the Metropolitan Hotel, Piccadilly, before to-morrow night, you will discover that the pistol is as powerful a weapon in London as it is in Philadelphia.

H. Smith.

"The man continued," went on the Sergeant, "to say that two days had passed since he had received the note, and he could bear his fears no longer; he could not sleep for fear of attack, and as for going out at night, he should as soon think of flying. He appealed to me for protection, and I felt that he had come to the right man. I sent him home under the surveillance of a policeman, and then came to you for advice. He wants me to go to the Metropolitan, and explain matters to Mr. Smith. He thinks, that I, being an officer of the law, should be believed."

"Do you think that the man is speaking truth when he says that the jewels were stolen from him?"

"I am sure that he is. I am of the opinion that he bears the trade-mark of contrition on his face. Besides, do you think he would have appealed to the law for protection if he had stolen goods in his possession?"

Sergeant Drew looked at me patronisingly.

"In that case," I said, "I'd do just as he asked me."

"Well, will you come with me to the Hotel?" said the Sergeant uneasily; "I'd like to have company."

"All right," I said, rising lazily, and stretching myself. "We will go at once."

It took us about twenty minutes to reach the Metropolitan. I took the lead, and asked for Mr. Smith.

"Which Mr. Smith?" asked the waiter promptly. "There are four staying here."

This caused us some embarrassment, but at last we found the man we wanted, and we were shown up into his sitting-room, Mrs. Smith being out. I felt some curiosity as we entered the room. We saw a big-bearded, vulgar man, with the stamp of the West upon him. He was sitting by the fireplace, his feet elevated far above his head, the empty grate on his left acting as a spittoon, when we entered.

I introduced myself and the Sergeant to him, and explained the whole business to him as I had heard it. He rolled the quid in his mouth, and looked at us half suspiciously, but after we had given him several references, he was forced to believe us.

"Then," he said, when we had finished, "if that's so, I suppose I must let the little wretch go. The sooner we leave England the better."

We parted on very good terms, and Drew went back to his office, proud of the way in which he had conducted the business, and promising to let me know if anything further occurred.

It was about a fortnight after this—three days after Smith and his wife had left England, that Drew came into my room. Some of the importance seemed to have been knocked out of him, and as he threw himself into the easiest chair in the room, he uttered these three words in a desponding tone:

"We've been sold!"

"Why, what's happened?" said I.

He pulled something from his pocket, carefully wrapped up in brown paper. He slowly undid it, and disclosed to view a small red morocco box. Opening it, he took from it a letter, written in a small, neat, almost womanish hand. I seized it from him, and read it eagerly. This was what it said:

Sergeant, you've been regularly sold for once. I could not resist letting you know how I had done you. I shall be safe away from England before you get this. I've disposed of my wife's jewels all right, and I am sending the box to repay you in some slight degree for your trouble. If you see Smith tell him he is welcome to Mrs. N. for me. Horatio Needham.

Drew and I let the matter drop, and nothing more was heard of Mrs. Smith's jewels. W

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BY JOAN BARRETT.

SUMMARY.

The story opens with an introduction to the inmates of two farmhouses in an English village named Thorneydene. Honeypots Farm has recently been taken by a young stranger, John Gillway, about whom there seems to be a mystery.

His neighbour, Farmer Strange, is a widower with twin daughters, Diana and Kitty, who have been brought up for the most part by a wealthy aunt, Mrs. Caffyn, who is about to take them on the Continent.

Gillway has already fallen in love with Kitty, who was at first pleased by his attentions. She soon wearied of them, but being half afraid of him, makes many promises of fidelity before going abroad with her sister and aunt, which she never intends to keep.

CHAPTER III.

The Nabob.

The girls went to London the following morning and were met by Mrs. Caffyn, resplendent in black silk and sable. She was a good-hearted little woman, and unaffectedly fond of her nieces. Her greatest ambition was to secure rich husbands for them. She regarded it as her duty.

She was so overjoyed to get her children back again that she forbore laughing at their great string-tied hamper of eggs and chickens and butter and hams, and the enormous bunch of gaudy-coloured dahlias that Farmer Strange had sent her. She really pitied Strange, believing honestly that upon their twenty-first birthday both girls would elect to live permanently with her.

"London is simply vile just now," she told them as they rattled home in her luxurious brougham. "We must get out of it as soon as we can. The streets look quite depressing. I've been thinking, dears, that we might go to Naples and then out to Capri. I have just heard from—a friend that Capri is the most exquisite place in the whole wide world."

"Oh, aunt, how lovely!" cried Kitty, clasping her hands.

Quiet Di, leaning back in her corner with her heart full of her lonely old father, tried to smile and to appear delighted. It mattered very little to Di where her aunt took her; but she felt that she would be lacking in gratitude if she remained silent and unresponsive to so much kindness.

"Capri!" she exclaimed. "Isn't that where Tiberius had a palace, auntie?"

"Goodness knows, my dear," answered Mrs. Caffyn. "I only know that Pajano has a hotel there: a place that seems to be an elysium, where you can do as you like, and meet people in every position, from Germans who eat soft-boiled eggs with their knives to Italian countesses and French duchesses who wear their diamonds all day long. And I am told that the place swarms with artists and literary people and delightful Americans, and that after dinner there are dances in the hall, and primitive kinds of games for the young people. And the price is nothing at all. And you can gather oranges and lemons from the trees in the hotel gardens!"

"All this for nothing at all?" asked Di with a smile.

Di had various recollections of accompanying her aunt and Kitty to several hotels that had been described by Mrs. Caffyn in glowing terms, and that had turned out to be utter failures. Mrs. Caffyn was always enthusiastic about places and people at first.

"Who has been telling you all this?" Kitty asked.

Mrs. Caffyn seemed to hesitate, looking away from the girls and flushing to her eyes. Di watched her in growing perplexity. Her aunt's embarrassment was very evident, and it was such an unusual occurrence for Mrs. Caffyn to betray emotion of that kind.

"Oh, I met somebody the other afternoon at Mrs. Selwyn's," she answered at length, speaking hurriedly. "I forget now who it was. One so often remembers the conversation and forgets the speaker. It's like eating jam and forgetting the maker's name, you know."

"I hope that person won't turn out to be like one of those badly informed guide-books that are always leading you wrong, and cause such cruel disappointments, and make you feel that you would like to be present at the writer's execution," said Di. "It's a long way to go, auntie——"

"Oh, there is no danger of our being disappointed, Di," said Mrs. Caffyn positively. "My informant has lived at Pajano's, and spoke from real genuine experience. We must begin shopping to-morrow. We shall want a lot of things."

They began their shopping expedition the next day, and Di was surprised to find that Mrs. Caffyn was far more concerned about her own wardrobe than she had hitherto been when shopping for her nieces. She bought herself so many juvenile-looking articles of clothing that Kitty was amazed, and a little inclined to resent the new order of affairs. Mrs. Caffyn was continually appealing to the girls for advice. Did this suit her, and did she look nice in something else?

"Aunt must have got a new admirer. I think it must be serious this time," Kitty whispered to Di while Mrs. Caffyn was trying on an elaborate tea-gown in a show-room, "and she crimps her hair to make it look like yours. Have you noticed?"

Kitty had always considered that Di's only beauty laid in her thick masses of chestnut-brown hair. It was full of natural waves, and little fluffy pieces were always straying about over her temples, and breaking loose at the nape of her white slender neck. Di was dark, with a grave expression in her pale face; she carried her head well, with the manner of a girl who had never committed one action of which she was ashamed.

Di looked again at Mrs. Caffyn and saw that the strange new something that had perplexed her when she had seen her aunt for the first time upon the previous day was due to a fresh arrangement of Mrs. Caffyn's hair. It did not look so grey as Di remembered it; indeed it scarcely looked grey at all. At the back, Mrs. Caffyn, with her small tight waist, and crimped brown hair, passed very easily for a woman of thirty instead of fifty. Mrs. Caffyn was rarely without an admirer. Being a woman of means, well-connected, and still attractive in appearance, bright and youthful in her manner, it was no unusual experience for her to receive an offer of marriage. Hitherto she had treated the idea of her re-marrying as a joke, and a most unlikely occur-

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rence. Di wondered if Kitty's surmise were right, and admitted to herself that it was not improbable.

Mrs. Caffyn seemed eager to leave London. She hurried forward their preparations for departure, greatly to Kitty's relief, who dreaded the arrival of John Gillway. She had already received a passionate letter from him, in which he spoke of his loneliness and his craving to see her again. Kitty dreaded the knowledge of her flirtation with him reaching Mrs. Caffyn. She felt heartily ashamed of having at one time believed herself to be in love with Gillway. For him she had no feeling of pity, but rather an angry resentment, because he was so much more strong than she.

Di knew nothing of those stolen interviews in the farm meadows and woods. She had seen that Gillway admired Kitty, but then who did not admire her?

They were settled at Capri before the end of January, and then the girls discovered the reason of Mrs. Caffyn's anxiety to visit Pajano's hotel.

As they entered the hall a young man ran quickly from a lounge-chair, and came forward with outstretched hands to greet Mrs. Caffyn. He had a very youthful face, and bright blue-grey eyes, and he was certainly handsome and distinguished in appearance. Mrs. Caffyn blushed like a young girl as they shook hands.

They began their shopping expedition.

"I thought you were never coming," Di heard him say in a low, reproachful tone. "The time has seemed endless."

Mrs. Caffyn smiled as she looked at the girls.

"Let me introduce you to the real causes of my delay," said she genially. "My dears, Mr. Bernard Eliot, my nieces and adopted daughters, the Misses Strange."

Di looked at Mr. Bernard Eliot straight in the eyes as she bowed. When Di liked people at first sight she had a charming habit of offering them her hand. She did so with Eliot. His candid regard and a certain inexplainable winning charm in his face had won her liking.

"I hope you will like the place," said he, looking not at pretty pouting Kitty nor flushed, happy-eyed Mrs. Caffyn, but at quiet Di, whose eyes had wandered from him to the picture-painted walls. "I have wandered nearly all over the world, and I have never met with but one Pajano. Let me show you the dining-room. It is as original as the rest of the house."

He spoke to Di, and she started and cast a glance at Mrs. Caffyn. Di had not had very many admirers. People had found her cold and constrained, and did not always get on well with her. She was too reserved and quite unlike Kitty, who was continually making new friends.

"Oh, do let us see it!" cried Kitty eagerly.

She and Mrs. Caffyn went into raptures over the long room with its painted walls, and their delight was even greater when they found that their friend had procured rooms for them in one of the many white-washed cottages that laid at the back of the house and belonged to the hotel.

They went out into the garden and through a tangle of palms and roses and golden fruit-laden trees, up and down rough uneven steps, and into a plain three-roomed cottage with white-washed walls and red-tiled floor, and simply furnished.

"When it rains it's rare fun rushing to the hotel for one's dinner under an umbrella in the dark," said Eliot to Di.

She smiled responsively. He wondered if she was never going to speak. She must have a pretty voice, he thought.

"But, surely, it never *can* rain here!" said Kitty, glancing at the dazzlingly blue sky and the sun-filled garden with its fruit and flowers.

"Oh, doesn't it! We get grand seas here! I've never seen finer. There's a fancy dress ball to-night," said Eliot, "and everyone has to appear masked. The idea is that we shall get into each other's seats and puzzle everybody as to our identity, you know. The masks are not to

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be taken off until dinner is over. It's only a couple of francs. I do hope you'll all come."

"Indeed we will," Mrs. Caffyn declared, "only—we've no fancy dresses."

"Some of them—the other ladies, I mean—are using up sheets and towels. There's the jolliest American girl where I'm quartered. She only came here yesterday. She's coming out in a grand costume, she says, and it's all made up of sheets and white things, you know."

"But we can't all wear the same dress," objected Kitty. "Isn't there a draper's here?"

"There's a little bit of a shop where you can get red stuff and silk and Neapolitan caps and things like that," said Eliot in an anxious tone. "Shall I take you there? I speak Italian like a native with all his teeth out, and a hot baked apple in his throat; but I generally manage to make 'em understand. The great thing, you know, is pantomime. Point to things and then count on your fingers. See? And if they want you to pay more than you feel like giving, say *Mai*, that means never, and then make an ugly grimace at 'em. I got on splendidly that way. Shall I go with you to buy the things?"

Again he spoke to Di. Her beautiful lips parted in a smile as she answered: "No, thank you. I should like to try my own way of getting on with them. And besides," as he looked disappointed, "if you are with us, you will see what we buy and that will help you to recognise us easily."

"May I take you to a tea-shop?" he asked. "I know such a nice one where you get good tea and little cakes and sweets——"

Mrs. Caffyn had been watching and listening with a smile upon her face. She interrupted Eliot to cry: "Indeed you may. We shall be ready at four o'clock. You will find us here."

"Auntie, who is he, and how did you get to know him?" Kitty asked when they were alone.

"Mrs. Selwyn introduced him to me. He came over from India in the same ship with her husband and children."

"He is very handsome," said Kitty. "Is — he rich?"

"Immensely rich. Somebody has given him the nickname of the 'Young Nabob.' He was born in India. Nobody knows anything more than that about him. I don't quite know what his people were. It doesn't matter, as they are all dead," answered Mrs. Caffyn as she took off her little bonnet and smoothed her hair before the mirror. "I wish there was a wardrobe in the room," she added, with a discontented glance at a row of pegs. "Martin is quite capable of giving me warning. She will never reconcile herself to hanging my best gowns on the wall."

Di had walked out upon the little terrace where a Gloire de Dijon was opening its pale scented petals to the sun, and doing its best to cover and conceal the plain white wall. The air was redolent of the scent of flowers. A great box of wallflowers in a corner made a gay patch of colour, and seemed to look down with good-natured tolerance upon a humble but none the less pretty blue periwinkle growing beneath.

Before Di stretched the queer-shaped garden with its palms and roses, its orange and lemon trees and the almonds and peaches as yet not in flower. Between the trees at the side of the hotel she caught a glimpse of the sea, dotted here and there with latteen sails. Overhead the sky was as blue as a sparrow's egg and almost unflecked with clouds. It was an ideal afternoon, and the flowers and sunshine made it hard to realise that the month was December, and that in England the day might be cold and snowy and depressing.

A great feeling of exhilaration and happiness stole over Di. Leaning her arms upon the rail, she began to think of her father and tried to picture him tramping over the frozen fields beneath a grey, overhanging sky, maybe thinking of her and wondering what she was doing.

Mrs. Caffyn coming out upon the terrace five minutes later found her in the same pensive attitude. The elder woman sighed as she watched her niece.

"Dreaming of the Nabob, Di?" she asked, trying to speak lightly but with a strange new inflection in her tones that made Di turn and stare at her in surprise. Mrs. Caffyn was

Leaning her arms upon the rail.

smiling, but Di thought that her lips were drawn as though she was in pain.

"The Nabob? Oh, no. I was thinking of dad. Isn't it difficult to tear one's eyes away from the sunshine and to make oneself see black clouds and white snow and frost-covered window-panes. Betty will soon be lighting the lamp at home."

"It's awful to think of. Kitty and I have been speculating about our costumes for to-night. She is going as a nun, and I thought that I might go as a waiting-maid. What should you think, Di?"

Di nodded, though it seemed to her that it would have been more appropriate if Kitty and Mrs. Caffyn had reversed their *rôles*.

"I can borrow a cap and apron from Martin. Those little white caps are *so* fetching. And a black velvet mask ought to look striking. What are you going to wear?"

Di glanced down at her dark blue travelling dress, and thought for a moment with a grave little pucker between her black brows.

"I'll dress as a fish-wife," said she at length. "I can tuck in my bodice at the neck and twist a red scarf round it. A red sash and a red cap will be all that I need buy."

"You will look nice in red," murmured Mrs. Caffyn almost regretfully. "I wish I had thought of that costume for myself."

"Oh, I don't mind exchanging. A waiting-maid's dress will please me just as well, auntie."

Mrs. Caffyn bent and kissed Di.

"You are a dear good girl," she said. "If you are quite sure——"

Di was quite sure. They strolled down the hill to the shop where red twill and Neapolitan caps were to be bought, and made their purchases. As they passed a confectioner's Eliot came out to them.

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"I've got the nicest little table in a corner where we can see everybody," said he. "The room is always crowded at this time."

He was very attentive to Mrs. Caffyn during the bright little meal, and yet Kitty thought that he was smitten with her own pretty self. The Nabob could not do the smallest thing without investing it with a charm. There was tender chivalry in the way he poured cream into the tea-cups, and he handed pound cake with such a winning smile that the cake seemed to gain in flavour. He looked a great deal at Mrs. Caffyn and a great deal at Di and Kitty. He seemed to admire all three ladies as one might admire a cluster of beautiful flowers. It was evident that his sweet and amiable disposition made him anxious to please everybody. He had to shake hands with half of the occupants in the room and exchange bows with the other half when he and his little party were leaving the shop. Mrs. Caffyn watched him with a look in her eyes that is only to be seen in the eyes of a mother or a proud wife whose heart has never been tortured with jealousy. Once she whispered to Di: "Isn't he popular here? It is just the same in London."

He seemed to admire all three ladies.

Di smiled back at her aunt and wondered if Mrs. Caffyn had fallen in love with the Nabob.

"I hope not, oh, I do hope not!" she thought to herself as she followed Mrs. Caffyn and Kitty into the street. "He is so young."

The Nabob walked by Di's side back to the palm-shaded hotel. He was eager to know if they were comfortable and if there was anything whatever that he could do to add to their comfort. He seemed quite distressed at hearing that they had everything necessary to their welfare.

"I suppose I mustn't ask you to give me a tiny hint as to the kind of dress you will wear to-night?" he asked Di in a low voice.

She shook her head, looking at him frankly.

"I am sure that I shall recognise you. I've never seen another woman——" he paused and bit his lip, looking away from her face to the sunny wall, where boxes of little pink oxalis were blossoming. "You don't care to make me a bet that I shan't pick you out, and get a seat by your side?" he added in quite a different tone, and loud enough for Kitty and Mrs. Caffyn to hear.

"I don't bet," Di answered a little stiffly.

She was growing angry with herself because already she found herself liking the Nabob. And Di so rarely took to strangers with facility that there seemed to her to be something abnormal in the Nabob to have this strange power of extorting affection from people who were barely acquainted with him. She looked at him impatiently as he walked by her side with the glow of the afternoon sun upon his face.

It could not be his good looks that unlocked the door to people's hearts in this extraordinary way, handsome as the Nabob was with his clear-cut features and beautiful mouth. "It must be the sweetness of his expression," thought Di in sudden remorse for her irritable sensation towards him. "He looks so kind and candid and amiable."

He turned at that moment and met her puzzled scrutiny with such honesty in his smiling eyes that an odd impulse seized her to take his arm. She put both hands upon her parasol and began to talk hurriedly to Kitty.

"I wonder if aunt and Kitty feel as drawn towards him as I do?" she asked herself with a hot blush. Then she smiled. "Anyone would really think that the Nabob mesmerised people!"

CHAPTER IV.

"Home-keeping Hearts are Happiest."

Di sat alone by the sea and tried to think it all out. She felt very happy, but with the happiness a feeling of uneasiness had mingled. She looked away at Vesuvius with its thin umbrella-shaped cloud of smoke, and then her eyes fell upon the blue sea and the boats and the picturesque fishermen. The men were all loafing and lounging about, watching their wives and daughters carrying stones from the shore to a cargo-boat. From time to time a brown-skinned dark-eyed fellow shouted out a few words of direction to his women-folk as they hurried past, bending wearily beneath their burdens. The lap-lap of the waves was pleasant and soothing. Its song and the sunshine together made one feel how good it would be to lie and dream until the sun went down and the stars peeped out to look down upon the quiet world.

Di clasped her hands in her lap, forcing herself to think over the events of the past three months. Did Bernard Eliot love her, and did Mrs. Caffyn really believe that she herself was the object of the young man's affections? And Kitty? What of her? The uneasy load upon Di's heart deepened. It was not the Nabob's fault that everyone fell in love with him. Di felt sure of that. She had watched his manner towards Mrs. Caffyn and Kitty, and it had never varied. He had always been the same gay, kind, chivalrous gentleman, anxious to please, unselfish in his regard for others, and very thoughtful for everyone's welfare. No. The Nabob was clearly not to blame. Mrs. Caffyn and Kitty were foolish in wilfully misconstruing kind actions into expressions of some deeper sentiment.

Suddenly Di started. What if she was doing the same? The colour died away in her cheeks, and painstakingly she

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went back in her memory to the night of the fancy ball when the Nabob had sat by her side during dinner and, in the disguise of a white monk, had whispered such pretty things to her. He had seen her portrait in Mrs. Selwyn's drawing-room and he had fallen in love with it. To meet her he had induced Mrs. Caffyn to visit Capri. He had told her that she was ten times more charming than her photograph had represented her—but—did not men often make those kind of speeches and not really mean them? Something rose up in Di's heart and retorted that some men might be weak or base enough to trifle with a girl's love, but the Nabob did not belong to that class of men. He was loyal and true. Oh, why were Mrs. Caffyn and Kitty so blind and foolish?

The breeze suddenly brought her a strong whiff of scented heather. Di turned, and her pulses beat quicker. The Nabob was standing behind her smiling, and he carried a great bouquet of wild flowers in his hands. He looked so young, so handsome and so strong, standing there in the clear afternoon light, with the sun shining upon his fair moustache and hair, and his white teeth gleaming between his parted lips as he smiled upon her.

"I thought that I should have found you in our favourite walk," he said reproachfully. "I've waited there quite an hour. Did I make a mistake in hoping to find you there—or did you forget?"

Di looked at him very fearlessly.

"I did not forget," she answered in a low voice. "I knew that you would go there. I came here by preference. I wanted to think."

"Of me?"

He had taken a seat at her side, and as he spoke he laid the flowers in her lap. The scent of the heath and the white narcissi made Di feel giddy.

"Yes," she said. "I wanted to think of you—and of my father."

She paused a moment and very gently put the flowers upon the rock.

"Aunt has told you that in a fortnight's time Kitty and I shall be twenty-one?"

"Yes—and that you are returning to London to-morrow. I am glad, for I am obliged to leave Capri this week."

He laid the flowers in her lap.

"You know," said Di steadily, "that my father is only a poor farmer. He is not *very* well educated, my poor old dad; but he is the kindest, dearest, noblest father in the world. Aunt always speaks of his being a 'land-owner.' So he is, but he does not own much land. Our farm is only a hundred acres."

Eliot nodded, smiling as he listened. It was as though he knew all that Di was nerving herself to tell him—knew it, and admired her for her courage and honesty.

"When we are twenty-one, Kitty and I, we are to decide whether we shall live always with dad or with aunt. I have always decided in my mind that I shall live with dad. I am going to him on the very day that I attain my majority. My father is very dear to me."

"Di," said Eliot, calling her for the first time by her Christian name, "this decision of yours makes me—reverence and admire you more than ever. You are not angry?"

He had kissed her hand. Di flushed as she drew it away.

"Your sister is not going with you, of course?"

"No, she will remain with aunt."

"She does not love your father so much as you do," said he in disapproval. "She is quite another creature."

"Kitty doesn't care for the country," Di said apologetically. "She wearies of green fields and grass. I love it. The smell of the upturned earth, the rustle of the dead leaves, the trees with their beautiful covering in summer, and their gaunt nakedness in winter, the very sound of the spades going through the earth delights me. And the birds and flowers! The dear little red fungi that one finds in winter, the last bits of clinging wild geraniums, the scattered tufts of yellow ragwort. Oh, I can't tell you how dearly I love them all!"

Her cheeks were flushed. She looked at Vesuvius as though her imagination had carried her far away from sunny Capri to Thorneydene.

"It is a very beautiful place where your father lives," said Eliot, after watching her in admiring silence for a few moments, "but lonely, I suppose? No houses—big country seats—near?"

"Oh, ever so many. There is Lady Foley's place, and Baron Schroiner's, and the Hon. Mrs. Jamieson's—and several others."

"I had no idea that Thorneydene could boast of such aristocratic inhabitants. I imagined it to be a tiny, out-of-the-way village."

"So it is. Of course, these residences are not all in Thorneydene itself, only near it."

"I suppose the owners of these country seats are poor people who reside in the country for the sake of economy?" said Eliot, looking a little bored.

"No; they are all rich people. Lady Foley is tremendously wealthy, and there is the American widow—I'd forgotten her—Mrs. Raffin—she has a new house. She is very, very rich!"

Eliot stretched out his hand for the flowers, and carefully arranged the border of ferns.

"Do you remember when we found the first lilac crocus in our favourite walk?" he asked. "And the big violets, and the narcissi in the wood? What a happy time we've had. It doesn't seem possible that we can have passed three months here! A quarter of a year of happiness is a lot to get out of the twelve months. Di, tell me, have you been happy, too?"

She would not look at him as she murmured:

"Yes."

"Shall I see you in London—shall you stay there?"

"No. Only a week or so. I shall be home upon the day of my birthday—the twenty-ninth of April."

"I wonder what you will do when you are at home?"

"I am going to make butter and cheese, and perhaps learn to milk cows. I am not quite sure about learning the last accomplishment, but I shall try. And I shall keep fancy poultry," said Di, trying hard to control her voice. She was angry with herself because of that foolish quiver that would creep into her throat. Why was it that she felt no pleasure in thinking of these simple home duties? Hitherto she had always looked forward to fulfilling them,

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and had thought of them with keen delight. To-day her heart ached, and there was a sordid ring in the enumeration of butter and cheese making, and milking cows, and keeping

Put one cold hand to her throat.

poultry that she had never before noticed. Was Thorneydene really attractive after all?

"I can't fancy this pretty white hand turning a churn," said Eliot, looking at the hand in her lap.

Di laughed, and rose from her seat. She felt angry now, though even to herself she dare not admit that she had a reason for this feeling of disappointment that had stolen over her.

"It will not be very white when I have been a dairymaid for a few months," said she in a harsh voice. "I—I think I must be returning to the hotel. There's such a lot of packing to do."

Eliot sprang to his feet. His face was pale, and his eyes were strangely tender as they rested upon the girl's white, drawn face. Without a word, he drew her to him, and kissed her. She felt his kisses upon her cheek, and tried to draw herself away.

"Oh, Di!" she heard him whisper. "How I admire you! How brave, and sweet, and good you are, my darling!"

She tore herself away, trampling in her agitation over the fallen flowers. Her cheeks were scarlet, when she looked at herself in the mirror in her bedroom.

"He admires me!" she cried to herself with a little hysterical laugh. "He admires me! Would a man who loved say what he said? If he loves me—why didn't he tell me so?"

The partition walls were very thin in the white-washed cottage. Kitty's sweet, happy voice, speaking in the adjoining room, fell upon Di's ears.

"The Nabob has received a host of invitations, Aunt Lu-lu, from people in the hotel. He is going to stay with the Malets in Yorkshire next week."

"Nasty, vulgar parvenus!" retorted Mrs. Caffyn. "Maud Malet makes no secret of *her* infatuation for the Nabob. She is always looking at him as though she feared that the earth would suddenly open and swallow him up. She looks positively idiotic when he is near her! If I were her mother, I'd send her back to the schoolroom. As if *she* can ever hope to marry a man so rich and handsome and popular as the Nabob! It is quite too mad an idea." Di gasped and put one cold hand to her throat.

"He will marry some handsome, accomplished girl of *good* family when he *does* take a wife," went on Mrs. Caffyn, and Di detected the false ring in her aunt's voice, and knew that Mrs. Caffyn's words did not come from her heart. "He is rich enough to marry anybody; but he will never marry a fool, nor yet a girl who comes of such a stock as Miss Malet has the misfortune to own for her relations. *I* know the Nabob's ideas about marriage, Kitty."

Di removed the neck-ribbon, folded it mechanically, and placed it upon her dressing-table. Once her lips quivered, but it was only when she murmured: "Oh, Daddy, Daddy! How could I ever want not to go back to you, dear?"

(To be continued.)

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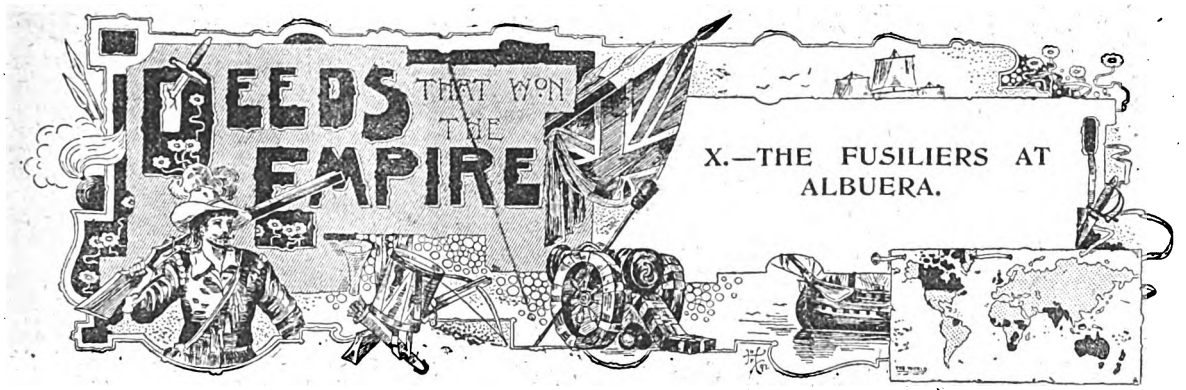

ALBUERA is the fiercest, bloodiest, and most amazing fight in the mighty drama of the Peninsular War.

On May 11th, 1811, the English guns were thundering sullenly over Badajos. Wellington was beyond the Guadiana, pressing Marmont; and Beresford, with much pluck, but little skill, was besieging the great frontier fortress. Soult, however, a master of war, was swooping down from Seville to raise the siege. On the 14th, he reached Villa Franca, only thirty miles distant, and fired salvos from his heaviest guns all through the night to warn the garrison of approaching succour. Beresford could not both maintain the siege and fight Soult; and on the night of the 13th he abandoned his trenches, burnt his gabions and fascines, and marched to meet Soult at Albuera, a low ridge, with a shallow river in front, which barred the road to Badajos. As the morning of May 16th, 1811, broke, heavy with clouds, and wild with gusty rainstorms, the two armies grimly gazed at each other in stern pause, ere they joined in the wrestle of actual battle.

All the advantages, save one, were on the side of the French. Soult was the ablest of the French marshals. If he had not Ney's *élan* in attack, or Massena's stubborn resource in retreat, yet he had a military genius, since Lannes was dead, second only to that of Napoleon himself. He had under his command 20,000 war-hardened infantry, forty guns, and 4,000 magnificent cavalry, commanded by Latour Maubourg, one of the most brilliant of French cavalry generals.

Beresford, the British commander, had the dogged fighting courage, half Dutch and half English, of his name and blood; but as a commander he was scarcely third-rate. Of his army of 30,000, 15,000 were Spanish, half-drilled, and more than half starved—they had lived for days on horse-flesh—under Blake, a general who had lost all the good qualities of Irish character, and acquired all the bad ones peculiar to Spanish temper. Of Beresford's remaining troop, 8,000 were Portuguese. He had only 7,000 British soldiers.

Beresford ought not to have fought. He had abandoned the siege of Badajos, and no reason for giving battle remained. The condition of Blake's men, no doubt, made retreat difficult. They had reached the point at which they must either halt, or lie down and die.

The real force driving Beresford to battle, however, was the fighting effervescence in his own blood, and the warlike impatience of his British troops. They had taken no part in the late great battles under Wellington. Busaco had been fought, and Fuentes Onoro gained without them, and they were in the mood —both officers and men—of fierce determination to fight *somebody!*

This was intimated somewhat roughly to Beresford, and he had not that iron ascendency over his troops Wellington possessed. As a matter of fact, he was himself as stubbornly eager to fight as any private in the ranks.

The superiority of Soult's warlike genius was shown before a shot was fired. Beresford regarded the bridge that crossed the Albuera, and the village that clustered at the bridge head, as the key of his position.

He occupied the village with Alten's German brigade, covered the bridge with the fire of powerful batteries, and held in reserve above it his best British brigade, the Fusiliers under Cole, the very regiments who, four hours later, on the extreme right of Beresford's position, were to actually win the battle.

Soult's sure vision, however, as he surveyed his enemies on the evening of the 15th, saw that Beresford's right was his weak point. It was a rough, broken table-land, curving till it looked into the rear of Beresford's line. It was weakly held by Blake and his Spaniards; immediately in its front was a low wooded hill, behind which, as a screen, an attacking force could be gathered.

In the night Soult placed behind this hill the fifth corps under Girard, the whole of his heavy cavalry under Latour Maubourg, and the strength of his artillery. When the morning broke Soult had 15,000 men and 30 guns within ten minutes' march of Beresford's right wing, and nobody suspected it.

No gleam of colour, no murmur of packed battalions, no ring of steel, no sound of marching feet warned the deluded English general of the battle storm about to break on his right wing. A commander with such an unexpected tempest ready to burst on the weakest point of his line was by all the rules of war predoomed.

At nine o'clock Soult launched an attack at the bridge, the point where Beresford expected him; but it was only a feint. Beresford, however, with all his faults, had the soldierly brain to which the actual thunder of the cannon gave clearness. He noticed that the French battalions supporting the attack on the bridge did not press on closely; as a matter of fact as soon as the smoke of artillery from the battle raging at the bridge swept over the field they swung smartly to the left, and at the double hastened to add themselves to the thunderbolt which Soult was launching at Beresford's right.

But Beresford, meanwhile, had guessed Soult's secret, and he sent officer after officer ordering and intreating Blake to change front, so as to meet Soult's attack on

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his flank, and he finally rode thither himself to inforce his commands.

Blake, however, was immovable through pride, and his men through sheer physical weakness. They could die, but they could not march or deploy. Blake at last tried to change front, but as he did so the French attack smote him. Pressing up the gentle rise, Gerard's men scourged poor Blake's flank with their fire; the French artillery, coming swiftly on, halted every fifty yards to thunder on the unhappy Spaniards; while Latour Maubourg's lancers and hussars, galloping in a wider sweep, gathered momentum for a wild ride on Blake's actual rear.

Beresford tried to persuade the Spaniards to charge as the French were thus circling round them. Shouts and gesticulations were all in vain. He was a man of giant height and strength, and he actually seized a Spanish ensign in his iron grip, and carried him bodily, flag and all, at a run for fifty yards towards the moving French lines, and planted him there.

When released, however, the bewildered Spaniard simply took to his heels, and ran back to his friends, as a terrified sheep might run back to the flock!

In half-an-hour Beresford's battle had grown desperate. Two-thirds of the French, in compact order of battle, were perpendicular to his right; the Spaniards were falling into disorder; Soult saw the victory in his grasp, and eagerly pushed forward his reserves. Over the whole hill, mingled with furious blasts of rain, rolled the tumult of a disorderly and broken fight. Ten minutes more would have enabled Soult to fling Beresford's right, a shattered and routed mass, on the only possible line of retreat, and with the French superiority in cavalry his army would have been blotted out.

The share of the British in the fight consisted of three great attacks delivered by way of counter-stroke to Soult's overwhelming rush on the hill held by Blake. The first attack was delivered by the second division under Colborne, led by General Stewart in person.

Stewart was a sort of British version of Ney, a man of vehement spirit, with a daring that grew even more flame-like in the eddying tumult and tempest of actual battle. He saw Soult's attack crumbling up Blake's helpless battalions, while the flash of the French artillery every moment grew closer. It was the crisis of the fight, and Stewart brought on Colborne's men at a run. Colborne himself, a fine soldier with cool judgment, wished to halt and form his men in order of battle before plunging into the confused vortex of the fight above; but Stewart, full of breathless ardour, hurried the brigade up the hill in column of companies, reached the Spanish right, and began to form line by succession of battalions as they arrived.

At this moment a wild tempest of rain was sweeping over the British, as, at the double, they came up the hill; the eddying fog, thick with the smoke of powder, hid everything twenty yards from the panting soldiers. Suddenly the wall of changing fog to their right sparkled into swiftly-moving spots of red; it shone the next instant with the gleam of a thousand steel points; above the thunder of the cannon, the shouts of contending men, rose the awful sound of a tempest of galloping hoofs.

The French lancers and hussars caught the British in open order, and in five fierce and bloody minutes, almost trampled them out of existence!

Two-thirds of the brigade went down.

The 31st Regiment flung itself promptly into square and stood fast—a tiny island, edged with steel and flame, amid the mad tumult; but the French lancers, drunk with excitement, mad with battle-fury, swept over the whole slope of the hill. They captured six guns, and might have done yet more fatal mischief but that they occupied themselves in galloping to and fro across the line of their original charge, spearing the wounded.

One lancer charged Beresford as he sat, solitary and huge, on his horse amid the broken English regiments. But Beresford was at least a magnificent trooper. He put the lance aside with one hand, and catching the Frenchman by the throat, lifted him clean from the saddle, and dashed him senseless on the ground!

The ensign who carried the colours of the 3rd Buffs covered them with his body till he was slain by a dozen lance-thrusts. The ensign who carried the other colours of the same regiment tore the flag from its staff and thrust it into his breast, where it was found, stiff with his blood, after the fight.

The Spaniards, meanwhile, were firing incessantly, but on general principles merely, and into space, or into the ranks of their own allies as might happen, and the 29th, advancing to the help of Colborne's broken men, finding the Spaniards in their path, and firing into their lines, broke sternly into volleys on them in turn. Seldom has a battlefield witnessed a tumult so distracted and wild.

The first English counter-stroke had failed, but the second followed swiftly. The furious rain and fog, which had proved so fatal to Colborne's men, for a moment was in favour of Beresford. Soult, though eagerly watching the conflict, could not see the ruin into which the British had fallen, and hesitated to launch his reserves into the fight. The 31st still sternly held its own against the French cavalry, and this gave time for Stewart to bring up Houghton's brigade.

But this time Stewart, though he brought up his men with as much vehemence as before, brought them up in order of battle. The 29th, the 48th, and the 57th swept up the hill in line, led by Houghton, hat in hand. He fell, pierced by three bullets, but over his dead body, eager to close, the British line still swept. They reached the crest. A deep and narrow ravine arrested their bayonet charge, but with stubborn valour they held the ground they had gained, scourged with musketry fire at pistol-shot distance, and by artillery at fifty yards range, while a French column smote them with its musketry on their flank.

The men fell fast, but fought as they fell. Stewart was twice wounded, Colonel Dutworth, of the 48th, slain. Of the 57th, out of 570 men, 430, with their colonel, Inglis, fell. The men, after the battle, were found lying dead in ranks exactly as they fought.

"Die hard! my men, die hard!" said Inglis when the bullet struck him, and the 57th have borne the name of "Die hards!" ever since. At Inkerman, indeed, more than fifty years afterwards, the "Die hard!" of Inglis served to harden the valour of the 57th in a fight as stern as Albuera itself.

But ammunition began to fail. Houghton's men would not yield, but it was plain that in a few more minutes there would be none of them left, save the dead and the wounded. And at this dreadful moment, Beresford, distracted with the tumult and horror of the fight, wavered.

He called up Alten's men from the bridge to cover his retreat, and prepared to yield the fatal hill. At this juncture, however, a mind more masterful and daring than his own launched a third British attack against the victorious French, and won the dreadful day.

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Colonel Hardinge, afterwards famous in Indian battles, acted as quarter-general of the Portuguese army. On his own responsibility he organised the third English attack. Cole had just come up the road from Badajos with two brigades, and Hardinge urged him to lead his men straight up the hill. Then, riding to Abercrombie's brigade, he ordered him to sweep round the flank of the hill.

Beresford, on learning of this movement, accepted it, and sent back Alten's men to retake the bridge which they had abandoned. Abercrombie's men swept to the left of the hill, and Cole, a gallant and able soldier, using the Portuguese regiments in his brigade as a guard against a flank attack of the French cavalry, led his two fusilier regiments, the 7th and 23rd, straight to the crest.

The French lancers and hussars caught the British infantry in open order.

At this moment the French reserves were coming on, the fragments of Houghton's brigade were falling back, the field was heaped with carcases, the lancers were riding furiously about the captured artillery, and with a storm of exultant shouts the French were sweeping on to assured victory. It was the dramatic moment of the fight.

Suddenly through the fog, coming rapidly on with stern faces and flashing volleys, appeared the long line of Cole's fusiliers on the right of Houghton's staggering groups, while at the same exact moment Abercrombie's line broke through the mist on their left. As these grim and threatening lines became visible the French shouts suddenly died down.

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It was the old contest of the British line—the "thin red line"—against the favourite French attack in column, and the story can only be told in Napier's resonant prose. The passage which describes the attack of the fusiliers is one of the classic passages of English battle literature, and in its syllables can still be heard the tread of marching feet, the shrill clangour of smitten steel, and the thunder of the musketry volleys.

"Such a gallant line," says Napier, "arising from amid the smoke, and rapidly separating itself from the confused and broken multitude, startled the enemy's masses, which were increasing and pressing forward as to assured victory; they wavered, hesitated, and then, vomiting forth a storm of fire, hastily endeavoured to enlarge their front, while the fearful discharge of grape from all their artillery whistled through the British ranks. Myert was killed, Cole and the three colonels—Ellis, Blackeney, and Hawkshawe—fell wounded; and the fusilier battalions, struck by the iron tempest, reeled and staggered like sinking ships.

"Suddenly and sternly recovering, they closed on their terrible enemies, and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult, by voice and gesture, animate his Frenchmen; in vain did the hardiest veterans break from the crowded columns and sacrifice their lives to gain time for the mass to open on such a fair field; in vain did the mass itself bear up, and, fiercely striving, fire indiscriminately on friends and foes, while the horsemen, hovering on the flanks, threatened to charge the advancing line.

"Nothing could stop that astonishing infantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm weakened the stability of their order; their measured tread shook the ground, their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation, their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries that broke from all parts of the tumultuous crowds as, slowly, and with a horrid carnage, it was driven by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the hill.

"In vain did the French reserves mix with the struggling multitude to sustain the fight. Their efforts only increased the irremediable confusion, and the mighty mass, breaking off like a loosened cliff, went headlong down the ascent. The rain flowed after in streams discoloured with blood, and eighteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill."

The Battle of Albuera lasted four hours; its slaughter was dreadful. Within the space of a few hundred feet square were strewn some seven thousand bodies, and over this Aceldama the artillery had galloped, the cavalry had charged! The 3rd Buffs went into the fight with twenty-four officers and 750 rank and file; at the roll-call next morning there were only five officers and thirty-five men. One company of the Royal Fusiliers came out of the fight commanded by a corporal; every officer and sergeant had been killed!

Albuera is essentially a soldier's fight. The bayonet of the private, not the brain of the general, won it; and never was the fighting quality of our race more brilliantly shown. Soult summed up the battle in words that deserve to be memorable.

"There is no beating those troops," he wrote, "*in spite of their generals!* I always thought them bad soldiers," he added, with a Frenchman's love of paradox; "now I am sure of it. For I turned their right, pierced their centre, they were everywhere broken, the day was mine, and yet *they did not know it*, and would not run."

("*The Shannon and Chesapeake*" *next week.*)

ON THURSDAY, MAY 6th,

GIRLS,

Our New Paper for Girls of all ages, from Six to Sixty, will make its bow to the Public.

GIRLS will, I am sure, meet with a warm welcome, not only from schoolgirls and home-girls, and young ladies of all sorts and descriptions, but from mothers and teachers as well.

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As ***Girls*** is only one penny, and will appear weekly, I advise you to lodge orders with your newsagent at once, not only for the weekly edition, but also for the monthly parts, price sixpence, ready the first of each month.

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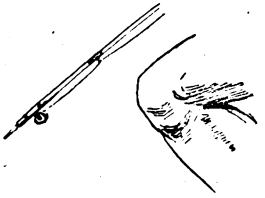
Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your lists until you are told to send them in.

Don't be discouraged if you cannot solve them all. Others may be no more clever than yourself. Send in fifty-five, or fifty, or even fewer.

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of six must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.



No. 1. RODNEY.

No. 2......

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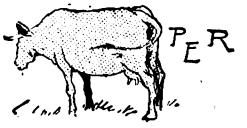

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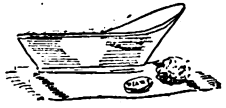

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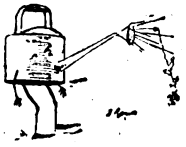


No. 6......

No. 7......

No. 8......

Remember these Things.

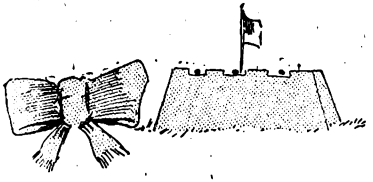
YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the titles of the people. The family names are not depicted.

Name.....

Address.....



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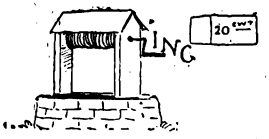

No. 10......

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of Peers.—Whitaker's Almanack, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

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TOLD BY THE DOCTOR.

II.—The Secret of an Old Garden. (*Concluded from last week.*)

CHAPTER II. (*continued*).

OUR search for Mr. Gavin Temple was not of long duration. We came upon him just as he was about to enter the green door of the old garden in Pulteney Street. He simply nodded to Ogilvie as we approached, and pushed open the door for us. Frank faced up belligerently.

"I want a word with you, Mr. Temple," he said. "I insist upon knowing what you have done with the body of Miss Yseult Dunbar."

Mr. Gavin stared at him with a surprise which was certainly very well acted, if it was not genuine. He was a tall, sallow, thin old man, with an aquiline nose and little black eyes like his daughter's, but more restless and furtive than hers. His manner was nervous and uneasy, and when he spoke it was with a stutter.

"I do not understand!" he said, looking from one to the other of us in his restless, furtive way.

"I will speak plainly, then," said Ogilvie with suppressed passion. "This morning you smuggled the body of my *fiancée*, coffinless, out of the house—whether living or not, nobody knows—and have buried it, Heaven knows where, for fear we should find out that my darling was not dead."

His voice broke as he ended, and he advanced to the man at the door of the garden with such mad passion in his face that I felt bound to step between. Gavin Temple edged away into the garden.

"He is mad!" he said to me. "The body has not been moved at all." And I made haste to answer:

"You are mistaken, Mr. Temple. Whether you know it or not I cannot tell, but the body of Miss Dunbar has disappeared from the house."

"Disappeared!" he repeated. "It is impossible."

And again his acting, if acting it was, merited all admiration.

"If you go into the house you will find the fact apparent," I said, taking the conduct of the case into my own hands, since my companion had become silent, evidently attempting to master his emotion. "We will wait for you in the garden, to talk over with you the course to be pursued."

Gavin Temple seemed to me to cast a quick, frightened look round the place.

"Come into the house," he said; and I noted his anxiety down in my memory as a fact which might help us in our investigations.

In spite of his evident eagerness for us to enter the house, we insisted on remaining in the garden, and he rejoined us there in a remarkably short space of time, after finding out for himself—or pretending to do—the fact of his ward's disappearance. He had evidently made up his mind to maintain his air of ignorance concerning the affair, and assured us, as volubly as his stutter would allow, that he was as surprised as ourselves.

"I suppose you will inform the police of the affair, Mr. Temple?" I said, wondering how he would take the suggestion.

He showed some hesitation.

"I have fought all along against my poor ward's death being turned into a scandal for the benefit of the halfpenny papers," he said at last. "Mr. Ogilvie has been angry with me for not allowing it, I know. I suppose this disappearance is a new move of his to bring publicity into the case."

This was turning the tables with a vengeance; and I saw poor Frank's pale cheeks redden with indignation.

"You are a clever man, Mr. Temple," he said with a calmness which surprised me; "however, this case shall be hushed up no longer. Talk as you like, the affair

I felt bound to step between.

shall be handed over to the proper authorities at once, to be sifted, and whatever villainy has had a place in it will be discovered."

"Whatever villainy there may be is yours," stuttered the tall old man. "If you care to make a nine days' wonder for the riff-raff out of your *fiancée's* death, it is your own matter."

There seemed some likelihood of a quarrel, so I tried to cause a diversion by asking Yseult's guardian whether he had found anything among her papers, or those of her dead grandfather, which could throw any light upon the disappearance. Was there any person who could reap advantage by allowing the slight doubt to remain whether the young lady was actually dead or not?

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The topic turned out to be an unfortunate one, for it reminded Ogilvie of the iron box which we had seen on Gavin Temple's study-table. He accused the old man fiercely of having opened it while the question of Yseult's death was still in doubt.

"My dear young man, how can you be so absurd?" said Gavin, stuttering more than ever. "I can sympathise with your grief at my ward's untimely death, and understand your inclination prompting you to believe that there was some hope; but after Dr. Mitcheller's emphatic decision, it is simply insane to harbour any longer a doubt of your sweetheart's death."

Ogilvie shrugged his shoulders and made no reply.

"Well, as you have opened the box, we may as well see the contents," he said, waving the question, and he took a step in the direction of the house.

The effect of his words on Gavin Temple surprised me. He was all in a nervous tremour at once, and refused under any circumstances to disclose what the box contained.

"The papers which are there," he said, "are not for the public gaze. It is my right, as executor under Lord Englon's will, to read them."

I thought for a moment that my companion would fight for the right to do so; but he turned on his heel.

"All right, Mr. Temple," he said over his shoulder. "I am going now to place the matter in the hands of the police! We shall see whether they do not insist on seeing the contents of the iron box."

And we left the gaunt old man turning white and red in turns and struggling to speak.

"I wonder what the box contains?" said Ogilvie, as we went out into Pulteney Street. "I have a good mind to go back and break it open."

"It can hardly concern the work we have in hand," I said. "To that we must give all our energies, and never rest until we have discovered what has become of the body of Miss Yseult Dunbar. Let us now see if we can trace Gavin Temple's doings throughout to-day. His daughter told me, while you were searching the house, that he had been to an eye specialist in Wigmore Street about his sight. The doctor is a friend of mine. We will go and inquire, in the first place, whether he visited him."

CHAPTER III.

The Burial in the Garden.

Early the next day I went alone to the house in Pulteney Street, determined to see Miss Madge, and try if there was any value in old Mrs. Ogilvie's address.

Our inquiries into Gavin Temple's doings on the previous day had been easy enough, but produced nothing. He had really visited my friend in Wigmore Street, and had stayed some time with him. The rest was accounted for easily, and gave us no clue to follow.

In spite of Frank Ogilvie's threat to the old man, we had not yet called in the aid of the police. The young fellow was, naturally, unwilling to give the case publicity, and I managed to persuade him that, between us, we should do more towards unravelling the mystery than any number of ordinary Scotland Yard men.

I have no great opinion myself of the English detectives. I hoped to extract information from Miss Madge much more cleverly than the most astute of them could do. The difficulty, however, was to see her. I trusted that since my name had not transpired on the previous day, I might obtain admittance by simply sending in my card. When, however, the servant reappeared with the information that Miss Temple was engaged, and could not possibly see me, I began to suspect that my identity was known to either father or daughter better than I thought; and I walked backward and forward along the blank street, trying to invent some other plan of seeing the lady I wished to interview. It was possible that if I waited she might come over herself and give me the chance I wanted, or her father might leave the house and give me a better opportunity of winning an entry into the house.

It was pretty early in the morning, and I had started out without having seen Ogilvie, or having told him what I meant to do, hoping to surprise him with the information I should have gained after the interview was over.

Judge of my surprise, then, as I paced slowly up and down past the green door in Pulteney Street, to see emerging from it Frank Ogilvie himself.

"You here already?" I said. "I was wondering how I could get to see Madge Temple."

"Yes," said the young man, whose face was full of sad seriousness, "your card came in while I was there, but Madge would not see you. She has just been making some revelations to me."

"Revelations that will help us?" I asked excitedly.

"I believe so. I wanted to ask you what I had better do."

"Certainly," I said. "Shall we walk towards the Park while you tell me?"

"I do not think I ought to lose sight of this garden."

"The garden? Why?"

"Because the body of Yseult is buried in it."

I stood still and stared at him in surprise. Then the remembrance of Gavin Temple's evident uneasiness while we were in the garden, and a half-suspicion which had flashed into my mind at the time, came back to me, and I asked:

"Buried by Mr. Temple?"

My companion nodded.

"But when did he do it?" I inquired. "In broad daylight, yesterday, for you saw the corpse in the coffin in the morning?"

Ogilvie shook his head.

"No; last night."

"After we had searched the house?"

"Certainly."

"Then where had he managed to conceal the body during the day?"

"That is a mystery which remains to be solved. The question is, what ought we to do now? We do not know where the spot is. I was wondering whether I ought to try and extract the information from Gavin Temple, now we know so much, or whether we ought to call the police in to assist us. Time is of so much importance."

"Why?"

The poor fellow hardly liked to confess that he had still some slight hope of finding his *fiancée* alive. I dispelled it at once.

"If she had been buried, there can be no doubt of her death," I said. "Even if she were alive before, the exclusion of air would prove fatal. There is no need for haste, unfortunately."

It was difficult to persuade him of the truth of my assertion. He had read in fiction, at least, of people living after burial.

"Fiction, indeed!" I said, "except in cases where the coffin has been inclosed in a vault only."

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Even then he insisted on taking me back into the old garden, with the idea of starting digging operations.

"But where are you going to dig?" I asked, and the poor fellow had to admit that he could not tell.

"I know that it is at the end of the garden farthest from the house, and out of view of the windows," he said, as he walked along in the direction he mentioned. "But that is all."

"And from whom did you gain your information?" I asked. "Miss Madge?"

"Yes; I will tell you all about it after we have discovered the spot."

The spot was more difficult to discover, however, than the young man seemed to imagine. The only ground which had been disturbed was a great bare bed lying under the southern wall about sixty feet by ten, and the whole of the surface of this had been recently turned over, so that it was impossible to mark any difference in one part from another.

"It is useless for us to begin to work on this great plot," I said.

"Tell me all you know, and I will tell you then a plan I have thought out for finding out what we want."

We walked slowly backwards and forwards along the path by the side of the garden bed, while Frank Ogilvie told me what he had discovered. All the while he did so he was looking at the newly-turned earth, looking in vain for some indication which would lead him to the unconsecrated grave of the woman he loved.

"My mother it was who advised me to question Madge," he began. "She—my mother—has an intuition which seems almost miraculous. She was right in this instance. She said that Madge had a hand in causing Yseult's death."

"And she was right?"

"Yes. Madge seems to have been alone responsible for it. I will tell you all about it. After the wrong she has done me, I cannot stay to consider whether I am right or not in doing so. I called early at the house in order to see Miss Temple before her father would be up—he is a late riser—to forbid my entrance to the house, as he might do, or interfere with my cross-examination of his daughter. I found her in a very nervous and highly-wrought state, which turned out to be fortunate for my plans. It required very little on my part to gain from the ill-balanced woman a full confession. Of the beginning of our interview I ought, perhaps, not to speak. I must only say, for the sake of explaining the rest, that Miss Temple was so affected by the sight of my own grief, that she surprised me by a passionate avowal of her love for me. Then she hurried on to her confession. She had been madly jealous of Yseult, and had formed a plan of changing my *fiancée's* feelings with regard to me——"

"And winning you for herself?" I asked, as Ogilvie had naturally some delicacy in expressing the state of affairs.

"Yes," he said gravely. "With this view the wicked woman forged a letter in my handwriting, and showed it to Yseult. In it I was supposed to say that I regretted my engagement, since it prevented my marrying the woman I really loved."

"Good Heavens!" I exclaimed. "What villainy!"

"Yes," said my companion. "The letter must have been cleverly fabricated, for it seems to have appeared genuine to Yseult. That letter was the cause of her seizure, which I am now more than ever convinced was only a trance, and not death."

"If so," I said, "Gavin Temple is a murderer! But go on with your story. How about the burial in the garden?"

"With that the woman had nothing to do. She professes to have been conscience-stricken at the effect of her deed and the sight of my grief, and only hoped that my supposition would prove correct, and that Yseult would recover and marry me, although that would mean the destruction of all her hopes and plans."

"Her repentance was probably quite genuine," I said. "Women are strange creatures. But go on. The burial was a step of Gavin Temple's, I suppose, as you thought all along, to make certain his inheritance of the property?"

"Yes, I suppose so. How he managed to conceal the body, after taking precautions as we were at finding the coffin empty. Like me, she suspected her father. When he called in an extra gardener yesterday to help turn over this plot her suspicions were aroused, and she kept some watch on his movements. After the household had retired last night she heard her father leave his room, go

Walked along in the direction he mentioned.

quietly downstairs, and let himself out of the house. She returned to her bedroom window, to see him cross the lawn in the direction of the tool-house. He emerged with a spade, and walked over the centre grass-plot towards this end of the garden. Here the trees hid him from the window, and his daughter could only wait and imagine what he was doing. After what seemed to her a very long time, her father emerged into the light of the open lawn with the spade still in his hand. He returned it to the tool-house, and re-entered the house, stepping so softly that it was only by the closing of his bedroom door that Madge knew he had come upstairs."

"That is all?" I asked, as Ogilvie paused in his account.

"Yes; but it is sufficient."

"I suppose he actually remained in the garden all the time that he was out of his daughter's sight?"

"It is almost certain. Even if he took such a round-about course to get to the gate, it is strange that he should have returned in the same manner, coming on the lawn through this opening between the trees."

"Yes, it seems pretty certain," I said, "that whatever

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he did, took place in the garden. You think—from the lady's account, I suppose—that he had the body hidden already somewhere in the garden when we made our search?"

"Yes; hurriedly buried, perhaps. I think he must have gone out to bury it deeper."

"And you think Miss Temple has been telling you the truth?"

"I am certain of it. I shall put it in the hands of the police—have the whole place dug up; and see that Gavin Temple is charged with murder."

"I have a plan," I said, "by which we can save ourselves the trouble of so much digging, and, at the same time, get a clearer case against the miscreant."

Ogilvie was all impatience to hear it.

"Tell Temple, this evening," I said briefly, "that you have obtained a clue, and intend having the whole south bed dug up in the morning—that you have a magistrate's order; if you do not mind the untruth. In the night we will keep watch on the garden, and, ten to one, our man will try to undo his work. We can pounce upon him in the act. Do you agree?"

Ogilvie's only objection was the delay, and I managed to persuade him that my plan would probably take up less time than the digging up of six hundred square feet of earth, to a depth of, at least, a yard.

With that settled, we took our way to Queen Anne's Gate, to recite the success of our morning's work to Mrs. Ogilvie. Frank was surprised, however, to find that his mother was not at home. She had started for St. Pancras, early in the morning, leaving only a brief message for Frank, to say that she had been summoned to her only sister's at Derby.

CHAPTER IV.

The Mystery is Cleared.

We had agreed that it would be best to give Gavin Temple the fright, by which we hoped to make him incriminate himself pretty late in the evening, in order to shorten the time during which it would be necessary for us to keep him under observation. If we told him early in the day that the garden-plot was to be searched, although it was not probable that he would attempt to remove the body before night, still the place was so secluded that there was a possibility of his making the attempt, against which we should have had to prepare. To make the warning late would, therefore, save us some hours of probably useless watching. Eight o'clock was the hour we had agreed upon, and Ogilvie was to make the announcement while I waited in the street.

The conversation lasted longer than I had expected, and it was almost nine when the young man opened the green door and beckoned me into the garden, already darkening fast with the shades of night. Our plans had all been arranged beforehand, and we crept along in silence to the southern end of the garden, taking care that we should not be observed from the house. At the south corner of the great lawn stands a little summer-house, which has a window at the back looking on the piece of ground which we were to watch.

Nothing could have suited our purpose better; and here we had agreed to remain all through the night, on the chance of Gavin Temple's coming out to undo his work of the night before.

We scarcely spoke, and only in the lowest of whispers. I was dying to smoke, but feared to do so for fear of betraying our presence before the time. I believe Ogilvie could think of nothing but the discovery which he expected to make before the night was out. He sat back on the opposite side of the open doorway, silent and motionless. The doorway opened upon the dusky lawn, and we were obliged to sit close to the wall on either side of it, for fear of being seen by anybody crossing the garden. For my own part, I found the position a most irksome and fatiguing one. I envied the composure with which poor Ogilvie remained motionless, but could not imitate it. The place seemed to swarm with creeping things.

I welcomed the coming darkness, which would render less the chances of our being observed, so that I might move a little. I was surprised at the lightness of the August night. Even at eleven the lawn, except under the yew trees, seemed almost as visible as in daylight. The hours chimed from the Westminster tower, or I should have been expecting dawn before midnight, the time seemed so long.

"Twelve o'clock," I said needlessly, as Big Ben tolled out the hour; but the slightest perceptible hiss from Ogilvie stopped me. From the house came the sound of a door opening.

After that I held my breath, listening. It seemed hours, though, before I heard another sound. It was a footstep on the gravel-path at the other side of the lawn. Then the tall, lean figure of a man came into view, crossing the grass with a spade on his shoulder. My plan had succeeded.

When we could see him no longer through the arbour doorway, we both rose, and stood watching through the little window at the back, our heads close together. Neither of us spoke a word, but I could hear Ogilvie's breath coming in drawn gasps as we saw Gavin Temple cross the garden-bed to the wall. He seemed to be measuring some length along the wall with a rod. Then there was more measuring across the bed, and then the old man began to dig.

"Shall we make our sally now? We have found the spot," said Ogilvie at last, in a whisper; but I held his arm.

"Wait!" I said, and we resumed our watching. Gavin Temple was working hard. Spadeful after spadeful of earth was thrown on the growing mound at his side. Now he had stepped into the hole which he was making, and his bent figure, still actively working, gradually sank lower and lower, showing us the depth to which he had dug. He did not stop till more than half his body was hidden; then the spadefuls of earth ceased to fly upwards, and we could see him bending down in the grave he had dug till he disappeared almost entirely. Then we saw that he was raising something with great exertion—a long oblong box, evidently.

We waited till he had lifted it to the surface, and then with one accord rushed upon him from our hiding-place.

I shall never forget the cry he gave when he caught sight of us. Down went the spade into the hole by which he was standing, and the next moment he was running towards the lawn.

My first thought was to pursue. But at the first step I stumbled on the uneven earth and fell forward.

Ogilvie helped me to rise.

"We will waste no time on him," he said. "Let us open the box."

"Here?"

"No, let us carry it home, if you are not hurt."

I assured him that my fall had done me no harm, and agreed with him that our best plan would be to carry the box to his house before attempting to open it.

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The long case seemed to be of oak, and was very heavy.

"I wonder how Temple managed to carry it alone?" I said, as we lifted it with difficulty.

"Let us hope that nobody will meet us."

"No, or we shall assuredly be arrested on suspicion of having committed a burglary."

I said it quite seriously. Of course I should not have dreamt of joking, under the circumstances. But the danger seemed to me a real one, and there was the probability of a more serious charge being preferred against us if the box were opened.

However, the distance between the two houses was so small, and the hour was so late, that, after carrying our heavy burden through the green door in the wall, we met not a single soul. Gavin Temple, as we learnt later, was so startled and terror-stricken by our sudden appearance, that he had only strength left to creep into his bed, from which he did not rise again for seven weeks.

On arriving at the house in Queen Anne's Gate, Ogilvie opened the door with his latchkey, and we carried our load into the library, where he had left a light ready.

I was thoroughly worn out with the exertion of helping to carry the oaken box even such a little distance, but my companion seemed full of energy. He hurried away to find tools for breaking the box open, while I sank into an easy chair and sat regarding it.

"Gavin Temple must have had this chest specially made for the purpose," I said, when Frank came back with screwdriver, chisel, and hammer. "I think he must have had it hidden under the earth in the garden for some days—see how the earth clings to it. My idea is that yesterday, when the body disappeared, he carried it out quickly to this chest, which was already in the earth, and covered it up temporarily. Then at night he returned, screwed on the lid carefully, as we see, and buried the box deeper."

But Ogilvie was not listening. With a strange, concentrated look on his stricken face, he had been turning up the lamp and moving the furniture of the room, so that the light should fall more clearly on his work. Then he cleared the earth from one of the screws with which the solid lid was secured. I could see that all his fingers were trembling as he did so.

Before the earth was even cleared away, however, an unexpected sound made him pause. A vehicle of some sort was stopping in front of the house.

It seemed so strange at that hour of the night, that we both listened.

"Lock the door," said Ogilvie quickly, as a latchkey was heard in the hall door. "It is my mother returning. I cannot see her now. Lock the door!"

I did as he commanded and stood there listening.

Rushed upon him from our hiding-place.

Yes, it was certainly Mrs. Ogilvie's voice, speaking to someone in the hall. I suppose she had noticed the light from our window, for immediately a tap came at the locked door.

"Frank, are you there?"

The young man still knelt over the long box, the sweat standing in beads on his white face, his fingers twitching with nervous and agonised impatience to get through his task.

"For Heaven's sake, mother, leave me a little! I cannot see you just yet," he said, with a voice full of anguish. And I thought that to a woman of Mrs. Ogilvie's sympathetic nature the plea would have been sufficient; but to my surprise I heard the knob turn.

"Open the door, Frank, dear, it is more important than you think."

The thoughts flashed into my mind that she must be fearing lest her son should do himself some injury, and I hastened to make known the fact that I was in the room.

"Oh, Dr. Favel, please open the door," she said. "There is someone here who has come especially to see Frank."

Her eagerness impressed me.

"You will have to see your mother," I said, "unless I tell her."

He made no answer, so I took it into my hands to open the door and step out into the dim hall, closing the door carefully behind me. Two ladies stood there—Mrs. Ogilvie and her friend—and as I approached them, the former surprised me by hastening past me to the door, without even waiting to give me any greeting, and, turning the knob, she almost thrust her companion into the room where I had left poor Ogilvie, kneeling by the side of the box which we had brought from Pulteney Street. The old lady shut the door behind her, and turned to me.

"Excuse my rudeness, Dr. Favel," she said. "I am so excited, that I fear I hardly know what I am doing. Shall we go into the drawing room? These young people are best left alone for a little."

"But, my dear madam," I began.

The old lady interrupted me with an almost hysterical laugh.

"You are wondering who the lady can be?"

"Yes, madam."

"Can you not guess?"

I dared not make the wild guess which occurred to my mind.

The old lady laughed again.

"Yes; it is Yseult, of course. Come into the drawing-room, and I will tell you all about it."

She led the way into a handsomely furnished room, and turned up the light as she was speaking: and I, uneasy no longer, of course, about the interruption to Frank's task, prepared myself with all eagerness to hear

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Almost thrust her companion into the room.

the particulars of this remarkable and inexplicable turn of events.

The dear old lady was too excited to seat herself, and began at once.

"You did not think that I was joining in the search as well as you!" she said vivaciously. "And you little expected that I should be the successful one! However, I have little cause to thank my own ingenuity. Everything was done for me.

"This morning I received a letter from my sister in Derby. She had heard of Yseult's supposed death, and had previously, of course, seen her photograph.

"Well, at Derby there happened to be an old lady who had been a nurse to Yseult years ago. My sister knew her, and had, after the engagement, heard a good deal about Yseult. Well, yesterday Marian happened to be passing the nurse's house, and saw on the step a lady wonderfully like Yseult's photograph. Of course, if it had been anywhere else, she would not have thought so much of the likeness, but the coincidence struck her, and she luckily sent and told me all about it. I did not like to mention the matter to Frank, fearing to raise any false hopes in his heart; but considering that Yseult had disappeared, I thought I must go over and inquire into the matter. The consequence is that here I am, back with Yseult."

"But, my dear madam," I exclaimed, "what on earth was Miss Dunbar doing at Derby?"

"Ah! that I had to discover when I found her. I expected that there would be some little misunderstanding for me to clear up. It was a very trifling affair, after all. Mischief that Miss Madge had concocted."

"I have heard of that wicked woman's letter," I said. "Did poor Yseult believe her story?"

"Yes, silly girl! And when she recovered from her trance, she thought her best plan would be to disappear, and leave Frank free to marry Madge. She did not wish him to know, if he did not love her, that she was not dead. So she did not put on her own dress, but took from an old chest in the room a gown which she had worn in some private theatricals as a servant girl, and which she thought would prevent her being traced. She had some money in her desk which had not been touched, and with its help travelled to Derby, to the only friend whom, she thought, she had left—her old nurse. I found her there, and soon put matters straight."

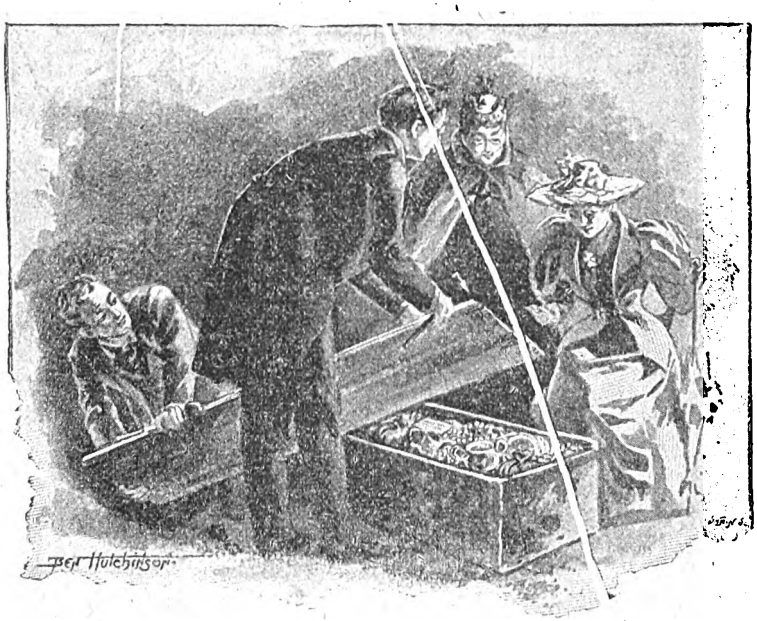
"But this is the inexplicable part," I said; and told the whole story of our doings and the finding of the box. "If it does not contain Miss Yseult's corpse, what on earth can it contain?" I wound up; and Mrs. Ogilvie laughed again. She was in the wildest of spirits at the happy ending to her son's trouble.

"Suppose we go down and see?" she suggested. "Those young people must have said all they can have to say to each other by now."

Frank and Yseult were sitting in the easy chair in the library, in a very lover-like attitude, looking as perfectly happy as two human beings very well can.

They rose as we entered, and Frank came forward to embrace and thank his mother for her part in the affair.

"We are dying to know what is in the box," said she, when she escaped from his embrace; and the young man laughed.



"It is the missing treasure!" cried Yseult.

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"I had forgotten all about the coffin," he said. "Let us open it."

It was easier said than done. The screws we found were so rusted that they could not be turned, and finally we had to break it open with the chisel and hammer. Then a surprise met our eyes, a goodly collection of jewels and gold and silver ornaments.

"Why, it is the missing treasure," cried Yseult, "which could not be found when grandpapa died!"

The missing treasure it was indeed, and lying in the midst of it a letter, which told us the story of its presence in the garden. The letter was in an envelope addressed to Yseult, with, beneath the name, the inscription:

"*To dear Yseult, on her wedding-day.*"

Luckily for our curiosity, Frank Ogilvie was too excited to pay any attention to the endorsement, but tore the envelope open, and handed the sheet which it contained to his sweetheart. Yseult read it in silence.

"It is from poor dear grandpapa!" she explained when she had finished it, seeing that we were all three devoured with curiosity. "He was always romantic. This is a plan to reward me for keeping the old garden intact. It was the last request he made to me. If I had neglected it I should have possibly lost all the family jewels and a sum of thirty thousand pounds, which he says is hidden beneath."

"Yes, here are bags of money," interjected Frank, who was leaning over the treasure-trove with the lamp in his hand.

"I suppose Gavin Temple heard all about the box from the papers in the iron box," I said, "and meant securing it?"

"No," said Yseult. "It was not to be his, the letter says if I am dead when the treasure is found, it is to go to a fund or something—which I do not quite understand."

"Which doubly explains Gavin's eagerness and secrecy," laughed Frank meaningly. "I suppose he must have either dug in the wrong place the first night, or tired himself so much that he had to give it up."

We heard later that he had dug in the wrong place from some vagueness in the old lord's directions for finding the spot—the paper speaking of the "right end" of the wall without saying from which outlook.

However, poor old Gavin's thankless labour hardly concerns us. The perfect happiness of the reunited lovers is a more pleasant consideration.

Yseult seemed damped a little when she caught sight of the envelope which had contained her letter from the dead.

"What have we done!" she exclaimed, in genuine distress. "Poor grandpapa said I was not to see this till my wedding-day, and we have read it now."

Frank Ogilvie looked at the clock on the mantelpiece, which had ticked its way merrily to the hour of three.

"The day is still young, darling," he said wickedly. "I think if we bustle round a little, we can make this the wedding-day, after all, since our banns are published already. Now I have got you back almost from the grave, I cannot bear to let you out of my sight again for a moment."

And the ardent young man's proposition was actually carried into effect.

Herbert Flowerdew.

A Bevy of Bright Articles.

SEE

Pearson's Magazine for May. Now on Sale.

REMARKABLE ROCKS:

In this article appear photographs of all the most quaint-shaped rocks in the world.

THE MAKING OF CRICKET BATS:

An interesting account of the process of manufacture, together with illustrations of bats of many famous cricketers, including W. G. Grace, K. S. Ranjitsinhji, Robert Abel, George Giffen, etc., etc., and a photograph of the Prince of Wales' favourite bat, reproduced by special permission.

TEACHING THE DUMB TO TALK:

A description of the wonderful methods of teaching deaf and dumb children to *speak* and to understand what is spoken to them.

FORTUNE-TELLING BY CARDS:

A most absorbing account of the various methods of telling the future by means of cards.

TRICKS WITH PENNIES:

A number of remarkably ingenious tricks with coins, which can be performed by an amateur without much trouble, are explained and clearly illustrated.

THE KING OF CONTORTIONISTS:

A most striking set of photographs of Señor Pablo Diaz, the great contortionist, in all sorts of extraordinary attitudes, accompany this article.

DIAMOND DIGGING AT DE BEERS:

This is a profusely illustrated account of the life in the Kimberley Diamond Fields.

Some pretty pieces of verse, **Wisdom Let Loose**, by W. L. Alden; rattling complete stories by Conan Doyle, Max Pemberton, Guy Boothby, Mrs. Egerton Eastwick, James Workman, and the second instalment of H. G. Wells' wonderful serial, complete the

Most Magnificent Number

THAT HAS YET BEEN PUBLISHED.

PEARSON'S MAGAZINE

For May. Price Sixpence.

Result of "READING" COMPETITION.

A copy of "The Final War" has been forwarded to each of the following six competitors: Walter Pontin, care of Mrs. Gorey, Stubbington, near Fareham, Hants; G. Guy, 5, Bath Cottages, Bath Street, Poplar, E.; F. C. Spendelon, 45, Ling Street, Holt Road, Liverpool; A. Hamley, 37, Westfield Road, Hornsey, N.W.; E. Westwood, 63, Willesden Lane, Kilburn, N.W.; J. Gibbins, 1, Greendale Road, Port Sunlight, Cheshire.

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LONGEVITY AND CORPULENCY.

We have received a copy of the just-issued eighteenth edition of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's "Corpulency and the Cure" (Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C.). This issue is in itself indicative of the widespread influence which the author now exercises as a successful expert in the treatment of obesity, while the additions to the evidence which, as a statistician, he is in the habit of collecting on the subject, are suggestive of some curious reflections. It is evident that Mr. Russell is annually treating thousands of cases of excessive fat with a success which, in the rapidity and the permanency of its manifestation, is truly marvellous. That the enormous popularity of his system is likely to increase in the future is most probable, because it is free from all the drawbacks which have rendered the Banting and other methods of reducing corpulence unacceptable to the majority of the sufferers, who have regarded these cures as rather worse than the complaint. By attacking the causes rather than the symptoms of obesity, he strengthens the digestive organs, thus actually increasing instead of decreasing the appetite; while the surplus weight is being reduced at a wonderfully rapid rate, amounting to pounds per week, and often stones per month. Add to this that there is no mystery about the nature of the absolutely innocuous preparation, the recipe for which Mr. Russell supplies in his capital little volume (256 pages), which may be obtained, post free, by sending two penny stamps to the author's offices, at the address given above. It seems certain, therefore, that, as a result of the happy revolution which the patient research of this specialist, with the aid of a distinguished physician as a collaborateur, has affected, the average of longevity will, before long, be appreciably raised. Obesity is, indeed, one of the few antagonistic influences remaining which, especially among the more prosperous classes, prevent the great majority of people of both sections becoming centenarians. With advanced ideas in regard to wholesome food, clothing, and sanitary arrangements, it only remains to get rid of clogging fat to live an ideally hygienic, and therefore, a very prolonged life.—*Belfast Evening Telegraph.*

DRINK AND CORPULENCY.

Dr. Lorenzen, the Earlangen physician, has been writing on the subject of the influence of liquors on corpulency. He made an experiment upon himself. For a space of four years he drank over two gallons daily, and for a further five years the quantity ranged from about half. In this way he succeeded in increasing his weight by five and a half stones, and he became corpulent. On discontinuing the liquids, he lost one stone in a week, and the difficulties attending respiration ceased. He endeavours to explain on the hypothesis that the cells whose province it is to decompose albumen, when a large quantity of fluid is taken, extend part of their energy in the combustion of fat. The fat they consume is replaced by fat from the tissues. All this seemed to be superfluous if intended to be of use to those who are suffering from obesity, for it simply proves that if one gives up their drink there is hope for them, but not otherwise. This is rather behind the times, for the English specialist, Mr. Russell, permits his followers to drink as much as they choose, and yet reduces them in weight as fast as the figures given by Dr. Lorenzen, which is all important. Is life worth living if one's supply of liquor is to be suddenly cut off? Mr. Russell's reduction is achieved by a clever concoction of mallows and other field herbs of the simplest nature, which has to be taken three times a day for a certain period. It is said to be extremely pleasant to the palate, tasting like a sort of lemonade, and upon the prescribed quantity as much as 4lb. in severe cases has been reduced in twenty-four hours. We have not more space to follow this interesting subject, but readers should send two stamps to Mr. Russell, Woburn House, Store Street, London, W.C., who publishes a book called "Corpulency and the Cure," which contains a pithy, sensible treatise on corpulency which should certainly be read by all who are victims to obesity.—*Kentish Gazette*, January 16th, 1897.

THE MISERY OF CORPULENCY.

A copy has come to hand of the just-issued eighteenth edition of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's "Corpulency, and the Cure" (256 pages), the clever little volume which, more than anything else, has brought about a revolution in the treatment of obesity. That the still larger circulation implied by the issue of the new edition of this popular work is necessary is proved by such a paragraph as the following. It appears among the answers to correspondents in the "Dress and Fashion" column of a Sunday newspaper, with a large circulation: "Miserable.—A young girl of eighteen ought not to be so stout that no dress looks well. Perhaps you require exercise and dieting." The helpless vagueness of this reply to a young girl who is naturally "miserable" on account of her unseemly obesity is a sufficient evidence that Mr. Russell does well in seeking to make known even more widely than they are at present, the simplicity, the efficiency, the rapidity, and the delightful surroundings of his treatment for the reduction of superabundant fat. The young girl in question, who might exercise and diet herself for months without any appreciable improvement, may easily learn to imitate the example of thousands of ladies of all ages who, by the use of Mr. Russell's pure vegetable preparation, have reduced their weight at the rate of pounds per week, and sometimes (but only when necessary, for the working of the cure is virtually automatic, stopping its effects when the normal limit is reached) stones per month. She may acquire this open secret—for the author makes no mystery about the recipe—by sending 2d. in stamps to Mr. Russell's offices, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., when a copy of the book will be sent post free. If she follows his instruction, "Miserable," without any fasting regimen, and without excessive exercise, will find herself being quickly reduced to shapely proportions, with an improved appetite, and full liberty to gratify it. *Teignmouth Post*, January 8th, 1897.

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Answers to Correspondents.

On page 599 will be found the first batch of sketches in a new series of Picture Puzzles. Everybody has an opportunity of obtaining a list of the names of British and Irish Peers. The best thing for you to do, is to get your children to compete. It cannot be but beneficial for them to become familiar with the names of Peers of the Realm, and you, yourself, will find the task both profitable and interesting.

H. H. B.—In proportion to their income, British people spend more upon their food than any other European nation.

G. B.—Certainly, the elephant has a nose, although it is not his trunk as you suppose. In fact, it is not easily seen, consisting of a single nostril, which extends from the air passages in the head, and has its opening in the roof of the mouth, near to the front.

D. D. B.—The largest square in London is Eaton Square. It measures 607,327 square feet. Your story is quite a good one.

P. C. P.—Rainbows are most frequently seen in the afternoon, when the sun is in the west, and the raineloud come from the west, clearing up as they go towards the east.

T. L. H.—Dartmoor is the largest tract of uncultivated land in England.

W. A. T.—The heart of the average woman beats faster than that of the average man.

A. N. W. has often been puzzled by the mysterious words "Ancient Lights" which he has often seen on old buildings.————When the windows of a house have been allowed to remain unobstructed from the light for the term of twenty years, the proprietor erects a sign of this sort, and the owner of the adjoining land then loses all legal right to build a wall, or erect a screen of any kind which would prevent the light of day from being freely transmitted through those windows.

A. L. B.—In proportion to its population, the United States of America has more theatres than any other country.

D. D.—Yes, gold has occasionally been found in Great Britain in small quantities.

R. S. T.—Although it is possible to tame a tiger if it is taken when very young, I should not advise you to try it. It is a dangerous experiment, and might cost you dear, for their temper is not to be relied upon.

H. H.—Your doctor is quite right. It is seldom that over-work kills a man, but the worry and mental strain which so often accompanies it, that proves fatal to him.

B. R. D.—You need have no fear of the population of the world becoming extinct. Even though the birth-rate is decreasing in several countries, the population generally is on the increase. Although families may be smaller now than they were of old, the members are stronger and hardier on the whole than they were.

C. A. W.—Thanks for your letter. Yes, dyspepsia is a dreadful thing. Try sipping a cup of hot water slowly, half-an-hour before each meal.

D. B. W.—No, the natives of India are not great lovers of cleanliness. The consumption of soap in India only reaches the modest amount of one ounce per head annually.

Hostess.—A room certainly does get oppressively hot during a long dinner, unless it is very well ventilated. A block of ice placed on a tray, or in a china basin, and covered with green leaves, ferns, and vines, has a charming effect, and will cool the atmosphere considerably.

Hippomenes.—To make invisible ink which is colourless, but turns yellow on being heated, dissolve sulphate of copper and sal ammoniac in equal parts of water. Cork tightly and use carefully.

G. J.—Probably the oldest wooden building in the world is a church at Borgund in Norway. It was built in the eleventh century, and has been protected by frequent coatings of pitch. It is made of pine wood.

A. B. B.—The salmon is undoubtedly the swiftest of fish. When it is necessary it can travel under the water at the rate of from twenty to twenty-five miles an hour.

A. C. B.—No, it is not true that pennies coined in the year 1864 are worth any more than a penny. The report that a bar of gold or silver had accidentally been melted with the copper in that year was entirely false, and the bronze coinage of that year has not been called in.

B. D.—I shouldn't think that you would make much profit out of silkworms, for it takes 2,800 insects to raise one pound of silk.

D. S. D. wishes to know how it is that if one has sufficient faith to grasp a nettle firmly, it does not sting. ————The stem of the nettle is covered with little hairs, each of which is terminated with a little cap containing an acrid fluid. When touched gently, the point of the hair enters the skin and injects the fluid, causing a stinging sensation. If grasped firmly, the cap is broken off lower down, and thus can do no injury.

C. C.—Far from being injurious, it is extremely beneficial to have plants in a living room, so long as they are not strong-scented.

Ivy.—The custom of calling real silver spoons, forks, etc., "plate" came from the Spanish word *plata*, meaning "silver."

R. C. M.—Perhaps the reason your beard grows so much stronger on one side than the other, is because you are in the habit of always sleeping on one side, the pressure of the pillow hindering the growth. This frequently does happen.

B. T. T.—The reason the lectern of a church is generally made in the form of an eagle is because the eagle is the natural enemy of the serpent, and as the serpent is symbolic of the enemy of the church, I think you will agree with me that the idea is most appropriate.

G. S.—Taken on the whole, Europeans have stronger, clearer, and altogether better voices, than the inhabitants of other countries. I should certainly advise you to take lessons in singing, if your voice is at all promising.

S. R.—A simple method of softening water is to expose it in the open air. The action of the atmosphere will soften it considerably.

M. B.—A pound troy of gold with alloy is divisible into a little over forty-five sovereigns. A pound troy of silver will produce sixty-six shillings.

A really interesting little medical work dealing with the digestive organs has been issued by Guy's Tonic Company. Technical language has been avoided as far as possible, and it is replete with information regarding every sort of diet. It is sent free of charge from the company in question, whose address is 12, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.

An excellent assortment of medals in commemoration of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee has been sent me by Messrs. Spink and Son, of 17, Piccadilly. They are very charming to look at, and the workmanship is distinctly good.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

POSTAL RATES.

Short Stories will be sent direct from these offices, post free, to any country within the Postal Union, at the following rates, prepaid:

One Year	6s. 6d.
Half Year	3s. 3d.
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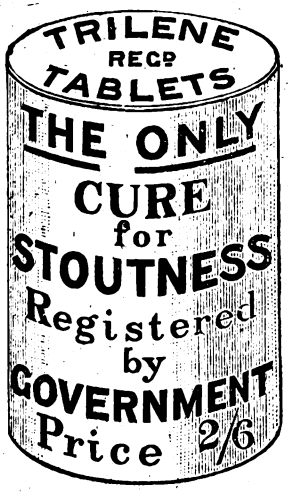
ALL FAT PEOPLE

Can be **CURED** by taking

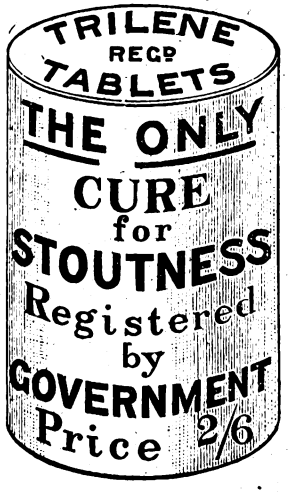
TRILENE TABLETS Regd.



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send **2s. 6d.** to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87, Alexandra Road, Norwich.

"GENTLEMEN,—I have had some boxes of your Tablets for my wife, and she has derived great benefit from them.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Illustrated Family Novelist, November 30th, 1895, says: "A great many women who are plump by nature worry about their stoutness. However, there are some perfectly safe remedies for embonpoint, among them being the Trilene Tablets, which are not only safe, but absolutely beneficial to the general health, and speedily produce the desired effect."

MR. TAYLOR, Church Farm, St. James, Halesworth, says: "I have lost quite 2 stone since taking your Tablets."

"6, Brighton Terrace, Hull.

"MRS. JOHNSON has much pleasure in saying she has derived great benefit from your Tablets."

"3, Castle Road, Deal.

"MRS. J. PEARSON is glad to say she is much thinner."

Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.

MISS S. J. PRITCHARD says: "They have done me good. I am 21lb. lighter already."

"Bretton West, near Wakefield.

"MISS L. LANGFIELD has taken a box of Tablets, and is already 7lb. lighter."

MRS. HUTCHINSON, 46, Irwell Street, Widnes, Lancashire, writes: "I have taken three boxes and am reduced a stone."

A. D. BILLINGS, Bell Inn, Aldershot, writes: "Have derived great benefit already. Less in size and weight, and breathing greatly improved."

25, Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.

MISS M. FLAVELL says: "I have lost 2 stone, and am much better in health."

Extract from *Bury and Suffolk Times*, June 15th, 1894: "Miss Atherton sings and dances as piquantly as ever, and is a marvel of agility, considering how much flesh she has put on of late. Her friends should induce her to take a course of Trilene Tablets, about which I hear wonderful things. One portly acquaintance of my own by merely a few weeks' use of these little Tablets, has reduced his bulk perceptibly. I am assured the Tablets are harmless and tasteless, and that the Trilene Company in Finsbury Pavement, London, are doing an enormous and ever-increasing trade."

MR. GILLESPIE, 50, Chancer Road, Forest Gate, Essex, says: "I have lost just 3 stone."

2, Chariot Street, Hull.

MR. JUBB, Chemist, says: "My customers speak highly of your Tablets."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.

MR. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17½ stone, and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

MR. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17 stone, was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15 stone."

Aspern, 29, King's Hall Road, Beckenham.

MISS S. WOODHOUSE writes: "I have much pleasure in stating that your Tablets are really a safe cure for stoutness; they have cured me, and I am a perfect figure now."

MRS. GIBBON, of Radford Cottage, Bitterne, says: "I have derived great benefit from your Tablets, especially abdominal."

The Lady, October 8th, 1896 (giving advice to a reader who complained of stoutness), says: "The Trilene Tablets help to reduce stoutness, if taken daily; they are made of purely vegetable ingredients, and are quite harmless."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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MILLIONS OF MONEY will be spent in seats alone to witness this, the most imposing spectacle of the 19th Century, and in order that **EVERYONE** may obtain a **LASTING AND VALUABLE MEMENTO** of the grand scene, we have decided to supply a **BEAUTIFUL NICKEL-PLATED SNAPSHOT HAND CAMERA** to all persons likely to witness the procession, and to give a **VALUABLE MONEY PRIZE** for every snapshot picture of **HER MAJESTY** taken by our camera on that date.

Our Diamond Jubilee Camera is a **PERFECT LITTLE GEM**, made entirely of metal **BEAUTIFULLY PLATED**, and illustrates, one of the great scientific discoveries of this reign, for it takes **EXQUISITE PICTURES** by merely **PRESSING THE TRIGGER**, and is so small it can be carried in the pocket; yet upwards of 50 pictures can be taken of the procession and surroundings by each person, and no previous knowledge of photography is necessary to obtain a **VALUABLE PRIZE**. Each applicant for a camera **MUST INCLOSE 5/-**, for which he will receive, post free, this **MARVELLOUS GIFT**, comprising camera, dry plates, and instructions for use. Address:

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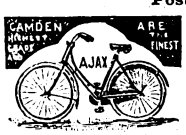

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ARE YOU LITTLE?

If so, wear the "A D" Invisible Elevators (Regd.). Will increase your height up to four inches; the only approved means; detection impossible; simple, inexpensive. Send stamped envelope for particulars to the ORIENTAL TOILET CO. (B 5 Dept.), 87, Strand, London

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DEAFNESS CURED.

On receipt of stamped envelope, a lady who cured herself of Deafness and Noises in the Head, after fifteen years of suffering, will send to all afflicted free particulars of the Remedy, which is simple, safe, sure and inexpensive. Address—Mrs. C. E. AUSTIN, 2, Lambeth Square, London, S.E.

HAIR DESTROYED.

A lady will, on receipt of stamped envelope, send free particulars of a new French Remedy, which permanently removes all Superfluous Hairs, destroying the roots *without injuring the skin*. Simple and inexpensive. Address, Madame F. B.," c/o Fontaine et Cie., 1, Piccadilly Circus, London.

DRUNKENNESS CURED.

On receipt of stamped envelope a lady will gladly send free particulars of a simple remedy which cured her husband (without his knowledge) of the craving for Alcohol, to which he had been for twenty years a victim. Address, in confidence, Mrs. L. A. NORRIS, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London. S.E.

WANTED

Hands for Home Employment and Travelling; either sex. Spare Time or otherwise. The work is light and easily learned. Inclose directed envelope.

E. INGOTT,
Wholesale Stationer, Emsworth, HANTS.

A LOVELY COMPLEXION

Ensured and a youthful and beautiful skin free from blotch, blemish, redness, roughness, pimples, or freckles, by using

DR. MACKENZIE'S ARSENICAL SOAP,

which contains special ingredients for beautifying the skin and complexion. It is most emollient and soothing, and can be used by those with the most delicate skin even when they are unable to use any other soap. Deliciously and expensively perfumed, and guaranteed absolutely harmless.

1/- per Tablet, or 3 in box, 2/6. Unscented, 6d.

AT ALL CHEMISTS AND STORES, OR POST FREE FROM

S. HARVEY, 5, DENMAN ST., LONDON BRIDGE, S.E.

"Mdme. Adelina Patti finds Dr. Mackenzie's Arsenical Soap most excellent."—Craig-y-nos Castle.

Florence St. John writes from Oxford Street, W.: "I have been using Dr. Mackenzie's Arsenical Soap for three months now. It was recommended by a friend, and I was so pleased with the result that I now use no other. You are at liberty to publish this letter."

Mdlle. Jeanne Douste, Royal Carl Rosa Opera Company, writes from 4, Hornton Street, Kensington, W.: "I find it delicious, and will certainly use no other."

Ellaline Terriss writes from the Gaiety Theatre: "I have tried Dr. Mackenzie's Complexion Soap. I think it is quite one of the best I have ever used, and can thoroughly testify to its excellence."

Dorothea Irving writes from Southampton Row, W.C.: "I have used your soap already for some time, and find it most soothing and refreshing to the skin."

Cynthia Brooke writes from Adelphi Theatre, London: "I consider Dr. Mackenzie's Arsenical Toilet Soap positively the best I have ever used for the complexion."

THE MOST NUTRITIOUS COCOA

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

WITH FULL NATURAL FLAVOUR.

TOO STOUT

If you require a reliable remedy for the relief of superfluous fat, send for a box of my **"H.D."** Pills. No starvation required; you may eat and drink what you like, yet I guarantee to either sex a permanent reduction of 5lb. to 7lb. weekly. They are a harmless vegetable preparation; successful in the most stubborn cases, and improve health and figure. Their action is rapid, certain, safe, tasteless, and highly recommended. Prices, 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 11s., post free, plain wrapper. PROFESSOR F. T. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

HAIR DESTROYED.

An American lady who has entirely destroyed Superfluous Hair on herself will, on receipt of stamped addressed envelope, send free particulars of the Remedy to all those afflicted. Address, Mrs. C. H. McCOY, 2, Lambeth Square, London, S.E.

BLUSHING

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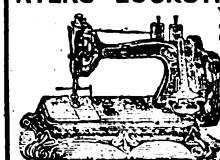

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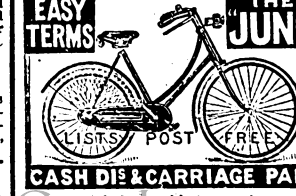

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EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 437. FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 15TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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SHORT STORIES

No. 437.] For the Week ending May 15th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

DEEDS THAT WON THE EMPIRE.

XI.—THE SHANNON AND THE CHESAPEAKE.

ON the early morning of June 1st, 1813, a solitary British frigate, H.M.S. *Shannon*, was cruising within sight of Boston lighthouse. She was a ship of about 1,000 tons, and bore every mark of long and hard service. No gleam of colour sparkled about her. Her sides were rusty, her sails weather-stained; a solitary flag flew from her mizzen-peak, and even its blue had been bleached by sun and rain and wind to a dingy grey. A less romantic and more severely practical ship did not float, and her captain was of the same type as the ship.

Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke was an Englishman to the core, and of a type happily not uncommon. His fame will live as long as the British flag flies, yet a more sober and prosaic figure can hardly be imagined. He was not, like Nelson, a quarter-deck Napoleon; he had no gleam of Dundonald's matchless brilliancy. He was as deeply religious as Havelock, or one of Cromwell's major-generals; he had the frugality of a Scotsman, and the heavy-footed common-sense of a Hollander.

He was as nautical as a web-footed bird, and had no more "nerves" than a fish—a domestic Englishman, whose heart was always with the little girls at Brokehall, in Suffolk, but for whom the service of his country was a piety.

A sober-suited, half-melancholy common-sense was Broke's characteristic, and he had applied it to the working of his ship, till he had made the vessel, perhaps, the most formidable fighting machine of her size afloat. He drilled his gunners until, from the swaying platform of their decks, they shot with a deadly coolness and accuracy nothing floating could resist.

Broke, as a matter of fact, owed his famous victory over the *Chesapeake* to one of his matter-of-fact precautions. The first broadside fired by the *Chesapeake* sent a 32-pound shot through one of the gun-room cabins into the magazine passage of the *Shannon*, where it might easily have ignited some grains of loose powder and blown the ship up, if Broke had not taken the precaution of elaborately *damping* that passage before the action began. The prosaic side of Broke's character is very amusing. In his diary he records his world-famous victory thus:

"June 1st. Off Boston. Moderate."

"N.W.—W(rote) Laurence."

"P.M.—Took *Chesapeake*."

Was ever a shining victory packed into fewer or duller words? Broke's scorn of the histrionic is shown by his reply to one of his own men who, when the *Chesapeake*, one blaze of fluttering colours, was bearing down upon her drab-coloured opponent, said to his commander, eyeing the bleached and solitary flag at the *Shannon's* peak:

"Mayn't we have three ensigns, sir, like she has?"

"No," said Broke, "we have always been an *unassuming* ship!"

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EDITED BY C. A. PEARSON
OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY

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And yet this unromantic English sailor had a gleam of Don Quixote in him. On this pleasant summer morning he was waiting alone, under easy sail, outside a hostile port, strongly fortified and full of armed vessels, waiting for an enemy's ship bigger than himself to come and fight him!

He had sent in the previous day, by way of challenge, a letter that recalls the days of chivalry.

"As the *Chesapeake*," he wrote to Laurence, its captain, "appears now ready for sea, I request that you will do me the favour to meet the *Shannon* with her, ship to ship." He proceeded to explain the exact armament of the *Shannon*, the number of her crew, the interesting circumstance that he was short of provisions and water, and that he had sent away his consort so that the terms of the duel might be fair.

"If you will favour me," he says, "with any plan of signals or telegraph, I will warn you should any of my friends be too nigh, while you are in sight, until I can detach them out of the way. Or," he suggests, coaxingly, "I would sail under a flag of truce to any place you think safest from our cruisers, hauling it down when fair to begin hostilities. Choose your terms," he concludes, "but let us meet."

Having sent this amazing letter, this middle-aged, unromantic, but hard-fighting captain climbed at daybreak to his own maintop, and sat there till half-past eleven, watching the challenged ship, to see if her foretopsail were unloosed and she were coming out to fight.

It is easy to understand the causes which kindled a British sailor of even Broke's unimaginative temperament into flame. On June 18th, 1812, the United States, with magnificent audacity, declared war against Great Britain, which, at that particular time, had 621 efficient cruisers at sea, 102 being line-of-battle ships. The American navy consisted of eight frigates and twelve corvettes. It is true that Britain was at war at the same moment with half the civilised world; but what reasonable chance had the tiny naval power of the United States against the mighty fleets of Britain, commanded by men trained in the school of Nelson, and rich with the traditions of the Nile and Trafalgar?

As a matter of fact, in the war which followed, the commerce of the United States was swept out of existence. But the Americans were of the same fighting stock as the English; to the Viking blood, indeed, they added Yankee ingenuity and resource, making a very formidable combination; and up to the June morning, when the *Shannon* was waiting outside Boston Harbour for the *Chesapeake*, the naval honours of the war belonged to the Americans.

The Americans had no fleet, and the campaign was one of single ship against single ship, but in these combats the Americans had scored more successes in twelve months than French seamen had gained in twelve years. The *Guerriere*, the *Java*, and the *Macedonian* had each been captured in single combat, and every British post-captain betwixt Portsmouth and Halifax was swearing with mere fury.

The Americans were shrewd enough to invent a new type of frigate which, in strength of frame, weight of metal, and general fighting power, was to a British frigate of the same class almost what an ironclad would be to a wooden ship. The *Constitution*, for example, was in size to the average British frigate as 15·3 to 10·9; in weight of metal as 76 to 51; and in crew as 46 to 25. Broke, however, had a well-founded belief in his ship and his men, and he proposed, in his sober fashion, to restore the tarnished honour of his flag by capturing single-handed the best American frigate afloat.

The *Chesapeake* was a fine ship, perfectly equipped, under a daring and popular commander. Laurence was a man of brilliant ingenuity and courage, and had won fame four months before by capturing in the *Hornet*, after a hard fight, the British brig-of-war *Peacock*. For this feat he had been promoted to the *Chesapeake*, and in his brief speech from the quarter-deck, just before the fight with the *Shannon* began, he called up the memory of the fight which made him a popular hero by exhorting his crew to "*Peacock* her, my lads! *Peacock* her!"

The *Chesapeake* was larger than the *Shannon*, its crew was nearly a hundred men stronger, its weight of fire 598lb., as against the *Shannon's* 538lb. Her guns fired double-headed shot, and bars of wrought iron, connected by links and loosely tied by a few rope yarns, which when discharged from the gun spread out and formed a flying iron chain six feet long. Its canister shot contained jagged pieces of iron, broken bolts, and nails.

As the British had a reputation for boarding, a large barrel of unslacked lime was provided to fling in the faces of the boarders. An early shot from the *Shannon*, by the way, struck this cask of lime and scattered its contents in the faces of the Americans themselves! Part of the equipment of the *Chesapeake* consisted of several hundred pairs of handcuffs, intended for the wrists of English prisoners; Boston citizens prepared a banquet in honour of the victors for the same evening; and a small fleet of pleasure-boats followed the *Chesapeake* as she came gallantly out to the fight.

Never was a braver, shorter, or more murderous fight. Laurence, the most gallant of men, bore steadily down, without firing a shot, to the starboard quarter of the *Shannon*. When within fifty yards he luffed; his men sprang into the shrouds and gave three cheers. Broke fought with characteristic silence and composure. He forbade his men to cheer, enforced the sternest silence along his deck, and ordered the captain of each gun to fire as his piece bore on the enemy.

"Fire into her quarters," he said, "main-deck into main-deck, quarter-deck into quarter-deck. Kill the men, and the ship is yours!"

The sails of the *Chesapeake* swept betwixt the saluting rays of the evening sun and the *Shannon*, the drifting shadow darkened the English main-deck ports, the rush of the enemy's cut-water could be heard through the grim silence of the *Shannon's* decks.

Suddenly there broke out the first gun from the *Shannon*; then her whole side leapt into flame. Never was a more fatal broadside discharged! A tempest of shot, splinter, torn hammocks, cut rigging, and wreck of every kind was hurled like a cloud across the deck of the *Chesapeake*, and of 150 men at station there, more than a hundred were killed or wounded. A more fatal loss to the Americans instantly followed, as Captain Laurence, the fiery soul of his ship, was shot through the abdomen by a British marine, and fell mortally wounded.

The answering thunder of the *Chesapeake's* guns, of course, rolled out, and then, following quick, the overwhelming blast of the *Shannon's* broadside once more. Each ship, indeed, fired two full broadsides, and as the guns fell quickly out of range, part of another broadside. The firing of the *Chesapeake* was furious and deadly enough to have disabled an ordinary ship.

It is computed that forty effective shots would be

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enough to disable a frigate; the *Shannon* during the six minutes of the firing was struck by no fewer than 158 shots, a fact which proves the steadiness and power of the American fire. But the fire of the *Shannon* was overwhelming. In those same six fatal minutes she smote the *Chesapeake* with no fewer than 362 shots, an average of sixty shots of all sizes every minute, against the *Chesapeake's* twenty-eight shots. The *Chesapeake* was fir-built, and the British shot riddled her.

One *Shannon* broadside party raked the *Chesapeake* and literally smashed the stern cabins and battery to mere splinters, as completely as though a procession of aerolites had torn through it.

The swift, deadly, concentrated fire of the British in two quick-following broadsides practically decided the combat. The partially disabled vessels drifted together, and the *Chesapeake* fell on board the *Shannon*, her quarter striking the starboard main chains. Broke, as the ships ground together, looked over the blood-splashed decks of the American and saw the men deserting the quarter-deck guns, under the terror of another broadside at so short a distance.

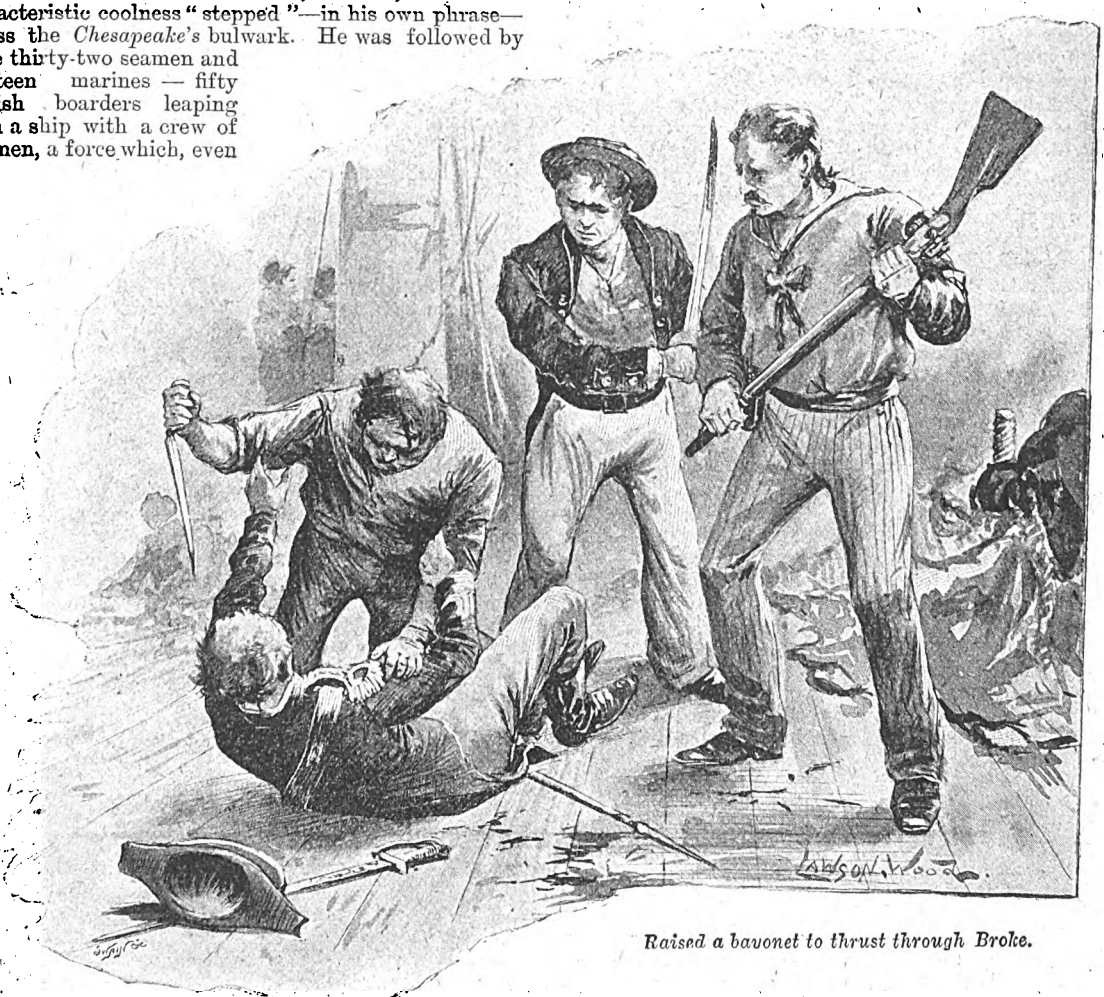
"Follow me who can!" he shouted, and with characteristic coolness "stepped"—in his own phrase—across the *Chesapeake's* bulwark. He was followed by some thirty-two seamen and eighteen marines — fifty British boarders leaping upon a ship with a crew of 400 men, a force which, even after the dreadful broadside of the Shannon, still numbered 270 unwounded men in its ranks.

It is absurd to deny to the Americans courage of the very finest quality, but the amazing and unexpected severity of the Shannon's fire had destroyed for the moment their *morale*, and the British were in a mood of victory. The boatswain of the *Shannon*, an old *Rodney* man, lashed the two ships together, and in the act had his left arm literally hacked off by repeated strokes of a cutlass and was killed.

One British midshipman, followed by five topmen, crept along the *Shannon's* foreyard and stormed the *Chesapeake's* foretop, killing the men stationed there, and then swarmed down by a back stay to join the fighting upon the deck.

Another middy tried to attack the *Chesapeake's* mizzen-top from the starboard mainyard arm, but being hindered by the foot of the topsail, stretched himself out on the mainyard arm, and from that post shot three of the enemy in succession.

Meanwhile the fight on the deck had been short and sharp; some of the Americans leapt overboard and others rushed below: and Laurence, lying wounded in



Raised a bayonet to thrust through Broke.

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his steerage, saw the wild reflux of his own men down the after-ladders. On asking what it meant, he was told the ship was boarded, and those were the *Chesapeake's* men driven from the upper decks by the English. This so exasperated the dying man that he called out repeatedly:

"Then blow her up; blow her up!"

The fight lasted exactly thirteen minutes: the broadside occupied six minutes, the boarding seven, and in thirteen minutes after the first shot the British flag was flying over the American ship; the *Shannon* and *Chesapeake* were bearing up, side by side, for Halifax! The spectators in the pleasure boats were left ruefully staring at the spectacle; those American handcuffs, so thoughtfully provided, were on American wrists; and the Boston citizens had to consume, with what appetite they might, their own banquet.

The carnage on the two ships was dreadful. In thirteen minutes 252 men were either killed or wounded, an average of nearly twenty men for every minute the fight lasted. In the combat betwixt these two frigates, in fact, nearly as many men were struck down as in the whole battle of Navarino! The *Shannon* itself lost as many men as any seventy-four gun ship ever lost in battle.

Judge Haliburton, famous as "Sam Slick," when a youth of seventeen boarded the *Chesapeake*, as the two battered ships sailed into Halifax.

"The deck," he wrote "had not been cleaned, and the coils and folds of rope were steeped in gore as if in a slaughter-house. Pieces of skin, with pendant hair, were adhering to the sides of the ship; and in one place I noticed portion of fingers protruding, as if thrust through the outer walls of the frigate!"

Watts, the first lieutenant of the *Shannon*, was killed by the fire of his own ship in a very remarkable manner. He boarded, with his captain, with his hands pulled down the *Chesapeake's* flag, and hastily bent on halliards the British ensign, as he thought, *above* the stars and stripes, and then re-hoisted it. In the hurry he had bent the British flag *under* the stars and stripes, instead of above it, and the gunners of the *Shannon*, seeing the American stripes going up first, opened fire instantly on the group at the foot of the mizzen-mast, blew the top of their own unfortunate lieutenant's head off with a grape shot, and killed three or four of their own men!

Captain Broke was desperately wounded in a curious fashion. A group of Americans, who had laid down their arms, saw the British captain standing for a moment alone on the break of the forecastle. It seemed a golden chance! They snatched up their weapons lying on the deck, and leapt upon him.

Warned by the shout of the sentry, Broke turned round to find three of the enemy with uplifted weapons rushing on him. He parried the middle fellow's pike, and wounded him in the face, but was instantly struck down with a blow from the butt end of a musket, which laid bare his skull. He also received a slash from the cutlass of the third man, which clove a portion of the skull completely away and left the brain bare.

He fell, and was grappled on the deck by the man he had first wounded, a powerful fellow, who got the uppermost and raised a bayonet to thrust through Broke. At this moment a British marine came running up, and concluding that the man underneath *must* be an American, also raised his bayonet to give *coup de grace*.

"Pooh, pooh, you fool," said Broke in the most matter-of-fact fashion, "Don't you know your captain?" whereupon the marine changed the direction of his thrust and killed the American.

The news reached London on July 7th, and was carried straight to the House of Commons, where Lord Cochrane was just concluding a fierce denunciation of the Admiralty on the ground of disasters suffered from the Americans, and Croker, the secretary to the Admiralty, was able to tell the story of the fight off Boston to the wildly cheering House as a complete defence of his department. Broke was at once created a baronet and a Knight of the Bath.

In America, on the other hand, the story of the fight was received with mingled wrath and incredulity. "I remember," says Rush, afterwards U.S. Minister at the Court of St. James, "at the first rumour of it, the universal incredulity. I remember how the post-offices were thronged for successive days with anxious thousands, how collections of citizens rode out for miles on the highway to get the earliest news the mail brought. At last, when the certainty was known, I remember the public gloom, the universal badges of mourning. 'Don't give up the ship,' the dying words of Laurence were on every tongue."

It was a great fight, the most memorable and dramatic sea-duel in naval history. The combatants were men of the same stock, and fought with equal bravery. Both nations, in fact, may be proud of a fight so frank, so fair, so gallant. The world, we may hope, will never witness another *Shannon* engaged in the fierce wrestle of battle with another *Chesapeake*, for the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes are knitted together by a bond woven of common blood and speech, and political ideals that grow stronger every year.

For years the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake* lay peacefully side by side in the Medway, and the two famous ships might well have been preserved as trophies. The *Chesapeake* was bought by the Admiralty after the fight for exactly £21,314 11s. 11½d., and six years afterwards she was sold as mere old timber for £500, was broken up, and to-day stands as a Hampshire flour mill, peacefully grinding English corn. But still on the mill timbers can be seen the marks of the grape and round shot of the *Shannon*.

("*The Great Breach of Cuidad Rodrigo*," *next week*.)

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A MURDER IN VAIN.

The frail figure propped up with pillows, the hectic spot of colour on her sunken cheeks, the bright eyes and hacking cough, told their tale only too well. Perhaps it was Fate that when the public had just recognised the strange genius of her books, Isobel Sutton should be dying.

Outside, a bleak December day was drawing to its close. A sharp, biting wind and leaden sky foretold a heavy fall of snow in the night. A bright fire burning in the grate helped to make the room look less cheerless, but it was poorly furnished, containing little else besides bare necessaries.

Crouched by the hearth was a man—almost a stranger to the invalid. It was more than nine years since Michael Sutton had deserted his wife and child, but he had turned up to-night—perhaps Fate again had willed it—to see her die.

With an effort the sick woman raised herself on her elbow and peered at her husband. There was sufficient glow from the fire to light up the man's shrunken figure. It was the same face she had known long ago, but how altered! The bloated, disfigured features spoke for themselves. It was the face of a drunkard. She shuddered and fell back.

"It is getting dark—light the candle and put it by my bed, and then——" she hesitated, but only for a moment, "then tell me what you have come for."

With an unsteady hand he did as she bid him. And the matches fell out of the box on to a roll of manuscript. He bent forward and scanned it eagerly.

"What's that?"

"Mine," and Isobel Sutton covered the MS. with her hand as though to protect it from his greedy gaze, "a novel—the last I shall ever write."

"A novel—yours—is it sold?" he asked breathlessly.

"Not yet."

"Finished?"

"Yes."

"Then it's worth a lot of money?"

"Yes, a lot of money," she repeated.

He sank on the bed and sat there rubbing his hands together gleefully.

Michael Sutton dreaded work—his whole life had been one long scheme to avoid it, but lately he had come to the end of everything, and nothing seemed to face him but the workhouse.

Now all was changed, for he was sufficiently sober to realize a small fortune lay within his grasp. Money meant drink, and drink to him was all life was worth living for.

With his eyes still fixed on his newly-found treasure, he took a flask from his pocket and commenced to drink its fiery contents.

Weak as she was, Isobel Sutton turned from him with loathing. She guessed his thoughts, but a will made and given to a neighbour would spoil his plans.

Rousing herself with a great effort she began to speak.

"I have known for some time I am dying, and I have had a hard struggle to finish this book. It will be worth more when I am dead. But it is all for Edith, she will need every farthing of it, poor child, when I am gone."

She was about to say more, but a fit of coughing seized her, leaving her almost prostrate.

Michael Sutton made no reply, but sat clasping the flask in his hand, with a vacant smile of semi-intoxication on his face.

His one idea was to get possession of the precious manuscript, but his brain was so addled with drink that he could think of nothing but that he dare not touch it now, and to-morrow would be too late.

He glanced towards the bed. The fit of coughing had brought on a sort of stupor.

Should he seize the roll of paper and escape with it?

Beads of perspiration rolled down his forehead as he gasped:

"Let's open the window—it's devilish hot."

She was so exhausted as to be hardly aware of his presence, but his voice seemed to recall her partly to her senses.

"Don't—don't," she whispered, "unless you want to see me die. The doctor said in my state it would kill me."

He stood staring at her with drunken solemnity. Then all at once an idea penetrated his muddled brain.

With unsteady footsteps he crossed the room, his dull, sodden face lit up with satisfaction. Slowly, deliberately, he threw up the window. Immediately a wave of cold air rushed into the room, driving with it little crisp flakes of snow.

The piercing cold of the night air seemed to partly restore the drunkard to his senses, as he stood there, shivering and helpless, a vague look of horror on his face.

Isobel Sutton lay stretched on the bed perished with cold. She was too weak to utter a sound, but gasped for breath. And so the long hours of the night passed slowly by.

At the first approach of dawn, the dying woman flung out her arms in the last struggle for life, and overturned the candle.

The guilty wretch cowering in the dark, fancied he could see a blue light flickering by the bedside, and buried his face in his hands to shut out the ghastly sight. Presently the light went out, and a strong smell of burning filled the room.

With a howl of rage, Sutton realised what had happened, and sprang forward to rescue the burning MS. But he was too late. The candle had completed its work, and all that remained of the dead woman's book was a smouldering heap of charred paper.

Gwendolyn Drake.

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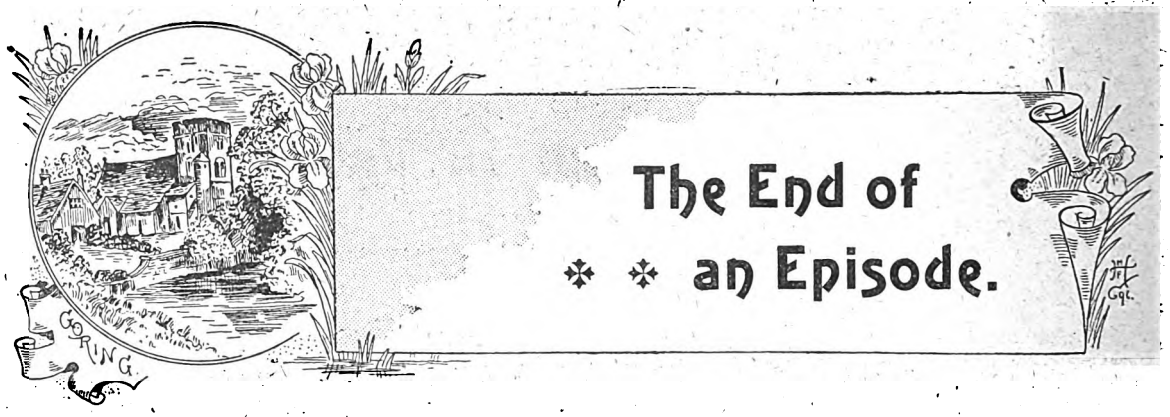

Bella was looking uncommonly vicious that morning as she swung the General's high dog-cart round to the door, with two grooms dragging at her head and a third hastily taking in a hole of the kicking-strap.

Clinda and I stood in the porch and glanced over her critically. I own to you I did not like the look of her at all.

Clinda is the thorough-bred daughter of the old General—I must drop this horsey style of talking, but three years in Mexico does not polish one's conversation particularly—and knew no fear for anything in the way of horseflesh. And that made me the more nervous, for if anything should happen to her——

I dropped the thought, and looked at Bella again. Her little ears were laid flat back on her arched head, her eyes looked white and vicious, her polished hoofs scattered the pebbles of the gravel as she pawed impatiently at the drive.

"Well," said I, "who's to take the lines?"

I lit a cigarette, as is my invariable method when nervous. It gives one the appearance of being very calm.

Clinda was already in the box seat, whip and reins in hand.

"Come," she cried gaily, "don't keep Bella waiting for you."

I sprang up hastily after her.

"Let her go," cried Clinda. "Steady, girl, steady," and the grooms dropped away, and the mare jerked angrily forward, and swung down the drive with long, ground-covering strides.

I leant back in my seat and glanced up at the pretty profile beside me. But the pace was too fast for love dreams, and I found myself watching the mare's ears, and noticing how she tucked her tail in underneath her. For these signs have meanings to Mexicans.

"Steady, girl, steady," said Clinda, as the pace increased, and the gates at the end of the drive came in view. Now, the General's gates are not as the gates of a respectable house should be, but set close together, and the drive turns sharp round, with no sweep to speak of, into the main road.

Clinda leant forward, and I threw away my cigarette, and held fast to the sides of the cart, while the gates came nearer and nearer, and the pace became faster; and then they were on us.

There was a click, a second's pause, the gate-posts shook, a splinter flew from the wheel, and then Bella's head went down, and her hoofs rattled against the splash-board, and a moment later she was rushing madly away up the road, while Clinda's tiny hands tugged furiously at the reins, as though she had strength to stop the runaway brute.

"Let me have her, Clinda," I cried—I remember distinctly that I said "Clinda"—"give me the reins, dear," and I leant forward, and she gave them to me quietly, and sat still on the box seat, like a sensible girl, for she realised our danger.

I twisted one rein round each hand, Mexican fashion, and, leaning back, worked at the bit with all my strength. But I was on the wrong seat, and felt below my work, while the strain and pain of my muscles told me that they had lost some of their power since last I pulled in a runaway horse.

The road that she swept behind was sandy soil, and ran for a mile from the General's gates up a gentle slope. On either side were steep green banks covered with fir trees. The road was so narrow that there was scarce room for two carts to pass. The mare's head was low down out of view, her flying feet fell regularly with giant strides on the sand, the cart rolled with a gentle swaying motion, a cool breeze blew on our faces. And the bit was fastened in Bella's teeth as a rock in the earth, and no human power could shake it.

As yet I had no fear but that I should have her in hand before we reached the hill-top. A mile's sharp gallop, with two people in a high cart behind, is as much as the ordinary horse would care for. I worked furiously at the reins, and threw myself back with Herculean force, and employed every cunning art that I knew.

But the trees swept passed us, and the wheels rolled swiftly on.

Then gradually Bella slackened her pace, and the proud head, bit by bit, came higher. I felt that I almost had her in hand. I threw a glance over my shoulder and I saw something that made me, I am ashamed to say, swear fiercely.

Following us up the hill, the sun glistening on the spokes of the wheels, his head bent low over the handle-bars, rode—a fiend on a bicycle.

I say a fiend, for no human being would have ridden up the hill on that blazing July day at the pace that it was riding. We were galloping madly up the road as fast as horse could lay hoof to the ground, but that fiend rode faster. Clinda, hearing my fierce words, turned her head, and then shrieked, and taking the whip in both hands, fell to furiously flogging Bella.

"Why?" I stammered.

"It's our only chance," said Bella. "We must tire her out before the top, or—the down hill—we shall be killed. Hurry, hurry!"

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I knew that she spoke truly, and that galloping Bella down the hill meant death. Our only chance lay in having her firmly in hand before the brow of the hill was reached. We knew full well that at sight of the bicycle, Bella, in her excited state, would run mad. The General had warned me of this peculiarity of the mare's before we had started. She hated a bicycle with all the proud blood in her veins as a woman hates a rival.

"Your only chance," the General said, "if you see a bicycle coming, is to jump out and hold her head until it has passed."

Therefore, I hurried Bella on up the hill with whip and voice, with the hopes of tiring her out, and then being able to spring to her bridle, and wait until the bicycle fiend had passed, and so avert catastrophe. Gradually I felt her pace slacken, her stride shorten, and saw her head come higher. There was no doubt that her bolt was over. I breathed again.

"Be careful; the bicycle is just behind." Bella's voice rang in my ears. I threw myself back on the reins, and cried out to the man to stop until I could reach the horse's head. It was too late.

Ting! Ting!

The metallic sound of a bicycle bell rang out on the air. A second later the fiend on the bicycle, unheeding my cries, shot by us, and Bella leapt in the air. The man leered up at me as he passed.

* * * * *

When it was all over I followed Clinda on to the General's lawn, where tea was being served under the shade of the trees, and where the hot sun found it impossible to penetrate. A tea-party seemed to be going on. I saw the General, and the Generaless, and the Eldest Son, and a score of others ranged round them. No doubt all were eager to hear our adventures.

The Eldest Son came forward with tea and cakes in either hand, and asked how we had enjoyed ourselves. I refused the tea and sank with a groan into a chair. Grim irony indeed to offer tea and cakes to a man who has narrowly escaped taking an innocent life within the space of an hour!

The Eldest Son found a chair for Clinda.

"Well," said he cheerily, "and did you have a pleasant drive?"

Then Clinda went off with her story at a pace, as I tell her now, that the galloping mare's could not compare with.

"Such adventures!" she cried. "Bella bolted before we had reached the road, and went galloping down the drive, and ran into the gate, and nearly upset us."

"What," roared the General—the General was as careful of the appearance of his gates as of the condition of his horses and cigars—"ran into the gate-posts, did you? Who was driving?"

"I was," I muttered; "it was all my fault—everything was my fault. Go on, please"—I waved my hand to Clinda—"let the tale be told."

"Inexcusable," growled the General. Everyone looked at me with scorn and pity. "What did you do next, pray?"

"Then," went on Clinda, "Bella put her head down and bolted up the road. We lost all power over her. Oh, she flew like an express train! It was terrible. First we nearly ran over a workman, and then a dog broke his heart in trying to chase us, and then we nearly charged into a group of nursery-maids and babies—and then—and then the most wonderful thing in all the world happened. Give me some more tea, and I will tell you all about it."

They waited in breathless silence whilst Clinda's cup was being refilled. The General took the opportunity to rebuke me for allowing Bella to bolt. I tried to prove that it was no ordinary case. I showed him a new pair of gloves I had put on when we started. They were worn to threads.

"He's trying to excuse himself now," muttered an old lady in a corner.

I felt that my reputation had gone for ever. In future, everyone would scorn me. If I could light a cigarette I felt that I might appear less nervous. I could not do so. My nerve had deserted me.

"I have never seen anything more wonderful in my life," cried Clinda, when she had sipped her tea, and had kept her audience waiting sufficiently long to hear her tale. "We had just reached the top of the hill when I looked round to see if any of the babies were alive, and what do you think I saw coming up after us, gaining hand over hand?"

"What?" Everyone waited breathlessly.

"A man on a bicycle," said Clinda. "A handsome man, with fair hair, and a long, curly moustache."

"A bicycle face," I put in. "Nasty, strained expression."

The Eldest Son laughed. Everyone looked at me as though I were spoiling the story.

"He came quite close to us," went on Clinda, "and then he rang his bell and shot past, and before I knew what had happened he had saved our lives. It was wonderful! He suddenly took his feet off the pedals and leapt on to the saddle, balanced himself a moment, and then sprang off, regardless of the danger. He caught at the bridle as he came down, and stopped Bella before she had gone ten yards. It was the cleverest thing I have ever seen. I felt that I could have kissed him!"

The Eldest Son was digging me in the ribs.

"I think," I said to the General, "I will go in for a little, if you will excuse me."

The Eldest Son and I strolled away, while the others crowded round Clinda to hear her adventures all over again.

"What on earth happened to you?" said the Eldest Son. "You seem to have been having a lively time."

"It was nothing extraordinary. Bella merely bolted, and just when I was getting her in hand again, a fiend on a bicycle came scorching past us, sprang off as I pulled the mare in, and jumped at her head, and then stood smiling and bowing to us, as though he had saved our lives. I'll teach him manners if I see him again. I'll break every bone in his——"

Ting! ting!

I started as though shot. My nerve was completely gone. The bicycling fiend was pedalling towards us up the General's drive. The eldest son took my arm.

"Restrain yourself, my dear fellow," he said, laughing immoderately.

"Good-afternoon." The fiend skipped from his machine, and bowed before us. I went forward with a frown. "Do you want to see me?" I said.

"No," said the fiend. "I called in to see the General, and to pay my respects to his most charming daughter."

"Well, you can't do it. The General's not at home to-day; he's out. Besides, he doesn't live here."

The Eldest Son and the bicycle fiend began laughing.

"Oh, come," said the Eldest Son, "that's a queer statement!" He took the other's arm. "I'll introduce you to the governor; he'll be delighted to see you."

They strolled away together towards the tea-party,

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and I could see the Eldest Son introducing the bicycle fiend all round.

I dug my heel into the grass and muttered things beneath my breath. This portion of the story is too painful to dwell long upon. Suffice it to say that the miserable day ended by the bicycling fiend becoming the darling of the ladies, and by the General slapping him on the back and declaring that he was a hearty good fellow, and inviting him to stay at the house as long as he wished.

He came, and he stayed. He and Clinda spent whole days together. They rode, they drove, they bicycled—the man could do anything on a bicycle—they played tennis, they went on the river together, and seemed to find each other immensely entertaining. Clinda seemed to forget my existence. Life at the General's became unbearable, and I decided to go away. When I had arrived at this conclusion, however, I heard that the bicycle fiend could not stay more than a couple of days, on account of his engagements in town. I determined to wait.

* * * * *

"Train just gone out. No train for two hours. By your leave."

The porter brushed past, and left us staring blankly into each other's faces. There was the General, the Generaless, the Eldest Son, and Clinda and myself. We had run up to town for an afternoon in Regent Street, and now we had missed the down train, and had two hours to wait.

"Oh, dear," cried the Generaless, "whatever shall we do?"

"We had better have something to eat," said the General.

"And then we will go to a theatre," cried Clinda.

"Or a circus," said the eldest son. "I haven't been to a circus for years. It's immense fun. There isn't a theatre within a mile, and there is a circus next door. Come along."

So it was settled. After dinner we dropped into the circus. We found it very amusing. I sat by Clinda, and pointed out the difference between a Mexican wild horse and a wild horse on an English stage. She seemed quite interested, and I felt that I was rapidly regaining the ground that I had lost through the visit of the bicycle fiend.

After an hour at the circus we thought it was time to be moving. The Generaless was becoming nervous lest we should miss the last train. We were about to go when the eldest son discovered that it was time for the best turn on the programme.

"The Most Marvellous Bicycling Feat in the World,"

ran the bills. "The Clown will stand on the saddle of the bicycle, and make a marvellous leap through a fire-encircled hoop on to a galloping horse's back. The Wonder of the World."

My programme fluttered down on to the benches below. Clinda's face, I fancied, turned a trifle pale.

At that moment a clown on a bicycle came careering into the ring.

We knew the face of that clown!

The people were roaring at his antics. He threw himself into all sorts of grotesque positions, making jokes as he travelled round the ring. Suddenly he drew his feet up on to the saddle, and leaning forward on to the handle-bars, came unsteadily down the centre of the ring directly towards the spot where we were seated. A horse was waiting in the ring for the clown's leap. The clown looked up for a moment, and his glance fell full upon us. His face was horror-stricken. He lost his balance, and bicycle and bicycle fiend fell over with a clatter.

We had seen the man before—on another occasion. We knew how it was that he could bicycle so well, and how he made his money to support himself in the best society.

He had deliberately duped us, and he realised that we were in his secret.

The people roared at the clown's fall. Clinda pressed my arm, and implored me to take her out.

We took our departure from the circus. At the door I turned for a moment, and I saw the bicycle fiend standing by his machine, a half-piteous, half-humourous expression on his face. The people were cheering him now, and perhaps he found consolation in the fact.

The General and the Generaless went on in front together towards the station. The Eldest Son and Clinda and I followed behind, and we were very quiet. The Eldest Son dropped into a tobacconist's shop for a cigar.

I took Clinda's hand, and she looked up at me imploringly. And then it all came right.

Marcus Tindal.

About a Home-made Cake.

This is no foolish story about the toughness of a home-made cake. We know better than that. In fact, so confident are we that the cakes made at home are by no means to be despised, that Eighteen Guineas are being offered for the best sent us, together with the recipes. More cannot be said here—purchase *Home Notes* for May 15th and learn the particulars for yourself. This is the way in which *Home Notes* will celebrate Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee.

"A Lady Explorer."

If you want an interesting account of the adventures and perils of a Lady Explorer, look in this week's

"GIRLS."

The College Sports at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, are fully described and illustrated.

A short complete school story:

"The Junior Room Gazette,"

is most amusing, giving as it does a really witty account of how a school newspaper was founded by some very juvenile amateurs.

And you ought not to miss Chapter II. of

"The Great House of Castleton,"

by Winifred Graham, which is even more amusing than the last.

Girls is a dainty paper for girls of all ages, from six to sixty. It costs one penny, and is published every Thursday. Number Two is on sale on Thursday, May 13th.

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TOLD BY THE DOCTOR.

III.—THE MESMERIST'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

When Lord Aldwyn called upon me at my house in Cheyne Walk, I knew at once that it was not the first time I had seen his face. I could not bring to mind, however, the occasion of our meeting, although I was sure that it was quite recent, and my visitor did not appear to recognise me. He informed me that, on the advice of Dr. Canise, of Wigmore Street, he had decided to consult me on a private matter which concerned him deeply. Canise had recommended me because he knew that I had given a good deal of attention to the subject of mesmerism, he informed me.

"Struck a match with the most innocent intentions in the world."

The mention of mesmerism interested me at once, and the fact that the case came to me from Dr. Canise, the well-known mental specialist, prepared me a little for the nature of the question which Lord Aldwyn wished to submit to me. When he said that it would be necessary to tell me some details of his history during the last few weeks, as a preliminary, I pushed my cigar-box towards him, and prepared to listen with interest.

My companion selected a cheroot, and, as he struck a match to light it, I recollected quite suddenly where I had met him. It was dusk in my dining-room, and the flare of the vesta thrown on the Marquis's face was all I needed to recall our meeting.

"I thought your face very familiar," I said. "Did you not attend a spiritualist séance of Professor Vaudary's in Paris?"

The Marquis laughed slightly.

"Were you there?" he asked, "that night when I spoilt the séance? I do not remember seeing you."

I felt it necessary to apologise for my presence there.

"I happened to be in Paris, and was introduced to the Professor as a most successful mesmerist," I said. "I did not expect to find the séance consisting of the old Maskelyne and Cook business. You went, I presume, to amuse yourself by making a revelation of the Professor's trickery?"

Lord Aldwyn smiled his peculiarly restrained smile again, and said quietly.

"Indeed I did not. Like you, I went expecting something out of the common. When we had sat half the night with nothing more amusing going on than table-rapping and the distinctly unpleasant perambulations of a washing-glove giving one's face occasional touches, I felt driven to smoke by sheer *ennui*, and struck a match with the most innocent intentions in the world."

I laughed at the remembrance.

"The revelation of your wax-light was certainly amusing," I said, recalling the strange picture. The patient and serious-faced visitors joining fingers round the centre table making a ring of hands broken only at the gap where Lord Aldwyn had just raised his; the venerable white-bearded Professor, still bound securely in his chair in the centre of the table, where we had tied him up, but with an ordinary handbell between his teeth, which he was vigorously shaking. Above all, the new figure in the scene—a handsome girl, who stood outside the ring of devotees, manipulating the spirit hand to which we owed so many ghostly and awe-inspiring touches, in the shape of a stuffed and phosphorised glove tied on a stick.

"She had not been present at the commencement of the séance, so I suppose she must have let herself in by unlocking the door, or through a secret entrance

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prepared for the purpose. I believe we all saw her while the Marquis's match burnt, and when it went out, the devotee who had seemed to me the most deeply impressed of the lot, struck another, and insisted on lighting the lamp. Professor Vaudary calmly attempted to explain away the position, and was for passing off the lady as a spirit. She did not look unlike it in her plain, loose gown of black cashmere, with her dreamy white face.

"But his daughter, as she appeared to be, was not inclined to second his efforts. She appeared to me

Her voice charmed me.

insufferably sick of the whole business, and spoilt the poor Professor's slender chances by throwing down her spirit-hand and walking to the door to unlock it and slam it behind her, in a most human manner. Upon which poor Vaudary begged us to unbind him, and dismissed us.

"I was sorry for the poor girl," I said to my visitor. "She seemed to me an unwilling assistant to her father's trickery."

"She was," said my companion emphatically.

"And she was really beautiful!" I went on.

The Marquis smiled and bowed.

"Thank you, Dr. Favel," he said gravely; and, when I opened my eyes a little wider in questioning surprise, he added: "I have the honour of being the accepted suitor of Miss Vaudary's hand."

I concealed my surprise sufficiently to make a suitable reply, and regarded my visitor with a keener interest than before. A sensible, undeniably English-looking man of thirty or so, Lord Aldwyn seemed the last person in the world to be dragged into a *mésalliance* by any youthful or foolish infatuation.

Perhaps he read some of my thoughts in my face, for he said:

"Possibly you think, with so many people, that I have no right to please myself whom I shall marry. I have very strong views on the point."

"It is a point on which I should not think of arguing with you, my lord," I said. "Does the question on which you wish to consult me relate to Miss Vaudary?"

"Yes. How did you guess it?"

"Because her father is a mesmerist. Possibly he has brought his daughter too much under his influence in that direction, and you wish me to prescribe a cure?"

"I want your opinion, rather," said the Marquis. "Shall I proceed with my story, which I am saved the trouble of commencing by the curious coincidence of your presence when I first saw my *fiancée*?"

I bowed, and Lord Aldwyn gave his strange story between the puffs of his cheroot.

"In the little while that you saw Miss Vaudary," he began, "you were struck by her beauty. For my part I had decided in that little while that she was certainly the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. There was something in her face which attracted me strongly; and, a month later, when I returned to town and found that the Professor had left Paris on account of the exposure, and had taken up his abode in Oxford Street, I called upon him and begged to be allowed to visit the house in the character of a friend. I explained frankly that I had been much struck by his daughter's beauty, and assured him of the honesty of my motives; and the Professor, who seemed pleased by my request, gave me an invitation to dinner for that same evening, which, needless to say, I accepted.

"Miss Vaudary, in evening dress, seemed to me more beautiful than at the séance. Her voice charmed me. Her carriage and manner were the most graceful I had ever seen. In a word, I loved her. She treated me, however, with depressing coldness. It was apparent to me from the first that the scene of the previous night, at which you were present, had raised an insurmountable barrier between us. It seemed impossible for the lady to forget that she had been rendered contemptible in my presence. I thought even that she had hated me for being the means of revealing her deceit! I was certain that she had hated me for being a witness of the revelation. We were a party of three only, and the Professor (who is altogether unworthy of respect) left us alone together most of the evening; but it was hopeless for me to try and win her favour in any way. The evening made me decide that I would willingly make her my wife; it also showed me that on account of her hostility the thing was impossible.

"I informed Vaudary of this when I left. 'It is useless my calling again,' I said, 'although I must admit that I love your daughter.' I had determined to master my passion at once since it was hopeless.

"It was plain to see that the Professor was disappointed. He evidently approved of me as a son-in-law; and he made a hundred excuses for his daughter's coldness."

"And persuaded you to call once more?" I suggested.

"Yes, he assured me that Violet—that is the name of my wife-elect—was full of caprices: that a second visit

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would find her more inclined to like me. He asked me whether I had happened to give my name, or allude to my title in his daughter's presence. This is a point, I believe, which affects the question I have come to ask you."

The Marquis paused and took a longer puff than usual at his cheroot, while I stared at him, and wondered how the mention of his title could affect any question he could possibly put to me. I begged him to proceed.

"As it happened," he went on, "I had not spoken much about myself, although I distinctly understood that Vaudary had explained to his daughter who I was before my visit. From his next suggestion, however, it would appear that he had not even told her my name.

"'My daughter is an ardent democrat,' he said to me confidentially, 'if she hears your title I am afraid it may lessen your chances of winning her hand. I meant to warn you before, and it is lucky, therefore, that you have not revealed your identity. I shall take the liberty of giving you a *nommé-d'amour* when you make a second visit, and of introducing you as plain Monsieur Paul Terry.'

"'Why Paul Terry?' I asked him; and the Professor answered lightly, that it was the first name which occurred to him. 'Once gain her love, and you can easily confess to the little deception,' he went on. 'But till the first step is gained, everything depends upon not arousing her prejudices.'

"The plan seemed to me superlatively precautionary, and I should have raised objections had not Vaudary gone on to speak of other subjects. As it was, I determined, after leaving him, to insist on using, at least, my own family name—and intended to inform Vaudary of my determination on my next visit before seeing his daughter. I had succumbed to his argument, you see, and to my admiration for Miss Vaudary, and accepted another invitation to the house. The Professor fixed both day and hour—this may be an important point—a week after our interview in the evening, at the same hour as before.

"This time I did not see Vaudary at all. His daughter received me in the room where the previous meeting had been held, but which was furnished differently—in a luxurious semi-oriental manner. It was too late to raise objection to the name which the Professor had given me; for his daughter greeted me by it when I entered.

"'Good-evening, Monsieur Terry.'

"I thought it best to accept the name, and, up to the present, Miss Vaudary has known me by no other."

"Although you are engaged to marry her?" I said, as the Marquis paused.

He hastened to defend himself from what he thought was condemnation in my question.

"Our engagement dates from Thursday evening," he said—it was a Saturday when he consulted me—"On that evening I did not reveal my identity because we had so many other things to talk about. I have seen my *fiancée* only once since, under circumstances which did not allow of any confidential conversation. That meeting is the one which led me to consult Dr. Canise."

"And which brought you to me?"

"Certainly. I will describe it as fully as possible, in the hope that you can answer definitely what Canise suggested. But first I must say a few words about our meetings previous to the engagements.

"On that first evening I noticed a complete change in Miss Vaudary's manner. Where she had been cold to me, now she was friendly and even affectionate. The brilliance of her conversation and manner, with which she had charmed me before, was toned down by a luxurious dreaminess which seemed to pervade her whole demeanour, and to render her a thousand times more captivating. We got along together capitally. At our next meeting, which the Professor again arranged, it was the same. And the next.

"Our next meeting was on Thursday, when, as I said, I begged Miss Vaudary to be my wife, and received a favourable reply. Up to this point you must observe I had never seen my wife-elect except at her father's house, and at appointed meetings arranged by him. I called once without an appointment, and was told that Miss Vaudary was not at home. Yesterday, however, came the chance meeting which brings me to you.

"On the Thursday, remember, I received from Miss Vaudary every evidence of a sincere affection for me. I think there can be no doubt that when Miss Vaudary promised to be my wife, she was really and truly attached to me.

"Yesterday morning as I was crossing from the Green Park, I was delighted to see her unexpectedly. She was playing with a child, a niece of hers, I believe, whose photograph I had seen at the house. The pleasure was all the greater, because I understood that she was out of town for a few days with her father. I vaulted over the fence, at once, and of course hurried towards her. To my unutterable astonishment and dismay she received me as an almost complete stranger. She appeared genuinely indignant at the affectionate manner in which I greeted her.

"At first I thought it was some jest of hers; but it

"I vaulted over the fence."

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quickly dawned upon me that, unless she was the most accomplished actress in the world, her mind was a perfect blank with regard to our mutual affection and engagement.

"'But you do not mean to tell me,' I said to her hotly, in the midst of our talking, 'that I am a perfect stranger to you?' And she answered quietly, but with a perfectly well-bred show of displeasure, that she had certainly met me at her father's house, but that the fact did not justify me in addressing her with such impudent familiarity.

"To say that I was surprised and startled but weakly expresses the effect of this unexpected and startling change. I used every effort of which I was capable to bring back to her mind the remembrance of our love, but in vain. I left her in despair at last, wondering whether I was going mad. Madness was the only terrible explanation I could give to myself for the action of the woman I loved—I see by your expression that you have another to offer."

The Marquis paused, looking earnestly into my face, and I felt quite uncomfortable to think how much he was counting upon my opinion. I nodded my head slightly.

"Pray go on," I said. "Have you seen the lady's father since?"

Lord Aldwyn shook his head.

"No; I went to the house immediately, to express my opinion of the deception he had practised upon me, in concealing the fact of his daughter's madness. I found, however, that he had quitted London for a few days, without leaving an address to find him, or the exact date of his return. I was burning with impatience to learn the worst, and have the mystery of my *fiancée's* conduct solved. So I called upon Dr. Canise, to inquire whether the hypothesis of madness was sufficient to account for it; and he, as I said, sent me on to you.

"After hearing the whole of the details which I have repeated to you, he seemed inclined to think that, although Miss Vaudary's conduct could certainly be explained on the supposition that her mind was unhinged—a supposition which is not rendered untenable by the fact of her perfect sanity of manner at our previous meetings—still, considering the reputation of her father as a mesmerist, it was quite as likely that at each of our interviews in the Oxford Street house Miss Vaudary has been acting under the influence of her father, in some mysterious manner, without being conscious of her own actions."

"So that, in her proper self she would be totally unaware of your friendship and engagement?" I asked.

"Yes; that was what Canise threw out as a suggestion. He expressed himself, however, too ignorant of the subject to give a definite opinion as to the possibility of his hypothesis. He said that you would tell me whether it was possible that, by mesmerising his daughter before each of my visits, the Professor could make her believe that I was some totally different person, for whom she had already conceived some affection. Madness or mesmerism? that is the question I am trying to have definitely answered, though Heaven knows there is little enough hope of happiness for me in either case!"

There was a little break in the young man's voice as he said it, and I felt thoroughly sorry for him. I had been so interested in the story, as a mere problem, that I had barely considered its terrible importance to my visitor. There could be no doubt that he was thoroughly in love with the girl, and it must have been a terrible blow to him, after feeling sure of her answering love, to find that it was not a reality but an illusion.

I thought the matter over quietly, while the Marquis leant back in his chair, with closed eyes, waiting for me to give an opinion.

"There were four visits altogether," I said, "at which Miss Vaudary seemed well disposed towards you?"

The Marquis opened his eyes and nodded.

"In each case Professor Vaudary was in the house?"

"I believe so."

"At each, owing to the Professor's adroit explanation, you allowed the lady to call you by a name which is not your own?"

"Yes."

I went on to ask a few technical questions about the appearance of the lady at the four interviews—the state of the pupil of her eye, and so on—to which the Marquis answered promptly. Then when I had concluded my little cross-examination, I gave my decision in favour of mesmerism.

"I think you may take it for a certainty, my lord," I said, "that to prevent such an eligible son-in-law as yourself from eluding his grasp, Professor Vaudary has used this mesmeric influence he evidently exercises over his daughter to assist your love-making. The thing is quite possible. It is simply a clever variation of an old mesmeric performance. You have seen, no doubt, the disgusting exhibition which professional mesmerists give—a man eating the most noxious things under the impression that they are the most pleasing?"

"Yes," said Aldwyn grimly; "I once saw a man devour a tallow candle greedily thinking it sugar-candy. In the present case, I suppose I am the candle?"

"Exactly."

"And the sugar-candy which mademoiselle imagines herself to be enjoying is some gentleman called Paul Terry? I presume that such a person must necessarily exist?"

"I believe so."

The young man's mouth was tightly compressed, as if he had difficulty in hiding his feelings. He took up his hat to go.

"I shall take your opinion as decisive," he said.

But I was by no means inclined to let slip a case which interested me so much as this did until I had thoroughly mastered it.

"I hope you do not object to my communicating with Professor Vaudary," I said, "with respect to this remarkable example of his mesmeric influence? I shall not feel quite satisfied about it until I have had an interview with him."

"Nor I," said the Marquis. "If it would not interfere with your inquiries, I should very much like to see Vaudary in your company. You will get out of him all the vital points of the business."

"There is nothing which would please me better," I said. "Your presence will give me all the authority I need to probe the affair to the bottom."

It was arranged, therefore, before we parted, that on a certain day in the week following our interview, we should meet at Lord Aldwyn's place in Grosvenor Square, and proceed together to Vaudary's house in the hope of finding him returned from his journey.

At Professor Vaudary's house we were luckier than we expected. The old man opened the door for us himself, and ushered us into his study to hear what we had come about. I put it to him plainly that he was mesmerising his daughter!

At first he was inclined to express great surprise at the suggestion, but Aldwyn cut him short.

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"Your manner proves well enough," he said quietly, "if any proof were needed, that Dr. Favel has stated the case correctly. You may spare yourself, therefore, the trouble of trying to hide the true facts of the case. I have only a few questions to ask before I decide what course I shall take in the matter. In the first place, who is Paul Terry?"

The Professor asseverated warmly that no such person existed. He had suggested the name simply as the first which occurred to him. It was a name only, and had no connection with any actual person. He grew quite hot in his denials, and used every emphatic gesture, I believe, of which he was capable, in his efforts to convince my companion of the truth of his assertions.

Meanwhile, I was turning over the bits of pasteboard in the Professor's card-basket, which stood on a little table at my side, hardly expecting to meet any reward for my trouble, but finding nothing better to do, since Lord Aldwyn had taken the conduct of the case into

"Flicked across to him the result of my search in the card-basket."

his own hands, and the Professor had ceased to notice my presence.

The latter was becoming more and more emphatic in his denial of Paul Terry's existence. When I looked up it struck me that Lord Aldwyn was becoming impressed by his vehemence.

"Look here, my man," he said, "let us drop this strong language; will you give me your word of honour that no such person as Paul Terry exists?"

The Professor was quite ready to do so. He opened his mouth with the evident intention of forswearing himself. But I stopped him.

"One moment, Professor, before you perjure yourself," I said, and flicked across to him the result of my search in the card-basket—a card with the name of "Paul Terry" engraved upon it, and an address in Paris.

Of course, denial was futile after that. The poor Professor gave in ignominiously; and, after trying to persuade us that he had *forgotten* that Terry was an actual person he expressed his willingness to tell us the real facts of the case without reserve. He seemed almost sincere at last; and, after warning him of the futility of making any more mis-statements, the Marquis showed some eagerness to hear what he had to say.

It seemed that Paul Terry was a certain young artist in Paris, who had called upon the Professor to make some inquiries after a séance he had attended. During the absence of Vaudary, his daughter had entertained the visitor, and the young people appeared to have become very interested in each other in the course of an hour or so's conversation.

"It was a case of love at first sight," said the Professor "and after making some inquiries with regard to the young artist's character and position, I decided to invite him to the house. Judge of my grief and disappointment then, when my note of invitation was returned by the *concierge* of the house where Terry lived, with the information that the poor young fellow had died suddenly of heart-disease on the day after his visit to my house."

Lord Aldwyn started.

"He is dead?" he asked earnestly; but the Professor seemed not to notice the slight interruption, and proceeded:

"I hesitated to tell the news to poor Violet, knowing that she had been deeply struck by the excellent fellow's manner, even in their one interview. Then came your very flattering declaration, my lord, with regard to your admiration of my poor little girl, which I will confess filled my heart with the most ambitious of hopes.

"At your first interview with Violet, however, I perceived that the memory of the young painter prevented her giving any attention to your advances. Under the circumstances, therefore, I am sure you will pardon the deception which a father's love and care for his beloved daughter's happiness suggested. If Paul Terry had been alive I should not have hesitated to inform you of the hopelessness of your suit. But knowing that he was dead, it seemed to me a duty to prevent my poor girl wasting all her chances of happiness in thinking of him. I absolutely could not see her throw away the brilliant prospect offered by your regard. Before me shone the affectionate hope of gradually transferring to yourself the preference she had given to another. I assure you, gentlemen, that my motives were entirely unselfish. I hoped to benefit all parties; to save my girl from a hopeless passion, and to satisfy your own wishes, my lord."

The wicked old man looked quite holy as he placed one hand on his heart and looked upwards. My companion recalled him to sublunary things with a quick, eager question.

"You speak of transferring to me your daughter's affection. Is that possible by any manner of mesmerism?"

"I believe so, my lord. At any rate, I thought the experiment worth making."

"And did not care a farthing whether it succeeded, so long as I married—or kept—your daughter," put in Aldwyn quickly.

"What is *your* opinion about the transfer of affection?" he asked, turning to me.

The idea was so novel that I did not venture to express an opinion; but the Professor was anxious to persuade us of its possibility.

"Look at the theory of hypnotic cure," he said, speaking as if he were at a lecture. "It depends upon throwing both patient and medium into a mesmeric trance, and transferring the affection from one to the other. In

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time the change becomes permanent, as far as the patient is concerned."

Aldwyn cut him short again.

"You can swear that Paul Terry is really dead?" he said sternly. "You are not lying?"

The Professor was indignant at this suggestion.

"It does not matter," said Aldwyn, "we have his address on this card. Now, one more question: suppose I refuse to accept your very kind services on my behalf, what course do you intend to pursue?"

The old man rubbed his patriarchal beard and glanced furtively at the questioner. Then, with some knowledge of human nature, he replied candidly:

"I have others to take your place, my lord."

My companion looked for a moment as if he meditated an attack on the holy-looking man of science. He contented himself with a strong curse, however, and then returned to his quiet, questioning manner.

"Excuse me asking the question," he said, "but is it possible that you thought you could marry me to your daughter without her knowledge?"

"I could engage to do so," said the Professor with a superior smile. "There would have been a difficulty about the name, of course, if I attempted to carry it through without your knowing the true state of affairs. But with your connivance in that small matter, I have not the slightest doubt that my mesmeric influence over

Placed one hand on his heart and looked upwards.

my daughter is such that I could make her marry any man I pleased, under the impression that she was marrying the man of her choice. Will you allow me to prove my words, my lord, or shall I find another bridegroom?"

I noticed that his manner had entirely changed since he had seen how Aldwyn took the threat of marrying his daughter to somebody else. However, I was surprised at the Marquis's next words.

"After the marriage, I presume, your daughter would wake up entirely unconscious of the ceremony she had gone through?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Then you may continue to use your influence over your daughter, you confounded scamp! and to count upon me as a son-in-law."

I felt bound to expostulate a little; but the self-willed young aristocrat stopped me almost as he had stopped the Professor—only with more show of politeness.

"Thanks to your valuable assistance, Dr. Favel," he said, with perfect courtesy of manner, "I think I can now see through the case quite clearly. I hope I may consult you again, if anything turns up which I am unable to understand. For the present I know all I need to go on with the affair."

I did not attempt expostulation after that; and, as I was evidently more of a hindrance than a help to the negotiations between the two men, I ventured to take my leave, wondering how on earth this strange business would turn out.

* * * * *

I was afraid, when I received an unexpectedly large cheque from Lord Aldwyn, on the day after our visit to Oxford Street, that all my connection with his extraordinary love-story had ceased. I was very sorry, because I was deeply interested in it, and should have liked to see its full development; but I felt that I should scarcely be justified in inquiring for news on the point from either Professor Vaudary or the Marquis. I felt very inclined, however, as time went on, and I heard nothing, to call upon the Professor on some pretext or other, and learn whether Aldwyn had actually married his daughter, as he had seemed determined to do.

Possibly I should have called eventually, had I not seen in a spiritualist organ a notice of the Professor's death, which occurred a few months after our visit to him.

The short article, unfortunately, did not allude to the Professor's family at all, so I could gain from it no news of Miss Violet.

It seemed to me that I had lost my only chance of gaining any. Evidently the Marquis was a man who did not care to bother other people very much about his private affairs. Only an impatient eagerness to get at the truth had driven him to make his first confidences to me, and, after he had remunerated me for my opinion, which certainly was not worth the remuneration, I did not expect to have any more revelations from his lips.

Of course, I made a few indirect inquiries from people who were likely to have some acquaintance with the Marquis's movements, and with a view to ascertaining whether anything was known of his marriage; but all I could learn about him was that he had disappeared from England, and was supposed to be living abroad—nobody knew exactly where.

As it happened, I was the first person to learn where that foreign retreat of Lord Aldwyn's was—Dildac—a quaint little country place in the heart of the Champagne country; and I learnt it from Aldwyn himself.

Just as I had given up all hope of hearing anything about him, I was delightedly surprised to get a note from him asking me to come down to Dildac for a little while, to look after the health of his mother, which seemed to him very unsatisfactory. He expressed the

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hope that I should be able to get away from London, said that I should find the Champagne village a delightful change if I was at all fond of the country, and mentioned that he had taken an old château there, and could give me any amount of room for myself during my professional attendance on his mother. Not a word was said about my former services, nor was there the remotest mention in his letter of Professor Vaudary's daughter. However, it was not likely that I could meet the Marquis again without learning something about her; so you may guess that I accepted Aldwyn's offer with all speed, and began to make preparations at once for my journey to the other side of France.

Dildac was a charming little place, truly—a nest of white cottages among miles of vineyards, with the green hills of Aspequille behind.

There was nobody to meet me when the lazy train loitered into the little wooden station. It was hardly worth while sending to meet me, when my arrival was so uncertain and the château was so near. I could see its stone turrets rising behind the poplars when I stepped out on to the platform of the little wooden station. The fact tempted me, after leaving my luggage to the tender mercies of the station-master, to try and find my way to my destination without making inquiries.

I wandered along the white road between the vineyards wondering whether I should learn anything about Miss Vaudary, or find her settled as mistress of the château when I arrived there. To do the latter turned out a more difficult task than I imagined. As soon as I descended from the station to the road the view of the turrets was lost; and, although I had started in the direction in which I had thought the château would lie, still every turn in the road seemed to take me away from that direction.

I began to wish that I had asked my way at the station, especially as I met nobody of whom I could inquire. It was questionable, too, even if I did meet anybody whether I could make myself understood. My French serves me badly in Paris! I seriously doubted its success in the provinces. I stepped briskly along the road, getting more certain at every turn that I was going wrong.

The château, as far as I remembered, lay to the left, the road turned determinately to the right. At last, however, I came to a footpath leading away leftwards, and ornamented with a decrepid and undecipherable finger-post, the dumb leading of which I followed without hesitation. Still, I was not so certain of my way that I could afford to despise guidance; so when I saw a woman walking slowly along the path in front of me, I prepared a sentence in my best French, to inquire whether I was really on my way to the château of Dildac. I was pleased to notice, on getting nearer, that the person's dress and gait betokened her a lady, since, as I said, I doubt the efficacy of my accent among the country people

"Pardonnez-moi, madame."

in making my meaning understood. It occurred to my mind, of course, that I might be near the discovery of another chapter in Lord Aldwyn's love-story, and that this might be his wife.

The lady must have been deep in thought, whoever she was, for she did not notice my step even when I was close upon her.

"*Pardonnez-moi, madame,*" I began, raising my hat; but no further strain on my knowledge of the vernacular was necessary, for, as I spoke the three words, the lady turned her face with a slight start, and I saw, as I was more or less prepared to do, that it was a face I knew—that of Professor Vaudary's daughter. There was no mistaking that beautiful oval, with its large, lustrous eyes, and frame of black hair, although the cheeks which had been so white at the séance had a touch of colour in them under their healthy, country-made brown.

I inquired, in English, if I were on the way to the château, and the lady held out her hand.

(*To be concluded.*)

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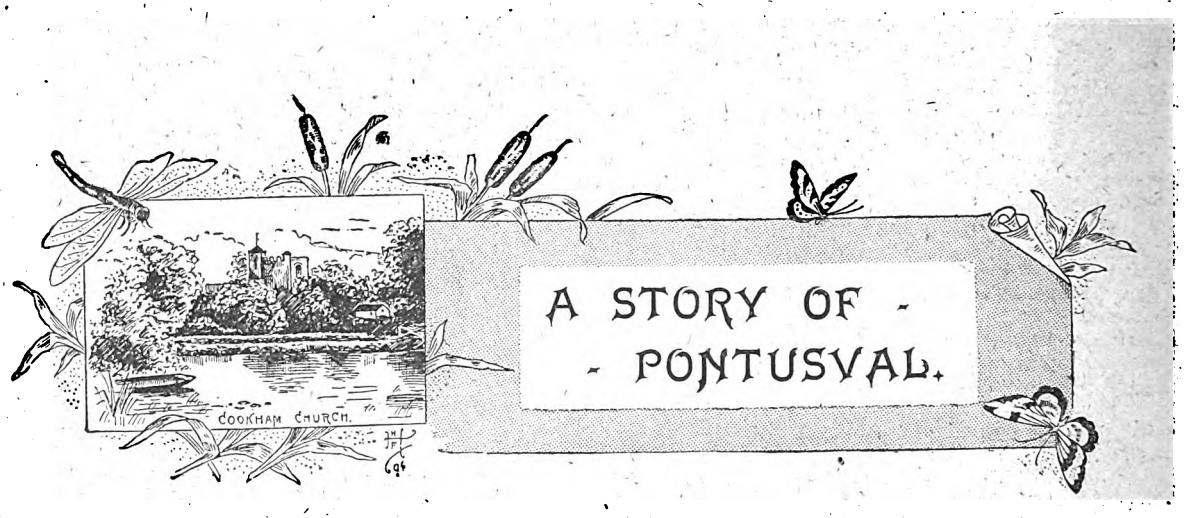

"Father!—Father!"

The clear but breathless voice of a woman rose above the howling of the wind and the roaring of the waves.

Then, after other cries, which the storm carried away from them and which they could not distinguish, a scrap of a sentence reached them through the tumult of the air, imperative and intreating: "Ship—in peril—at Penn Leach ven——"

The news fell like a thunderbolt on the fishermen.

Standing in disheartened groups along the shore near Keravesan, the north side of the port of Pontusval, they watched with passive and resigned looks the storm from the N.E., which had come so suddenly in the morning, continued all day, and now towards night showed every sign of increasing still more.

"A ship in peril."

They showed their terror at these words in different ways. While the young men seemed to defy the fury of the waves by appealing to courage and duty, their chests heaving under the bravery of their hearts, from the dried and rugged lips of some of the old men the same words were strangled by the dread roar of the rollers on the beach and the knowledge of the awful danger they were in.

With her cap half blown off and her arm tragically pointing to the north, a young girl, whose fair golden hair formed a bright halo round her head, ran towards them, throwing herself into the arms of one of the fishermen as into a haven of refuge—a man with massive shoulders and grey hair under his cap of coarse wool.

"What is the matter? Where have you come from?" he asked tenderly.

"From the lighthouse at Pontusval, father, where I went to see my friend, the signalman's daughter. And then—then——"

Her emotion overcame her, and her words were drowned by her sobs.

"Father—oh, it is horrible. Over there, I saw this poor ship in distress—on the rocks of Penn Leach ven. And at this hour. God grant there may yet be time. All must hurry to the rescue!"

"On the rocks? Then there's a poor chance for her!" declared one of the fishermen.

Another, shaking his head and crossing his arms, as if to assert the uselessness of any effort on their part, muttered:

"Yes, yes, that is true. Our rocks there take only a few minutes to break up any ship, however big. It has happened many a time."

Then above the tumult of the sea, a phrase in the old dialect of Leon, in the famous "Land of Pagans," as this part of Finistère is often called, sounded mournfully:

"Wreckage on the coast!"

These words caused a great hubbub. There were rounds of cursing, of approval and of anger, a rapid exchange of arguments for and against, in the midst of which, arm-in-arm, walked the fisherman and his daughter.

But now that the others had picked up this ominous rallying cry of former times, the souls of the wreckers were swelling with recollections of pillage and with a hope of a return to the atrocities of the past, and they muttered in pleased accents:

"Wreckage on the coast!"

Then William Madec, disengaging himself from Jeanne-Marie, and trembling with indignation, threw his cap behind him, showing his massive head, his honest and frank eyes, the face of a sturdy fisherman, and in answer to the cry of the wreckers he gave the cry of the godly:

"To the lifeboat!"

Leading the way impatiently, with rapid strides, to the small red-roofed house a little distance off, he added:

"We will see which of us is right this time."

Carried away by his example, those behind followed him, repeating with enthusiasm, as if in defiance to the sea, and to those who had dared to invoke the barbarous customs of their ancestors:

"The lifeboat! The lifeboat!"

Young, old, women, children, all had rushed in great haste to the little lifeboat house; with the assistance of ropes and the combined help of a heavy waggon, the lifeboat was quickly brought out and taken towards the sea.

"Oh, hisse! Ah! Oh! Ah! Holla! Oh, hisse! Ah! Oh! Ah! Holla!" they sang as they pulled in unison. And everyone joined in, from the treble voices of the children, to the bass notes of the men.

A little way off the other group of older men had gathered, drawn together by a common understanding and a common purpose. Very different scenes came to their minds. Instead of a lifeboat as the centre of all,

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they saw the people armed with boat-hooks, hatchets, fish-spears, and ropes, all the tools for plunder and murder.

They looked on with disappointment at the preparations to spoil them of their prey.

From this group a grumble of revolt arose, growing louder as the lifeboat neared the water, and when the crew, clad in tarpaulins and sou'-westers, appeared with William Madec at their head, a cry burst forth:

"To the wreck!"

It was the same harsh and piercing voice, so loud that it was distinctly heard above the howling of the tempest, and the "Oh, hisss! Ah! Oh!" of the workers.

He stood up, this defender of heathenish rites, continuing:

"It is our bread that they want to take from us. The sea destroys for us. No one can take from us what it brings. It is for us the Penn Leach works, and all the rocks and islands, too!"

In front of the others, well in view, the strange old man who had uttered these words stood defiant.

Though almost a centenarian, he was always to the fore in a storm. He always came, robust and straight, his white hair falling over his shoulders, with his black eyes which age had not dulled, his nose like the beak of a bird of prey.

"Oh, Heaven! Hervé Raguénes! It is always him. May the Lord protect the poor sailors!" cried Jeanne-Marie Madec in terror.

And while the young people, continuing their preparations for rescue, did not deign to respond, the old men threw evil glances at them, brandishing their boat-hooks menacingly. However, the boat was just being launched, when one of the men cried: "Captain William, there is a man short on the larboard."

As no one volunteered to take the place, a young man, of a tall and athletic figure, breathless with his long run to the scene of action, caught hold of the planking, drew himself up by the strength of his wrists, and jumped on board, saying:

"There. You can go ahead, the crew is complete."

Stupefied, William Madec looked at him, demanding:

"You, Alain? But you do not join our party, I think?"

"You won't have me?" said the new-comer in a pleading tone.

Jeanne-Marie, her face lit up with joy, murmured:

"Father, I beg you."

His eyes fixed themselves with candid admiration on the young man, who, without waiting for the captain's answer, had seized a life-belt and put it on. William, with a smile on his lips, held out his hand to the new arrival, when the rough voice of the old man shouted furiously:

"Where are you going, you, now? Who gave you leave?"

The young man suddenly became pale on hearing this brutal question, and, turning, stammered:

"Grandfather! Like the others, to the rescue. The others!"

A horrible laugh came from the withered lips of Raguénes.

"The others!—ha! ha! ha! There are no more of our blood, the old blood of the Pagans. As for you, you are a Raguénes, the last living Raguénes with me, a Pagan like me. It is not to the rescue you must go, but to the wreck."

"But, grandfather—the poor people who are in danger. I pray you."

"It is God who has sent them to us; we mustn't interfere with His will."

All the fatalism of his race flamed in this savage speech.

The captain leant towards his daughter, exchanging some words with her, then, lifting up his head, addressed the terrible old man:

"Hervé Raguénes, the ship in danger is English again."

The old man, recoiling a step, did not wait for the attack, but with an instinctive movement of revolt added:

"A heretic."

Madec said slowly:

"Do you remember the Drummer?"

"Ann Taboulinn."

The name trembled on the lips of Raguénes, and half stifled with rage he made a threatening gesture in the direction of Alain.

Into the troubled waters the boat went on its way to save those in peril on Penn Leach ven.

* * * * *

A slab of stone served as the door, and it needed a great exercise of muscle to open it. It was opened and shut again, and by the light of an enormous ship's lantern the weird face of Hervé Raguénes could be seen.

He sat down amidst strange surroundings, broken open cases, staved casks, fragments of wood, of iron, of steel, fishing utensils, arms, provisions, lovely pieces of china, massive pieces of timber, spoil from many a wreck. By the remains of letters visible on certain boards one could almost make a list of the wrecks which for sixty-five years there had been on this coast.

This was the house of Raguénes, this cave which had been dug in the rock by prehistoric man, and had served as a burial place for the ancient inhabitants of the country to judge by the litter of bones about.

He had found this retreat by chance, and now in his old age he had left the house of his only living relation Alain, to live away from everyone in this cave.

In old times he had been able to stow here many of his treasures, and could accumulate what he would without fear of the police. Anger burnt in his heart, for now they saved the ships in peril.

He sat by his wood fire brooding, listening instinctively to the howling of the wind as it swept along the coast with the fury of a wild beast, and the roaring of the waves as they dashed against the rocks.

And thus it was that, in the faithful mirror of his brain, he saw reflected many such nights and days of storm from which he had reaped such a rich harvest.

Oh, this lifeboat of to-day! How the times had changed! How the race had degenerated! His grandson, blood of his blood, was on the sea, not to enrich himself with spoil, but to save unknown beings, strangers, Englishmen.

To save Englishmen, a Raguénes, a Pagan! If he could do as in former times!

"Do you remember the Drummer?"

It was William Madec, one of the rescuers, who had said these words.

He remembered well, and the whole scene passed before him.

It was a long time ago. He tried to count on his fingers twenty, thirty, at least forty years. There, quite close, in the middle of the crypt, he could see the *débris* of the

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frigate, an English frigate, did they say? Well, they had nothing to prove its nationality.

It was a night like this, a storm from the north-east with thunder and lightning.

He, Hervé Raguénes, with some of his boon companions, had started off to Brignaugan, when there sounded across the waves the boom of a cannon.

At the same time someone from the beach had distinguished a ship, still free, and, perhaps, thanks to the lightning, able to keep out of the breakers and regain the high sea.

Then Hervé ran to his house and returned dragging the finest bull in his drove: his companions clustered around, applauding and helping him to drive the frightened animal towards the shore.

When they reached the beach, Hervé lighted a big ship's lantern, which he had fastened to the animal's head, between the horns, with a rope, one end of which was tied to one of its front legs, long enough to allow the beast to walk, but sufficiently short to oblige it to lower its head at each step.

And then he guided the animal along the shore: at each step the head of the bull went down and up again, making the lantern oscillate to imitate the light of a pitching ship.

Almost at once the sound of the cannon came nearer, showing that the ship, instead of continuing on her course out to sea, was approaching the shore under the belief that safety lay in that direction.

By the flashes of lightning which became more frequent as the storm increased, they could distinguish a frigate, sailing under its lower sails, one mast broken and its head fully on Penn Leach ven.

Doubtless at the same moment the sailors also saw the danger into which they were running, for a horrified cry came over the intervening space. To this death cry a roar of joy answered from the beach, and all raised their hooks and their hatchets, while Raguénes put out the lantern, freed the animal's leg, and waited while the sea did its work of destruction.

A last flash showed them the ship breaking amongst the rocks, and calling all the plunderers to their prey, the cry resounded:

"Wreckage on the coast!"

It was a famous windfall, some ship from the colonies laden with spices, precious clothes, and with chests of silver.

And of all that were washed ashore that night, there was not one living soul.

In the morning, further along the coast, close to a big rock, which stood alone in the middle of the beach, they found a huge corpse, half-clad in the remnants of a uniform that it was impossible to recognise.

But what aroused their curiosity most was that the giant carried at his side a drum fastened by a strong belt. Evidently this acted as a buoy and prevented him from totally disappearing like his comrades.

The first of them who had noticed him, and who had knelt down to strip him, stood up suddenly with a cry of astonishment, holding up a child, a little girl of a year or more, fastened to the drum, and still living.

He was going to throw her back into the sea, or kill her with a blow on the head with his hook, when one of his neighbours, seizing his hands, declared:

"I will take it. It shall be my care."

A man unlike the others, this Yves Madec, the father of William Madec, and one who was always reproached for his tender-heartedness.

"Can't you leave her to return to where she came from, the little heretic?' Hervé Raguénes had called to him mockingly.

"I will make her a Christian for her good, and ours," replied Yves Madec, adding in a low voice, "for the redemption of our sins."

He went away carrying the little heretic, the little English woman, "*Saoz bihan*" as the other Pagans around him said, with the horror which they professed, and which some of them had, for the English, personified in their eyes.

As for the man with the drum, instead of carrying him to consecrated ground, they buried him where he was found, at the foot of the gigantic rock, which has since been known as "the Drummer's Rock."

The incident seemed to have ended here, and little by little was being completely forgotten, when a disquieting rumour, which began among the fishermen went round, affirming that on certain stormy days, when the sky was over-cast, on the deserted beach there could be heard the roll of the drum. The ghost of the drummer arose and beat on the instrument which had been buried with him.

From one to another the story was repeated, and soon, especially in the evenings, no one dared pass the rock without hastening their steps and crossing themselves with fear. Perhaps they had done wrong to bury him there without the sacrament, and it was these prayers he came to claim with the roll of the drum.

When this rumour reached the ears of Hervé Raguénes, he refused to believe it. He sneered:

"Their drummer, ha, ha! It is alcohol or cider which disturbs their senses, and makes them think thunder is the beat of a drum. Ah, well." And he listened with a shrug of his shoulders.

Outside, the storm continued to increase as the night came on. Hearing the significant roaring, the old man rubbed his hands with a pleased gesture, while a smile of satisfaction spread over his face, as he muttered:

"In a little while there will be more than a drummer on the beach. Ah! Ah! Spoil! Spoil! The sea, the rocks, the anger of God, all is for us!"

Then as he went to extinguish the lantern preparatory to lying down on a mass of seaweed, which served as his bed, he heard the sound of steps approaching, and seizing his boat-hook he stood in the entrance of the grotto, demanding:

"Who is there?—Who dares——?"

The profile of a young man was discernible by the pale light of the dawn: a head appeared, with eyes shining with joy.

"Is it you, Alain?"

He dared ask no more, divining at once the cause of his joy.

The other exclaimed in a glad voice:

"Grandfather! All saved!"

Raguénes groaned:

"Saved! The English heretics!"

"Shipwrecked, poor exhausted sailors, frozen with cold, creatures of God like us," corrected the young man. "If you had seen them, you would have pitied them."

He had come inside the grotto, and stood nervously twisting his cap.

"I want to ask you something—that is, I have had a confession to make to you, for—for a long time. But I have not had the promise until to-day; then I am old enough to settle down. I——"

The old man looked at him savagely, and asked harshly:

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"You aren't content as you are? That is your fault, what then?"

The grandson hesitated, then he said:

"I love a young girl, and I wish to marry her."

Hervé suggested sweetly:

"You have made your choice alone; doubtless it is good, as you haven't consulted me. Perhaps, then, it is the daughter of Lanlo, who is one of the old school, like me. If it is she, my son——"

Alain interrupted coldly:

"No, it isn't Yvonne Lanlo, it is Jeanne-Marie Madec."

The old man glared at his grandson in a fury.

"She? '*Saoz bihan*,' the little English heretic!"

"The little English girl," Alain stammered. "But she is Breton, the daughter of William——"

"Ah! Ah! I don't doubt it. And it was for that William Madec took you in his crew. And you want my consent? Never. Never while I live shall a Raguénes marry a heretic. Do you hear? I would rather see you dead," he added, "than married to her. Go and ask her hand from the drummer."

* * * * *

"I love you with all my heart, more than life, and I beg that if you love me in the same way, you will be my wife. You still wish it, Jeanne-Marie, in spite of the name I bear, in spite of all I have told you, in spite of my grandfather?"

Alain was tenderly holding her trembling fingers in his hands as he was pleading. It was some days after the wreck, as evening was approaching. They had met near the Drummer's Rock with a touching superstition, as if they wished him to be a witness of their love, and of their engagement, as she was the daughter of the little stray, rescued by Yves Madec, forty years ago.

Alain remembered the jeering phrase of his grandfather:

"Go and ask her hand from the drummer."

Slowly night enveloped all in a veil of mystery.

Jeanne-Marie, yielding to the dictates of her heart, and the persuasions of her companion, confessed:

"I love you, Alain, and I will be your wife, I promise you."

A burst of savage laughter sounded so suddenly behind them that they turned simultaneously: and there, shaking his hook, with which he was always armed, at the terrified young people, stood Hervé Raguénes.

"And I," he said, "I swear that a grandson of mine shall never marry you."

With a spring, Alain threw himself instinctively between the old man and the young girl, guarding the latter with his arms, saying:

"Grandfather! Take care."

In his tone, at first supplicating and then commanding, you could recognise his ancestry.

The old man advanced threateningly.

"I will send her whence she came, this heretic. I will——"

Step by step he approached, his eyes aflame with the light of murder, the fixed idea of his hard cruel heart showed in his stony face. Without arms to defend her, hesitating to strike his own grandfather, Alain stood before him. Flight was impossible, they were between Hervé Raguénes and the sea, between him and the Drummer's Rock, towards which they recoiled.

Possessed by this bloodthirsty folly, a homicidal laugh on his lips, the old man came on.

Suddenly a long rumbling sounded, as if the anger of Heaven was let loose.

The grandfather gave a chuckle.

"It thunders now, as in the days of wrecks. Wreckage on the coast. God is for us."

But now the rumbling came nearer and more regular, as if by some mystery an invisible drum was being beaten.

Hervé stopped:

"It sounds odd this evening, all the same. Perhaps a fresh scheme of the good God. It doesn't matter——"

The noise seemed to approach them and envelop them in its sonorous waves, as in the winding sheet of death.

All three looked at each other, the blood left their faces, their bodies became rigid, and they heard the old man stammer:

"The Drummer's Rock!"

Still the beating continued.

The lips of the old man muttered:

"Do you not hear the Drummer?"

And as they looked the Drummer's Rock seemed to move and advance towards them.

Terrified, haggard, Hervé Raguénes saw the giant rise before him, his drum at his side, monstrous, living, terrible, as high as the rock itself, always sounding his drum like the rumbling of thunder.

While Jeanne-Marie and Alain, mute with terror, tried to distinguish what was happening under the moving pall of darkness, the old man, his hook fallen on the ground, his two arms stretched out towards the rock, his heart full of remorse, exclaimed:

"The Drummer himself! It is he! He comes! I will——"

His legs gave way beneath him and he fell to his knees on the sand, vanquished, supplicating:

"Mercy! Pardon! I consent!"

As the words passed his lips, the rumblings diminished, receding, dying away with a final roar in the unfathomable depth of the night.

It was Alain and Jeanne-Marie who brought back the redoubtable Pagan. He had become as feeble as a little child.

While they helped him to walk, he called to memory again and again what he had heard and seen, he, who had never believed the stories of the fishermen.

"It is true, this drum. I have heard it. I have seen."

These incoherent phrases escaped him from time to time.

"It is necessary—prayers—repose of his soul—a cross."

* * * * *

A month later the marriage between Alain Raguénes and Jeanne-Marie Madec was celebrated.

For the occasion, old Hervé Ruguénes, whose brain never recovered its balance, but whose figure was as upright and imposing as ever, put on the ancient holiday costume of the Pagans.

After the Mass, all the congregation with the clergy repaired to the beach to witness the ceremony of placing a cross in front of the Drummer's Rock, which can be seen to this day. Since then, no one has heard the beating of the drum, as if the sanctification of his grave and the marriage of Alain and Jeanne-Marie had given eternal rest to the unknown buried under the rock.

M.E.

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A Wedding Tombstone.

"So you never heard of Mary Barbour's weddin' tombstone?" said grandma in a tone of surprise. "I thought everybody knew about that."

I confessed the most abject ignorance, and immediately drew up to the fire. This was partly to gain information and partly because, although the fireplace was wide and deep-throated, and big logs were blazing in it, there were biting draughts of stinging November air coming in at the loosely-fitting door. For grandmother would not be persuaded to leave the home that had been hers for fifty years, and which now showed some signs of decay.

She sat knitting by the firelight, for, although she had all the modern conveniences of heating and lighting, her big fireplace cast its ruddy glow out into the room through all the long winter evenings. I was an angular schoolgirl of fifteen then, with a great love for the romantic, and was on a four weeks' visit at the old homestead. After knitting a few minutes in silence, she began:

"You've seen the old stone house down on the bank of the river, all shut in with pines and evergreens? It's nigh a hundred years old. When I was born it had been built ten years. When I was a young married woman the Barbours came to live there, and they was proud, 'aughty people that nobody could get acquainted with. That's what made 'em take it so dretful hard when—but here I am, ahead of my story. You see, Mr. Barbour embezzled or did something of that kind, and went to prison. After he had been there a year he up and hung himself, and that is the last of him so far as my story goes.

"Then his wife and little boy shut themselves up in the stone house and never went outside the gate hardly. She'd had a good deal of schooling, his mother had, and she taught him herself as long as she could, and then he bought books and studied by himself. He tried going to school when he was a small boy, but one of the scholars threw it at him about his father, and Mortimer nearly killed him, and after that his mother kep' him home.

And she was such a proud woman, was Mrs. Barbour, and lofty and severe in her ways. She wouldn't let nobody sympathise with her, which everybody wanted to, as there's so little going on in a place like this.

"Mrs. Barbour was real selfish with her grief, so she got herself disliked, besides folks bein' suspicious after the way her husband turned out. What did they live on?

"Oh, the boy farmed it, and later they do say he wrote books on what they called natural history, though to my mind it was the most natural stuff I ever heard tell of—all about beetles and flies with three hundred muscles in their heads, and as could carry twelve hundred times their own weight on their own backs, which everybody knows he must have got up as he went along.

"They were dretfully taken up with each other, he and his mother, and she believed everything he said was so, even about the flies and beetles. But she was his own mother, and that explains it.

"When she died Mortimer went well-nigh crazy. He planted her grave with vi'lets and pansies, and at the head was a white marble monument he had gone to the city for—nothing nearer would suit him. But he didn't display no taste. Nothing on it, my dear, but the old lady's name and the date she died—not an angel, nor a cherub, or a lamb, or a broken rose-bud, nor a bit of verse. And yet he always seemed to set store by her.

"Then Mortimer, he just stuck to the old house, same as ever, though now he was alone. I used to wonder how it seemed to him late at night hearin' the swash of the river and the sighin' of them pine trees. He wore his hair long, as was the custom in them days, and it was curly up at the ends, like the picture of John Wesley. But he had eyes that went right through you and came out the back of your head. And he never set foot into the meeting-house nohow.

"Now, he was the last man in the village I'd ever said would got married. But as sure as you set there, when the little milliner, Mary McAllister, came into the place he was struck. That wasn't nothing strange—all the young fellows was—but, mind you, *she was struck, too.* No, you wouldn't 'a' thought it.

"Everybody warned her, and told her about his fathers' hangin' himself in prison, and how queer his mother was, and that Mortimer was as old as Dick's hatband and wouldn't come to no good. She listened, with her eyes big and cool and a little hot patch of red on her cheeks like a daub of paint, but she never said a word.

"That was Mary McAllister all over, never to say a blessed word, but go and do just as she saw fit. First we knew they was engaged, and it was given out in meeting. Next day her aunt she lived with came in to

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see me, and wrung her hands, sayin' she wouldn't be surprised if Mary was murdered before the year was out. What can you think of a man who lives like a hermit, and had a crooked father and a peculiar mother?

"But we wasn't prepared for the worst. A day or two before the wedding, in comes old Mrs. Johnson, and says:

"'Shut up the doors tight,' says she, 'and the winders. I've got something to tell you that'll make your hair rise up,' she says, whisperin' like.

"So I shut the door, she a-workin' her hands together like one possessed.

"'It's about Mary,' she went on.

"'He's been and got a tombstone for her.'

"'Who?' asked I, as if I didn't know, but my knees knocked together and I felt a bit sick.

"'Mortimer Barbour,' says she. 'My grandson, Johnnie, was after a bird's nest in a tree over in his yard. The limb broke, and down he went right on to the roof of the old outhouse, that hasn't been used for years. It went in under him like tinder, and as soon as he could pick himself up and found no bones broke, what should he see but a new white gravestone, a-settin' up in a corner against some rubbish. He went up to it, and he says as true as the Bible he saw "Mary Barbour," cut on it, and the date she is a-goin' to die.'

"'I don't believe it,' says I, but I was all a-faint, and had to go and make us each a cup of tea so we could bear up under it.

"As soon as I said I didn't believe it, Mrs. Johnson said we'd go ourselves and see. And we did go, Mortimer bein' away in the fields, and got into the outhouse. It was towards dark, and we shook with the cold, though it was a warm day in June. We'd brought a bit of candle with us, and Mrs. Johnson lit it, and then we saw —good gracious, child, how scairt you look; don't get so near the fire, you'll be all ablaze. Where was I? Oh, we saw the stone just as Johnnie said, a real gravestone of white marble, and on it the name 'Mary Barbour,' with the date 'Sept 5, 18—,' below it. But the rest we couldn't make out.

"'He's going to let her live three months, may Heaven forgive him,' says old Mrs. Johnson, meanin' different from what she said.

"The next day I went to Mary, and told her the whole truth! And would you believe it, she said she thought Mrs. Johnson and I had no business prying about other people's affairs? 'If he had bought me a thousand gravestones I'd have him just the same,' says she. So they was married the next day, but Mary was white as a ghost, and she trembled so she could hardly walk.

"They went right away, and we threw some old shoes after 'em, but all the wishin' of joy was make believe, and I never saw a bride with such a white set face, never looking at her husband, nor yet at us.

"They was away nearly three months; they came back to the old house. But folks said they wasn't happy, that she was as cold as a stone, and he was always at his books and old insects. One day I got a letter askin' me to come and see her. She was lyin' down on a lounge when I got there, white and so thin, with big eyes, with a sorry, hungry look in 'em. But she had on a smart dress, and was as pretty as a pictur'.

"As soon as we'd shaken hands and I'd taken off my bonnet and shawl, she says:

"'Do you know what day to-morrow is?'

"Then I thought it up, and said it was the 5th of September. 'The day I am to die,' she says in a soft, quiet way. Then I up and asked her if Mortimer had been ill-treatin' her, but she put her finger and said:

"'Not a word to my husband; he doesn't know I know it.'

"Then she said he was awful good to her, but she couldn't get that gravestone out of her head day or night. All at once it came to me how matters was; she'd been too proud to give him up, besides her likin' him, too; and she'd been too proud to tell him about it; and so betwixt the two the poor child was almost beat out. She asked if I would go out to the outhouse with her to see the stone. She wanted to see it, and was afraid to go alone.

"Then a queer thing happened. Mortimer had come into the next room while she'd been talkin', and heard every word. I never saw anybody so stirred up as he was when he came in.

"'Is that tombstone what has stood between us?' he said, and went on to explain that it had been ordered for his mother. He was such a bad writer that the stone-cutter mistook the name Marie for Mary, and after the stone was half done it was found out, and they made him pay for it. So, as it was his, they brought it to him, and, not knowin' what to do with it, he'd just set it up in the outhouse and forgot all about it. Mary, she began to cry, and then they fell to huggin' and kissin' each other, as if they hadn't met for years. I tried to put in a word to ca'm 'em, but they saw me without seeing me, and heard me without hearing me, so I put on my bonnet and shawl and came away and left 'em.

"After that? Dear me, they was the happiest couple you ever saw. They used the gravestone for a front doorstep, wrong side up, and it was really pretty. Mary was dretful proud of him, and believed every word he wrote about them flies and beetles, just as his mother did, which only goes to show that the old sayin' is true, that love is blind." CLARICE IRENE CLINGHAM

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A CASE THAT MADE A NAME.

"What was the most interesting case in your long experience, doctor?"

It was a little entertainment given in honour of Dr. Tournequet's retirement from practice—an event we young aspirants felt inclined to celebrate with no small satisfaction—that the foregoing question was put to the guest of the evening.

"I think," said the old gentleman, after a moment's reflection, and casting a fatherly look upon us through his gold-rimmed spectacles, "about the most interesting case I ever had was my first."

"Would you mind relating it?"

"Not at all. Whatever secret there once was about it, all reason for keeping it has long since ceased.

"It is now nearly fifty years," he continued, "since I presumed to settle down here and enter into competition with Old Carver, whose dazzling gilt sign, emblazoned with his name and professional designation of 'Physician and Chirurgeon'—Curmudgeon would have hit the mark more nearly—had hitherto enjoyed a monopoly of 'lighting fools the way to dusky death.'

"He never passed me without a scowl, and never spoke to me but with contempt. His evident purpose was to nip my pretensions in the bud. I should never have a case if he could help it.

"I came very near having one, in spite of him, before long. A poor wretch had cut his throat, just missing the carotid artery, and severing a number of important veins.

"A messenger dispatched for Old Carver not finding him in, had left word for him to come immediately, and then, as a makeshift, hurried on for me. I accompanied him at once, and found the wounded man so utterly prostrate from the loss of blood that but the faintest signs of life remained. A few drops of an invigorating cordial, which I forced him to swallow, partially revived him; and I was preparing to sew up and dress the wound when Old Carver came bustling in and pushed me aside rudely. Of course, the case was his by right of being first summoned, and I could not oppose his taking charge of it.

"'Humph,' he grunted, clapping his fingers on the patient's pulse, which had somewhat risen from the effect of the cordial, 'what have you been doing here?'

"'I gave him a restorative,' I answered.

"'And threw him into a fever,' interrupted Old Carver, without waiting to hear further.

"Then whipping out his lancet, he proceeded to deplete the sufferer of what little blood he had remaining.

"'I trust you are satisfied with your work,' he growled as the man gave a gasp and sank back dead.

"I was about to repel indignantly the insinuation that it was at my door the man's death lay; but the looks and mutterings of the crowd admonished me that my word would weigh but little against that of the venerable quack, and that if I would get off with a whole skin, I had better go at once.

"I lost no opportunity, whenever I could get a hearing, of relating the true state of the case and vindicating my conduct. The restorative, I insisted, had been absolutely necessary to stimulate the flagging vital current, and demonstrated the stupid folly of bleeding a man almost at death's door. But the listeners would only shake their heads and say: 'Doctor Carver was a very good judge of physic, and they thought I couldn't do better'n larn a wrinkle or two from him.'

"My prospects, which had never risen much above zero, now sank considerably lower. I began to lose heart at last, and was seriously considering the advisableness of giving up the struggle, and leaving the headstrong population to Old Carver and their fate, when one night I received a hurried call to attend a gentleman who had just had his leg broken.

"Mr. Soammi Furneval, the individual referred to, was a respectable middle-aged bachelor, for some time back thought to be particularly attentive to Miss Bernice Potts, a maiden lady of fortune, and nearly his own age.

"In attempting to board a moving train he had missed his footing, and fallen so that one of his legs was run over and completely crushed, almost to the knee.

"They carried him home on a stretcher, and, as usual in such cases, messengers ran for all the doctors in the

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place—that is to say, in the present instance, for Old Carver and myself.

"We arrived simultaneously.

"'It's a compound comminuted fracture of the tibia and the fibula,' said Old Carver, pushing forward to take possession by first getting his ugly paw on the injured limb, which he fumbled roughly through the clothing. 'It's a case for immediate amputation,' he added, opening his case of instruments.

"'I shall not require your services,' spoke up Mr. Furneval, with considerable energy for one in his condition; 'I prefer placing myself in the hands of Dr. Tournequet.'

"Everybody looked astonished, and Old Carver's face grew blacker than a thundercloud.

"'Your blood be on your own head!' he croaked ominously, and, bundling up his instruments, he banged the door behind him.

"'I wish to be left alone with the doctor,' said Mr. Furneval, when Old Carver had gone; 'if assistance be needed it can be called.'

"Everybody withdrew but the patient and myself; and there, alone and single-handed, I did everything the case required."

"You don't mean to say you amputated the limb without assistance?" said a fidgety little M.D. across the table.

"No; you see Mr. F., as I have said, was keeping company with Miss Potts, and thinking he might be better able to walk than to hobble into her affections, we decided against amputation, and proceeded accordingly.

"Next morning I met Old Carver in the street. He was in the habit of passing me with a frown without speaking, but this time he stopped.

"'How's your patient?' he inquired with a sneer.

"'Doing finely,' I replied.

"'Your first amputation, I suppose?'

"'Neither first or last,' I said. 'I didn't amputate at all.'

"'I suppose you know the leg's smashed to flinders?'

"'I do.'

"'And you haven't amputated?'

"'No.'

"'And don't intend to?'

"'No.'

"'Better go by the undertaker's and order a coffin, then!'

"'He's busy on one of your last victims, I believe,' said I, hurrying along without further parley.

"For nearly a week my patient saw no one but myself and the servant who carried up his meals.

"Then a few friends were admitted to cheer his confinement, which he bore with admirable patience. In six weeks I removed the splints, and the next day Mr. Furneval was walking out as well as ever. My fame was in everybody's mouth. Even Old Carver could find nothing to carp at, for he had everywhere circulated the terrible nature of the injury, and predicted the patient's speedy death. My practice soon exceeded my most sanguine hopes, and Old Carver's whilom patrons flocked to me in such numbers that he shut up shop and retired in disgust."

"Was the limb really as badly fractured as at first supposed?" inquired the fidgety little doctor opposite.

"Quite—ground almost to powder, you might say."

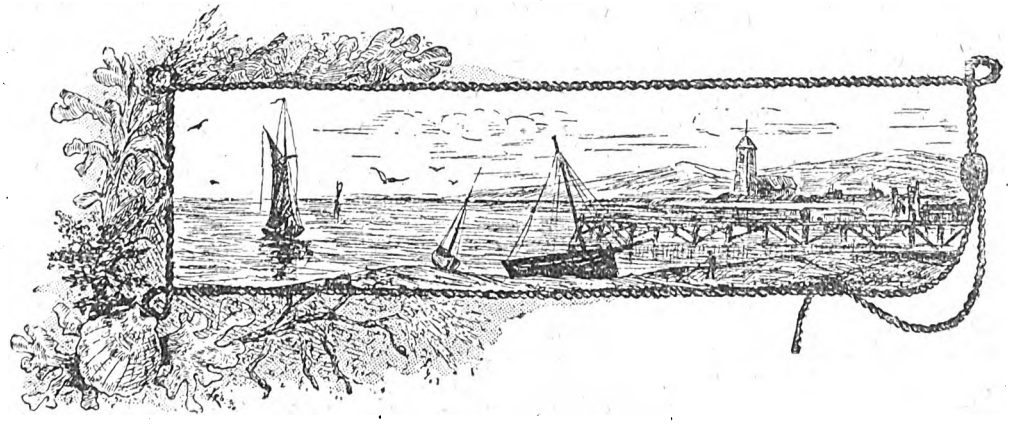
"And gave no signs of lameness afterwards?"

"No more than before; there had previously been a slight hitch in that leg, but I think there was less afterwards."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the little doctor.

"Not at all. You see, and there lay the secret, the injured leg was of wood, and we replaced it with a better one."

U. P



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Short Stories

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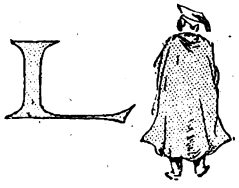
BELOW you will find ten pictures. Each represents the name of a Peer of the Realm. The title alone is indicated, not the family name.

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your lists until you are told to send them in.

Don't be discouraged if you cannot solve them all. Others may be no more clever than yourself. Send in fifty-five, or fifty, or even fewer.

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of six must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.



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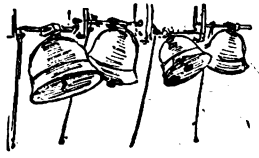

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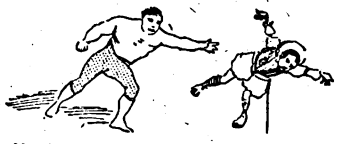


No. 18.....

Remember these Things.

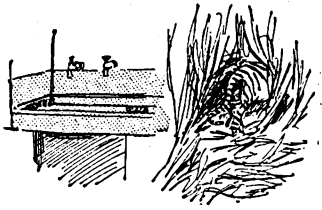
YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the titles of the people. The family names are not depicted.

Name.....

Address.....



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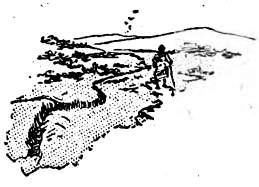

No. 20.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of Peers.—Whitaker's Almanack, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

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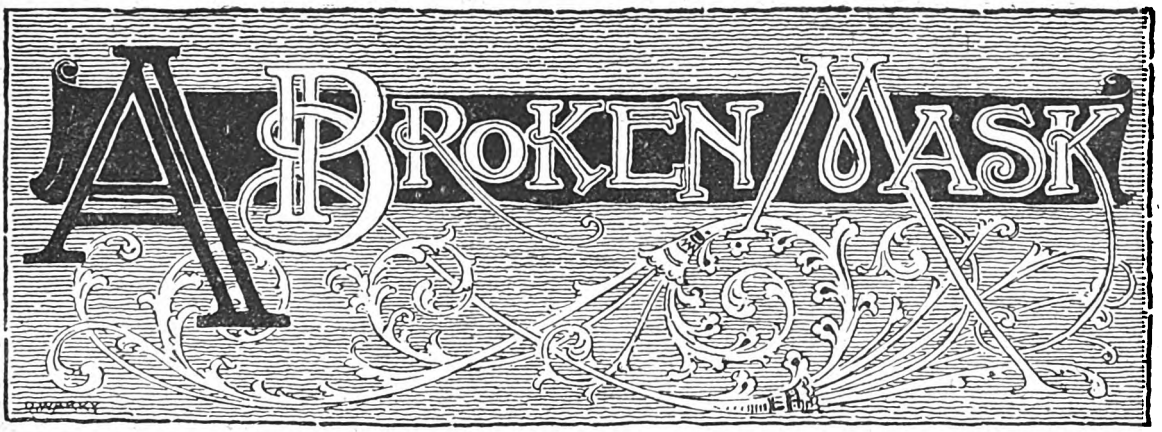

BY JOAN BARRETT.

SUMMARY.

THE story opens with an introduction to the inmates of two farmhouses in an English village named Thorneydene. Honeypots Farm has recently been taken by a young stranger, John Gillway, about whom there seems to be a mystery.

His neighbour, Farmer Strange, is a widower with twin daughters, Diana and Kitty, who have been brought up for the most part by a wealthy aunt, Mrs. Caffyn, who is about to take them on the Continent.

Gillway has already fallen in love with Kitty, who was at first pleased by his attentions. She soon wearied of them, but being half afraid of him, makes many promises of fidelity before going abroad with her sister and aunt, which she never intends to keep.

At Capri they meet with Bernard Eliot, nicknamed "the Nabob" on account of his wealth. He speedily wins the affections of all three ladies, but seems to prefer Di's society.

At the end of three months they return to London, and as the two girls have now attained their majority they are given the option of remaining with their aunt or returning to their father for good. Kitty chooses the former and Di the latter.

CHAPTER V.

THE GATHERING OF A CLOUD.

"WELL, there," said Aunt Shales in her sweetest tone of voice. "As I says, an' shall keep on a-sayin' to my dyin' day even if I lives to be a hundred—not as *that's* likely, seein' as I've gone through more trouble an' had more to put up with than anybody'll ever know in this blessed world—*you*, knows what trouble is, Jane, an' I should like to meet with the woman as don't know what it is—that I should—as I was a-sayin' when our Poll sat in the very chair you're settin' in—I'd put on a clean chintzy cover that very day—oh, I can't abide dirt, I can't—an' up and told me as you should call her a born liar, I never did feel so took to. As I says, 'tain't like Jane to go a-callin' her relatives names. Oh, I knows what *you* be, Jane. Course, I didn't make any remark to Poll. She makes enough worrits in the fam'ly, don't she now? But I did say jest to myself like, as 'twas too bad of Poll, seein' how good you'd bin to her."

Miss Jane Shales gave a little snort of righteous indignation and carefully spread out the shining folds of her best black visiting alpaca. She was a thin, highly respectable, if a soured looking woman of five-and-fifty, with well-oiled grey hair, a fine set of white teeth, and a very high colour, that increased at Aunt Shales' words.

"I nursed Poll's children through the whooping cough an' the measles," said she austerely, "an' I am sorry for it. Their mother is the most ungrateful critter."

"So she be, Jane. Oh, she didn't say nothin' to me about *that*, though I did hear as she told Bob's Mary that you mussed up all the med'cines, and gave po'r little Jenny three or four doses of linseed oil an' vinegar what Poll had mixed ready for polishin' the furniture——"

Miss Shales sprang from her seat with an angry exclamation. "*I* do such a thing!" she cried. "Poll must be mad to think it! If ever anybody looked well after children an' saw as they had ther doses right to the very minute by the clock hands, I did.

"Poll's out of her mind to say such a thing about *me*. I on'y wish she'd come in at that door this moment. I'd make her own up to the truth. Linseed oil an' vinegar, indeed; ugh!"

"Oh, she admitted as you didn't go to do it intentional," said Aunt Shales soothingly. "Though, as she said, it might have pisoned the child, an' made her feel a bit anxious, seein' as there was rat pison an' chilblain mixture all on the same shelf. But as our Bob's Mary said to her, 'twas all her fault, considerin' as you can't read an' don't know nothin' about letters and——"

"I mayn't have been born in these days of board schools and sich like," retorted Miss Shales, growing a fine deep purple, "but I've got my share of common-sense, an' I know rat pison an' chilblain stuff from good wholesome physic, no matter how nasty it may taste. I'm not quite a fool, Ann."

"Lawks, you ain't got no need to tell me that," cried Aunt Shales. "Sit you down agin, now do, Jane. The cuttin's 'ull be done to a turn in a minute. You likes 'em brown, don't you? Pork wants to be well fried, or else you may as well put my ole boots on the tea-table for toughness. I tole that Em'ly to bring us in a plate of buttered toast; but I really do believe as that gal's headpiece is as full of holes for lettin' things slip out as a cullender."

Miss Shales gave another snort and looked at the polished range where Aunt Shales was cooking the meat for tea. The sound of the meat hissing and spluttering in the bright pan, the appetising odour that issued from it, and the cheerfully arranged tea-table with its snowy cloth, and shining brown loaf, and yellow pat of butter, induced her to take her hostess's advice. She resumed her seat, and slowly drew off a pair of well-worn black silk gloves.

"Poll's got a bad heart," she observed. "An' she've got on'y herself *an'* her tongue to blame for losin' me for a friend. I did think of givin' little Lottie them pink corals of mine; but I shan't do no sich thing now!"

"Oh, I said as you wouldn't!" declared Aunt Shales as she dexterously turned the pork cuttings from the pan to a hot white and blue dish, drawing back to avoid the spluttering bubbles of boiling fat. "As I up an' said to her; how could she expect as you would after all as she'd said? Oh, I can't abide them folks as is allays a-sayin' as they didn't say this, an' they didn't say the other. Now, Poll's she's one of that sort, she is. What was it she told me about your offerin' to knock her down, Jane? Don't upset your tea. It's jest by your elbow," as her visitor started in surprise.

"Me offer to knock our Poll down?" repeated Miss

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Shales, brandishing her gloves in the air as though they were war-clubs. "Well—I never did!"

"I thought it odd at the time," remarked Aunt Shales, tenderly loading her guest's plate with fried meat. "Take some mustard, Jane, an' eat it up while it's nice and hot. Ah, here's Em'ly with the toast, an' dried up to a cinder, I'll be bound. I never did know your double for doin' things as contrairy as one cross road is to the other. There, don't stand gapin' at me, don't. Put the plate down, an' get on with that bed-tick. You can sit in the gun-room, an' then there'll be no fear of the fire a-goin' out before Mr. John gets back. Is your tea to your likin', Jane?" she asked in tones of deepest solicitude. "Do you take rum in it? A drop from time to time is good for the wind, ain't it? I generally keeps the bottle locked up, for you can't trust that Em'ly not a bit further than you can see her. You got to keep your eyes a-purlin' all the time to be up to 'em, an' then they've got ways of doin' you!"

"I should like to know what our Poll meant by sayin' sich a wicked falsehood," interrupted Miss Shales excitedly. "Me offer to knock her down! Me as can't live as quiet an' peaceable as I should like, an' ain't never raised my hand, except in kindness, against any livin' critter, me——"

"There, I wouldn't upset myself, if I was you," said Aunt Shales, producing the rum-bottle, and eyeing its contents with a suspicious look in her round, rosy face. "You'll only make yourself ill, po'r dear. I wouldn't think no more about it. Help yourself, do, Jane." She watched Miss Shales pour the rum into her tea-cup with a shaking hand, and as she possessed herself again of the bottle, she added with a gloomy shake of her head: "Ah, 'twould be a good thing for our fam'ly if Poll *could* take jest a little less of *this*."

She tapped the bottle with her short, thick fingers.

"I seed how things was goin' when she was takin' tea here in this very room with me before Christmas. She takes too much, between you an' me, Jane. 'Course, *I* didn't say nothin'. You knows what I am for keepin' things to myself like. You're different, bein' po'r Shales' own sister, an' like my own sister, as I may say. I measured the rum in the bottle, afore I gave it to her, with my very eyes, an' I should like you to have seed it after she'd helped herself. I never did like her a-dealin' at them stores where they sells all kinds of bottled stuffs and encourages people in deceitfulness. How's anybody to know what everybody else buys when it all comes home in the grocery basket, and you can't even tell a bottle of vinegar from a bottle of spirits, so artful as they are in wrappin' of 'em up alike. Them stores will be the ruin of Poll. Lawks, Jane, do eat a bit. Feel bad, don't you? ah, I knows what it is to be slandered an' backbit up hill an' down dale, as you may say; but lawks, I ain't dead yet, an' 'twon't kill you neither. Well, here's luck!" she added, raising her tea-cup.

"What should I want to knock our Poll down for, that's what gets over me," said Miss Shales plaintively. "The mussin' up of medicines ain't nothin' to bein' accused of wantin' to fight."

"Oh, I knows what it was for, cause she tole me her own self. 'Twas about that pig affair—she called on you, an' you called her a liar for a-sayin' as you hadn't paid Farmer Strange for your pig, an' you offered to knock her down. So *she* says; but lawks, Jane, I wouldn't demean myself by lettin' sich things worrit me. People as takes a drop too much don't know what they says half their times, that they don't."

"It's very hard on them as have got to suffer by it. I couldn't find my receipt from Farmer Strange for the pig, so I went up yesterday an' asked him to give me another. I've been huntin' and huntin' for that paper for the past three or four months, an' I can't find it nowheres. But I've got one now, an' I mean to go to our Poll and show it to her to-morrow. I shall go after tea, now, an' jest give her a bit of my mind, the spiteful varmint!" declared Miss Shales, growing more embittered against her niece as she thought of her sister-in-law's confidences.

"Help' yourself, do, Jane."

"That I would," said Aunt Shales heartily. "An' jest tell her at the same time as I tole you as she should up an' say as she never said nothin' about the pig. I said I'd tell you, an' I have." She looked at her visitor's almost untouched plate, and bending forward, she touched the spinster's thin arm with coaxing persuasion. "Lawks, Jane, you'll never make ole bones and grin through life if you don't eat enough to keep a flea alive an' kickin'. As I says, let's be happy while we can, seein' as the longest-lived ain't here for ever, an' old as Methusaley was he had to go like the rest of us. So you've been to Greyhouse, have you? Miss Di looks a bit peckish, don't she? She didn't have over much colour when I seed her go by t'other day; but she's a nice gal, oh, she is, an' not a bit uppish like Miss Kitty, who wouldn't so much as pass the time o' day with you. I heard as Miss Kitty ain't comin' here no more. Hard on her po'r father, ain't it?"

"I heard as your master was sweet on her like the rest of the young men about here," said Miss Shales, evidently determined to forget her troubles and interest herself in the inmates of Greyhouse Farm.

"Ah, I've heard the same thing, too, an' I shouldn't be surprised if it was true; for a more melancholy man I've never met in a day's march. He ought to have been a mute at a funeral, that he did. An' never tells me a word about

hisself—oh, not a whisper about nothin', an' thinks no more of goin' away for a week at a stretch, an' never lettin' me know where's to, nor when he's a-comin' home, but just walks in like a ghost at all times of the night and day, an' expects to find everythink ready an' to be made jest as comfortable as if he was a Christian. Oh, he's a tryin' customer is Mr. John." She lowered her voice and asked mysteriously:

"Did our Poll tell you about the fight he had with some man what came to see him just afore Christmas? They had a set to with whips. Ah, there's more than we know a-goin' on in this world, Jane. Some people's got secrets what 'ud bring 'em to the gallows, if everythink was laid as open as my hand!"

She drew her chair nearer to Miss Shales. The two grey heads bent over the tea-tray, and Em'ly, listening at the keyhole, failed to catch the whispered conversation that followed.

Di had returned to Thorneydene with the fixed resolve to forget the Nabob, and to live only for her father. Mrs. Caffyn had raised a few feeble objections against Di's carrying out her resolve; but they had been spoken in such a half-hearted manner that Di had not experienced any difficulty in having her own way. Kitty had cried a little and protested a great deal. She had never been separated from Di, and even to one with her light disposition and fickle character, it was a wrench, this entire separation of their lives.

"I think you ought to know, Di," said Mrs. Caffyn, "that in leaving me you leave the little fortune behind for Kitty, that I always intended to divide between you upon your marriage. Instead of having only fifteen thousand pounds, Kitty will now have thirty."

"I am very glad that Kitty will be so rich," Di answered. "I am grateful for all your kindness to me, auntie. You have always been so good to me, dear, and I am sorry to go away; but I have always thought that it would be cruel to leave dad all alone in his old age."

"Do you intend to become an old maid?" asked Mrs. Caffyn with a laugh. "You are a silly girl, Di. Some day you will be sure to leave your father. You do not belong to that class of women who find happiness in leading lonely, secluded lives. One day, sooner or later, you will repent this quixotic action."

Di was thinking of this conversation as she trudged through the fields two or three days after her return to Thorneydene. The May day was fair and mild, and the buds of the trees were swelling, ready to burst into tender green at the first few days of warm rain.

"I won't repent it," said Di to herself. "Dad is happy at having me, and surely one must find happiness in giving pleasure to others."

But as Aunt Shales had stated, Di was pale, and just a little sad and weary looking. It was not quite so easy to forget as she had imagined. Those kisses of the Nabob seemed to have shadowed her life. She flushed as she thought of them.

"He had no right to kiss me if—if he did not love me," she murmured angrily. "A *good* man, a really good man, would not have done that! He must have seen that I cared for him—perhaps he pitied me—oh, it is humiliating to think of!"

She paused at a stile leading into a meadow. A yellow bank of pale primroses met her eyes, and a faint smile of pleasure parted her lips as she saw the flowers. With so many beautiful objects around her, surely she must find an interest in this new life that she had chosen of her own unbiassed will. When one did one's best to forget, it would, indeed, be strange if forgetfulness did not come. Di climbed the stile, and gathered a large bunch of blossoms.

As she stood near the stile arranging them, John Gillway came striding towards her from his own fields. He looked much older, and the bitter moroseness of his expression had deepened. The deeply engraved lines around his stern mouth looked as though they had been cut into the flesh with a chisel. There was something so stern, and with the sternness such deep unhappiness—such keen anxiety—in his

Di climbed the style.

dark, melancholy face that Di felt a vague, uncomfortable sensation torment her, such as one experiences when reading sorrow and suffering in the eyes of animals, and with pity for their pain and the dumbness that locks their tongues, comes that miserable feeling of impotence to help them or to make them understand that one sympathises with them, and would do anything to help and console them.

He came straight towards her, walking with the air of a man who had an object in view.

"Miss Strange," he said abruptly when he had joined her, and with no other preface than the simple lifting of his cloth cap, "why hasn't your sister returned with you?"

He spoke in a commanding, brusque tone, as though he felt that he had a right to ask the question, and to demand an answer to it. Di started in surprise, and the colour grew in her thin cheeks. But she answered him without hesitation. "She has chosen to remain with our aunt, Mrs. Caffyn."

"But she will return to Thorneydene later on?"

"No; unless it is to visit dad and myself."

Gillway drew in a long, deep breath, and his hand sought his collar. Di remembered the day at Capri when her neck-ribbon had seemed to be too tight, and seeing the man's involuntary action she understood and was sorry for him.

"Not coming back!" he repeated. "Are you sure?"

"Quite sure."

"But she is not yet her own mistress," said Gillway, betraying how deeply he had been taken into Kitty's confidence.

"She was twenty-one a few days ago—upon the twenty-ninth of April."

Gillway bent and looked searchingly into Di's face. The sweet honesty of her lips and eyes did not escape him. But Kitty also had seemed so loyal, and Kitty had deceived him with a cruel deliberation that was wantonness itself.

"Then am I to understand that your sister has chosen to live entirely with Mrs. Caffyn?" he asked quietly, but with a sudden clenching of one strong, brown hand upon the stick he carried.

"Yes."

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"Heavens!" muttered Gillway. "What a blind fool I have been!" he turned his head away and stared with unseeing eyes at the green meadow, the young foliage of the

He pulled his moustache and stared.

trees, and a flock of chattering jackdaws perched in the elms close by. The birds seemed to be mocking him. There was a worldly-wise, sarcastic sound in their muttered confidences to each other, as though they understood that Kitty had lied to him, and mocked his anguish. He looked at Di, and saw the deep pity—the shame—that lay in her eyes, and he laughed savagely.

"I suppose you know the pretty little story," he cried harshly. "Kitty has told you how completely she has succeeded in duping me! Have you ever laughed together at the thought of how I was patiently waiting for her, hungering for a letter that never came, working honestly to make a comfortable home for her—a home that we were to share together—it must have amused you to think of all this! Fools were made to tickle people who've a sense of the ludicrous."

"We never laughed at you. I knew nothing about this," said Di very softly, because of the agony in the man's wild face. "And I am sorry—indeed I am."

The wolfish expression in Gillway's eyes thrilled Di with fear for Kitty. She felt that his love had turned to hatred, and that this hatred was a thing to dread.

"It's not the loss of her love so much," said Gillway. "It's the feeling that I've been worshipping a little paltry soul, and mistook it for my ideal of all that is good and noble in a woman. It hurts to find that one's golden treasure is only gilded tin—and gilded tin of the commonest and cheapest kind. It lowers one's self-respect. You can never feel quite sure about your judgment after such an experience. Is Kitty still in London?" he asked, turning his blood-shot eyes upon Di's pale face.

She hesitated, but her regard did not shrink beneath his stern scrutiny. He saw her reluctance to answer, and laughed bitterly. "Don't feel afraid of telling me, Miss Strange. It is not Kitty who will be harmed by me. At first I felt that it would be pleasant to yield to my savage instinct of revenge; to track her down and do something to her pretty face that would effectually prevent any other man from following in my footsteps. Very brutal, isn't it?"

Di shuddered. What a cruel face Gillway had! How bitter the thoughts must have been that had cut those deep furrows in his cheeks!

"Yes," she answered, "it would be mean and degrading to yield to such feelings. Kitty has wronged you. That is no reason why you should injure her; and if you think her—her—so contemptible, it would be lowering yourself to her standard to try to injure her. I can't express myself very clearly, but I am sure that I am right. It must be more noble to bear pain in silence than to seek revenge upon the person who has hurt you."

"Your theory's all right," said Gillway, "but a man finds more satisfaction in giving his enemy a good kick than he would ever get out of simply offering his hand, and whining that he was going to be noble and forgive, and all the rest of it. If anyone has struck me, I have always struck back—harder, if I could. It's the first time that I've been floored by a woman, and it makes me despise myself."

"It is your own fault," cried Di, with a flash in her eyes. "How could you expect Kitty to honour you when you taught her to meet her clandestinely, unknown to dad and to me?"

Gillway opened his lips to cry some harsh invective against Kitty, but the light in Di's eyes checked the words. He pulled his moustache and stared.

"If you loved her you should have gone straight to dad and told him. Nothing good ever comes from deceit. You say and think bad things about Kitty because she has flirted with you and forgotten you. She is only a girl. You are a man, and older than she, and you should have known better."

"Look here, Miss Strange," said Gillway, passing one hand over his haggard face. "I wasn't going to clear myself; it's a mean trick to throw all the blame upon the woman, and a dirty one, too. But Kitty's conduct is not more free from blame than mine. I wanted her to let me speak to her father. She wouldn't. She was afraid, she said——"

"Kitty's conduct doesn't clear yours," Di retorted with a proud movement of her head. "You are old enough to know right from wrong, and if you deliberately commit a wrong action, you've no right to cry out when you suffer the consequences."

A few drops of rain fell as she spoke. She gathered her skirts around her and bade Gillway a curt good-afternoon. Her heart had quaked with fear; but she exulted as she hurried back home. She had not given him Kitty's address, and to-morrow Kitty and Mrs. Caffyn would be in Yorkshire. They had accepted an invitation to spend a week with the Malets. Gillway looked after the tall, erect figure with an unfriendly light in his gloomy eyes.

"I'll see her again," he muttered, "and if she tells me that Kitty has accepted any other man"—he paused, and added, with a hiss of the words between his teeth—"that man shall pay dearly for robbing me of—my little gilded tin god!"

Di seemed to grow paler in the days that followed, though she won old Betty's praises by her unflagging zeal and industry, and seemed so happy that her father never dreamt of the sleepless nights she passed fighting with her fears for Kitty's safety and her own sorrow. She, too, had loved only to meet with pain and disappointment; but it had not been the Nabob's fault—Di felt sure of that. Only he ought not to have kissed her. Things would have been so much easier to bear had it not been for the recollection of those farewell kisses. She tried to forget them, and was angry because she could not.

Then, as she grew thoroughly interested in her simple duties, her reward came. The image of the Nabob grew fainter and fainter in her memory. The colour returned to her cheeks; she sang as she went about the house. After some time she was able to look back and laugh at her foolishness in believing that she had given her heart to a man who did not desire it.

Kitty's letters were so full of happiness that Di decided to cast no shadow upon her sister's high spirits by mentioning her interview in the fields with Gillway. Di knew that Kitty would be alarmed. Once, in one of those brightly-written letters from Yorkshire, Kitty had asked if Di had encountered the mysterious tenant of Honeypots

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Farm. It was the only reference that she had ever made to him, and Di had passed it by in silence.

Once or twice a week Gillway came to Greyhouse to talk over farming affairs with Farmer Strange, the prices of corn and hay, and the unsatisfactory or satisfactory working of new machinery that the younger man had bought. Di generally contrived to absent herself upon those occasions. When she could not avoid being present she knew that Gillway had a habit of pulling his moustache and looking at her. She manœuvred to give him no opportunity of having a private conversation with her, fearing that he would speak of Kitty.

Farmer Strange did not care for Gillway. The young man's ideas were too modern for him to assimilate. He was so utterly unlike any other man known to the rough farmers, with his interesting descriptions of foreign countries that he had visited and the customs of their inhabitants, that it often seemed to Strange that the young man was a gentleman playing at being a hard-working man, just as Di appeared to him to be a lady masquerading as a dairymaid in her simple cotton dress, and with her shapely white hands that looked too dainty and delicate for the work she imposed upon them.

"I don't want you to do work that a lady wouldn't do," said he for the hundredth time to Di since her return to the farm. "Butter and cheese making ain't in your style, my girl."

"Oh, daddy, how nasty of you to say that!" cried Di, casting a reproachful glance at his thin furrowed face. "Just when Betty has been telling me that I am getting on so well, too."

They were standing in the garden where the flowers were beginning to open to the June sunshine. Di had stripped up the sleeves of her print gown high above her dimpled elbows.

Her father was looking at her pretty, fair arms in disapproval, with a wrinkle between his bushy grey eyebrows.

"It doesn't seem right somehow, Di," said he, rubbing his hollow cheeks in perplexity. "You've been brought up to be a lady, and——"

"I can be a dairymaid and a lady at the same time," said Di, lifting her little dark head proudly. "If I went to a ball I should have my sleeves ever so much shorter—more in this style, dear."

"I can be a dairymaid and a lady at the same time."

With a rapid gesture she rolled her sleeves still higher, and then, turning to her father with a smile, she linked her arm in his, and softly rubbed her cheek against his arm.

"Oh, daddy," she said in a low voice; "you don't know how happy I am to be at home——" she broke off in surprise. A hired fly had stopped at the garden gate, and a gentleman was aiding a little lady in a fawn dress to alight. Di stared at the lady for a second, and then began to pull her father towards the gate.

"It is, Kitty!" she cried. "Kitty and"—she paused, the colour rushed into her cheeks—"and the Nabob!"

Farmer Strange knitted his shaggy eyebrows, and his face assumed its most severe expression. He had never heard of the Nabob. The name was Greek to him. He saw a young, handsome man, with a golden-brown moustache, and particularly smiling, happy eyes that met his own very frankly as he advanced leading Kitty. She was rosy, embarrassed, and more pretty than ever in her light, lace-trimmed gown and large white hat with its soft white plumes.

"Oh, dad! Oh, Di!" she began, and threw herself into Di's arms. "We were married this morning, and, oh, I do hope that John Gillway won't do anything foolish!" she whispered in her sister's ear, while the Nabob was shaking hands and explaining matters to Farmer Strange.

"I feel ashamed of robbing you of Kitty in this underhanded fashion," said he, holding the farmer's rough brown hand and looking him frankly in the eyes. "I wanted to ask you to the wedding, but Kitty was so dreadfully afraid of some ruffian of a farmer coming up to London and making a jealous scene, that I listened to her entreaties to keep our engagement a secret from you. But I made up my mind to see you as soon as the ceremony was over. I felt that I must apologise and make things square, you know. 'Pon my word, I feel quite uncomfortable about it. Didn't seem like treating you with proper respect, sir."

Farmer Strange looked hard at the Nabob, and then at Kitty, whose eyes drooped beneath his regard.

"Kitty is her own mistress," said he; "I hope she's chosen well." He shuffled his feet uneasily, and hid a nervous cough behind one big palm, intimidated by this fine gentleman, with his well-gloved hands and diamond breast-pin.

John Gillway fell into utter insignificance compared with the Nabob.

"When were you married?" he asked awkwardly.

"I've just told Di that we were married this morning," cried Kitty. She kissed her father heartily. "Why, you haven't spoken to Di! She looks dumb with surprise," she added, giving her husband a little playful push.

Di tried to command her voice, as she laid her hand in the Nabob's. There was simple brotherly affection in his eyes.

"I am surprised," she admitted. "I—I—hope you will be happy."

"Thank you, Di," the Nabob said heartily, as he wrung

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A gentleman was aiding a little lady . . . to alight.

her hand; "I knew we should have your good wishes. What a jolly old place! Can you put us up for a week or two?" he asked Farmer Strange. "I should be so glad if you would. I don't want you to think that I'm going to deprive you of my little wife. If it would be agreeable to you, we should like to spend our honeymoon in Kitty's old home."

Farmer Strange looked steadily at his son-in-law, measured him from head to foot, coughed and rubbed his ill-shaven chin. That Kitty had married a gentleman did not astonish him. Had she married a Prince of the royal blood it would not have seemed odd to him. But that this fine gentleman should be anxious to make the acquaintance of Kitty's father, and should propose staying beneath the humble farm-roof did amaze Farmer Strange. He admired his son-in-law for his lack of pride, but he did not feel comfortable as visions arose before him of the necessity of removing his hob-nailed boots before venturing into the "parlours," where naturally Kitty and her husband would live. The Windsor arm-chair in the kitchen was more to his taste than the finer chairs in the "parlours." And from the kitchen window he could see the men passing by in the big yard, while the windows of the other rooms looked into the garden.

"We are not going to change your daily routine," said the Nabob reading the hesitation and doubt in the farmer's face. "If you have bread and cheese for dinner, we shall eat the same fare, and enjoy it, too, I'll be bound!"

"Bread and cheese! How foolish you are, Bernie!" cried Kitty, hanging upon her husband's arm, and smiling into his sunny face. "Whatever made you think that they ate bread and cheese at home?"

"Well, I hoped they did," answered the Nabob. "I like bread and cheese, with one of those big, sweet, juicy lettuces, fresh from the garden, don't you know. One gets so jolly tired of dinners of ten courses! What do you call those big lettuces—Roman's or Coss?"

"We calls 'em Coss lettuces," replied Farmer Strange, giving another perplexed glance at his son-in-law. "In summer time," he added, "we lives in the kitchen. There's three parlours in the house, but I never did take kindly to a parlour. Don't feel at home in one. Still, I've no doubt you do, and Kitty. I know *she* does, so if you like to use 'em——"

"Of course we shall!" Kitty interrupted. Her face had grown scarlet, and her imploring eyes said to Di: "Oh, do stop him, do, *please* stop him!"

She threw a furtive look at her husband, afraid of seeing shame and amusement in his expression. She felt so very ashamed of her poor old father with his blunders, and his want of tact, and his shabby, ill-fitting clothes. She had tried playfully to depict him to her husband when she had discovered how utterly impossible were all her efforts to dissuade him from visiting Greyhouse Farm, and she was immensely relieved to see that he was watching her father with kindly sympathy and good humour.

"We shan't put you to any inconvenience, Di?" asked the Nabob. "I'm afraid I must seem pretty cool to marry Kitty in this sly way, and then to spring a surprise upon you, and to come begging for a fortnight's hospitality. But if we shall put you out——" he paused, and smiled affectionately at Di. She was a little pale, but she had entirely recovered her self-possession.

"Do pull your sleeves down! You look like a housemaid!" whispered Kitty.

Di pulled mechanically at her sleeves. A look of relief came into her father's face. He had never thought it possible that anyone could feel ashamed of himself; but he had felt ashamed of Di being caught by Kitty and her husband in a common cotton gown and with naked arms.

"Put us out!" he cried in his content at seeing Di's pretty arms hidden respectably from sight. "Not a bit of it! Come 'long in! We'll drink a bottle of good wine to your very good healths, an' many of 'em."

Kitty and her husband entered the house, and Di, feeling like a person walking in her sleep, went into the kitchen to consult old Betty about providing accommodation for their guests. She thought of Mrs. Caffyn, and with her wonderment pity mingled itself.

(To be continued.)

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NOTE.—This contest closes on Saturday, June 19th, but there is only a limited number. You should, therefore, send early. You are bound to get a prize if you are correct in the six names. Should more than one prove correct, the money will be divided. Try for one or more of the ten £5 prizes; though you may not be first, your letter may be FIRST OPENED.
The names and addresses of the ten £5 prize winners, together with full particulars of the prizes, results, etc., will be dispatched on Monday, June 21st, 1897.

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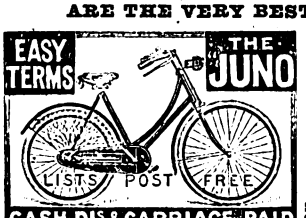

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Answers to Correspondents.

H. G.—Taking Europe as a whole, there are many more people engaged in the pursuit of agriculture than in manufacture. Always inclose a stamped envelope with your letter if you want an immediate reply.

Well-wisher writes to point out with reference to a paragraph that appeared in a recent number of *Short Stories* that not only is it possible to coin silver and bronze at the Mint simultaneously, but, taking the year throughout, there is seldom a time when either gold or silver, or silver and bronze are not being coined at the same moment.

G. B. B.—That your idea is a good one is assured by the fact that we were already busy developing the identical scheme when your letter arrived. Thanks for writing, all the same.

Miss S. T. — Gloves, I should say. Nearly thirty-seven million pairs are used in this country every year, which is about equal to one pair for every person.

H. K.—Winchester College is the oldest public school in this country; it was founded in 1393.

A. N. W.—Very few English churches have a surpliced choir of women choristers.

A Constant Reader. — The Royal Standard is divided into four quarterings, two being assigned to England, one to Scotland, and the other to Ireland. The latter consists of an azure ground, bearing on it a harp or stringed argent.

C. C. H.—Stockings made from human hair are supposed to be the best preventative for wet feet. They are used by fishermen on certain parts of the French coast. I should not like to vouch for their comfort, however.

L. M.—It was unfortunate for you that your attempt was posted without an address. But you may comfort yourself with the knowledge that about 26,000 other letters are posted in England every year without addresses.

Wax.—There is no doubt but that more wooden matches are made in Sweden than in any other country.

R. B. — The largest congregation of ancient people seems to exist at a little village in France, named Aumona. There are only forty inhabitants, twenty-three of whom are eighty years of age, and one is over a hundred. This rather puts your village into the shade, doesn't it?

T. C. D.—There is twenty times the amount of unmined coal in China than there is in all Europe. Your baby is certainly intelligent. It is not the only one to appreciate *Short Stories*.

V. B.—Yes, the effects of frost differ widely. Under its influence, eggs will burst, apples contract, and potatoes turn black.

D. C.—Chinese women are not allowed to act upon the stage.

H. M.—The average length of a man's stride is thirty and a half inches. When he gets a prize in *Short Stories* it is forty-five.

W. B.—A penny changes hands about 125,000 times in the course of its life. The publications issued from this office are directly responsible for over 50,000,000 single pennies changing hands in a year.

B. S.—You will find the cod to be about the most digestible of fish—and also about the most tasteless.

G. F.—Our foot gear is certainly by no means a small item in our yearly expenditure. More than half a million is expended in this country every year on boot blacking.

H. S.—The harp is the Queen's favourite instrument, and I agree with you that it is a pity it is not more popular. Probably this is due to the expense of the instrument, and the difficulty of attaining proficiency. If you think of studying the harp you must be prepared for sore finger-tips, but it is well worth the trouble.

W. W.—There is no rhyme to *virtue*. About 5,000 other words in the English language have no rhyme to them. Glad to hear you like the *Athletic Record*. Persevere in the theatre ticket competition. The seats are quite worth trying for.

H. G. H.—No, butter was not always a recognised article of food. It was used by the ancients as an ointment, in the same way in which we should use cold cream or vaseline, and the idea of eating it never occurred to them.

Jack Tar.—The custom amongst sailors of piercing the ears probably arose from a superstition that wearing earrings is beneficial to weak eyes.

T. H.—The climate of Britain is so very changeable that it would be difficult to say which is the wettest month, for the driest month in one year is quite as likely to be the wettest in the next. On the average, however, the greatest depth of rain falls in October and the least in February.

D. S. C.—No, our voices do not sound the same to us as they do to other people. This has been proved by means of the phonograph.

Suspicious.—There are plenty of ways of testing whether milk is pure or has been watered. Try this one: dip a knitting needle vertically into the fluid, and if after carefully withdrawing it you find a drop remains at the end of the needle the milk is pure. If, on the other hand, there is no drop, you may rest assured the milk has been adulterated.

B. C.—Women are less prone to insanity than men. No, we do not accept verses for *S.S.*

P. O. B.—Hibernia was an ancient name for Ireland.

Rollo.—The difference between "hard" and "soft" water lies in the fact that hard water contains a certain amount of earthy salts, whilst soft water is free from them, and in a greater state of purity generally.

Mannikin.—No, a fog does not impede sound as well as light.

W. S.—It is difficult to say whether animals dream or not. We do not understand their language, and so cannot ascertain by personal inquiry. Judging from the way in which some horses neigh, and dogs bark and growl in their sleep, I should say that they most probably do.

G. L. M.—The birds of the New World certainly possess most brilliant plumage, but their powers of song for the most part are a long way inferior to the less assuming British birds.

G. R.—A really good glass eye is an expensive article. The actual manufacture costs something like £10. But it will last a lifetime—barring accidents.

E. R.—I never give medical advice. You had better consult your doctor on the matter.

Stylites.—St. Bartholomew's is the oldest hospital in London. It was founded in the year 1123. The other matter you mention was referred to in this column a few weeks ago.

C. H.—The House of Commons has met on Sunday several times when urgency has demanded it.

F. A. T.—(1) "The American Emperor" will run in *Pearson's Weekly* until Whitsuntide. (2) Yes, we shall probably publish the other story to which you refer. (3) The other paper was first published in June, 1888; *Pearson's Weekly* in July, 1890.

E. C.—There are already several chainless bicycles on the market. The best known, perhaps, is the "Acatene." Messrs. Spink, of Piccadilly, are reliable numismatists.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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SHORT STORIES
EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)
No. 438. FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 22ND, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

"Experience the Best Teacher."

(Advice to a Friend.)

When you lie awake and fretting
At those love-sick cats duetting
Through the livelong night—
Head and hands with fever burning,
What a lesson you are learning—
Vainly for a "BEECHAM" yearning
Through the livelong night!

Let this be a solemn warning;
Wait impatiently for morning
Through the livelong night!
Then as quick as thought, be sure you
Get some "BEECHAM'S PILLS" to cure you;
They will certain rest assure you
Through the livelong night.

"BEECHAM'S PILLS" with magic power
Sleep on sleepless eyelids shower
Through the livelong night!
"BEECHAM'S PILLS"—where Duke reposes,
Or where humble crofter dozes,
Make their bed a bed of roses
Through the livelong night.

"BEECHAM'S PILLS," like fairy maiden
Coming with rich blessings laden,
Charm away our ills!
Beauty shines in sunken eyes,
Health returns and sickness flies;
Earth becomes a paradise
All through "BEECHAM'S PILLS."

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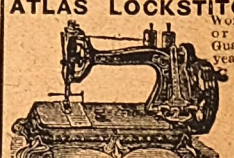

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Send **2/6** to **THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.**

No. 438.] For the Week ending May 22nd, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

THE BURGLAR NEXT DOOR.

I DO not love my neighbour as myself. Although in the habit, as a rule, of conducting my life according to Christian precept, I find this command impossible to carry out—except in theory.

My neighbour is a wrong-headed and prejudiced person, whose ideas on politics and other matters differ entirely from my own. Furthermore, he is constantly making himself disagreeable about small things, for instance, the fence between our gardens, which he declares I cause to be repaired with unnecessary frequency.

Again, in spite of my known dislike of noise, he insists on encouraging the organ-grinder to play for hours at a time before his dwelling. Besides all this, he overlooks my house to such an extent that I am obliged to keep the blinds of my staircase window constantly closed. This very materially interferes with my comfort, as it excludes a large quantity of light and air, which, by rights, should be mine.

In spite of all these just causes of complaint, however, I would not allow any harm to come to my neighbour that I could prevent. At least, I felt so until a short time ago. I think differently now. I have had a lesson I shall never forget, and if ever I put myself to any trouble again to save him from disaster, I am not the highly intelligent man I know myself to be. It came about in this way.

Once every year my neighbour takes his entire family away for a holiday. His house remains untenanted for a month—a blessed month for me. I spend it revelling in an extra quantity of air and light and a blissful cessation of grind-organ thrills and chords. It is not surprising, therefore, that I long for this happy period to arrive as ardently as do my neighbour's children, who are apt to discuss the event for days beforehand in shrill voices most trying to the cultivated ear.

Judge of my delight, therefore, when early the other morning, having been attracted to the window by the noise of wheels, I beheld an omnibus draw up before my neighbour's house. The annual departure was about to take place. Into this vehicle I saw my neighbour, with the patient and resigned air of a family man, hand his wife, three excited children, one bawling baby, six bandboxes, an Irish nurse, and a puppy. He then entered himself, and the whole party drove off.

They say to watch people out of sight brings them bad luck. I had not time, in any case, to do this. Hastily waving my hand in the direction of the omnibus as it rolled away, I rushed to the staircase window, threw open the blinds with a vehemence that upset a pet geranium of Emilia's that stood upon the window-seat, and admitted a flood of glorious sunshine into my dwelling.

I had another exquisite pleasure a little later in the day, when the piano organ man took up his usual station beneath my neighbour's windows. I allowed him to play for about an hour, then sent out my servant to say the gentleman who lived in No. 57 was out of town, and that if he, the organ-grinder, showed himself in the neighbourhood again for upwards of a month, I would send for the police and have him arrested as a public nuisance. I knew I would have no right to do anything of the kind, but counted on the man's not knowing enough to be aware of this. It proved to be the case. He moved off with astonishing celerity. Ignorance—in other persons—is, indeed, frequently productive of bliss.

It happened that three days after this, Fate, which is for ever meddling in our affairs (domestic or otherwise), ordained that I should have a little disagreement with Emilia, which materially assisted in bringing about the unpleasant events which followed. Emilia is my wife. She has a pretty face, and a mind of average calibre, which has become greatly strengthened since our marriage by constant intercourse with a superior one.

Emilia, who allows herself to be very behind-hand in keeping up with the literature of the day, had been reading Mr. Bodkin's account of the adventures of Alfred Juggins in *Pearson's Weekly* for the first time.

She was quite charmed with them, and began talking with a great deal of enthusiasm about the detective and his marvellous powers. I, who make it a rule to keep up with the times in the literary world as well as in everything else, had, of course, read the stories.

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I had been much interested in Alfred Juggins myself at the time, but when Emilia went wild about him in this extravagant way, I discovered I did not think so much of his powers after all. Emilia is frequently of assistance to me in this manner in the forming of my opinions.

I now pointed out to her that Mr. Alfred Juggins's doings were really not at all out of the ordinary. He did no more than any man of intelligence could have done equally well. Given the same premises, any person of even an ordinary amount of mind could have reached the same conclusions.

"I don't know about that," said Emilia.

"I assure you it is a fact," replied I.

"I'd like to have you prove it to me," said she.

"I have no doubt I could easily do so," I responded.

"Well then," said Emilia pugnaciously, "if you think yourself equal to Alfred Juggins, look at me and tell me what I've been doing all the morning? That would have been a trifle to him."

"Nonsense!" said I, "that's no way to argue. Like all women, you are totally unable to stick to the point."

"You can't do it," remarked Emilia triumphantly. "You are as incapable of observation as he was the reverse. Now, look at me well. My hair is ruffled, there are scraps of lace and silk adhering to my dress, and even an atom of straw, and my face wore a pleasant expression until you made me cross. Why, Alfred Juggins would have known in a minute that I'd been trimming a bonnet."

"Confound Alfred Juggins!" said I, abruptly terminating the conversation, which bored me.

It was the night after this that, with the intention of retiring to bed, I put out the light in the hall below and started up the staircase. I generally sit up late, and it was after one o'clock. Emilia had bidden me good-night some hours before, and the house was quiet from top to bottom. Halfway up the steps I paused, attracted by the brilliancy of the moon, which shone directly through the staircase window, the blinds of which I had so triumphantly fastened open on the day of my neighbour's departure. It gave me pleasure to recall the delights of that moment, and I leant out and gazed upon my neighbour's belongings with keen satisfaction.

All was still.

The old servant, who had been left in charge of the house, slept in the detached kitchen building at the rear—a half-deaf old creature whom I knew well by sight, as he frequently causes me intense annoyance by beguiling my coachman into gossiping with him over the garden wall, and thus wasting his time—which belongs to me.

I remained at the window for some time, for I became interested in observing the state of my neighbour's premises. The moon shone so brightly that I could see with great clearness the badly kept state of his back-yard and garden. Weeds running riot over everything, the garden gate off its hinges, the bricks, which should have marked the sides of the path, uprooted and scattered. Altogether, a most disgraceful condition of things.

I mentally compared it with my own well-kept grounds, and thought how true it was that the superiority of a highly intelligent man shows itself in all his belongings.

I had seated myself on the window-sill and was beginning to feel sure I was right in thinking I saw a broken pane of glass in one of the attic windows, when my attention was attracted by a slight noise in the direction of the street. It sounded like a person gently fumbling with a bunch of keys, or jingling instruments of some kind. All grew quiet again, and then, to my amazement, I saw a head slowly rising above the wall which separates my neighbour's front garden from the street.

Then a leg was put slowly and cautiously over, and in a moment the owner of these two articles stood safely on the ground. I leant forward, keeping carefully in the shadow, and watched for further proceedings.

The man looked all about him, then walked softly towards the house, and appeared to be measuring with his eye the height of the balcony. Apparently he was satisfied with his observations, for, mounting upon the lower railing, he embraced one of the posts and quickly clambered up to the second storey.

I considered what I should do. Here was clearly an individual who had nefarious designs upon my neighbour's property. It was my duty, as a man and a fellow citizen, to prevent the carrying out of his villainous schemes. My first impulse was to give the alarm and attract the attention of the police, and I was on the point of putting this idea into execution, when the memory of that little conversation with Emilia, which I have already repeated, flashed into my mind. Here was an excellent chance to confute her, utterly and entirely—a grand opportunity. I would secure this person myself without calling upon the aid of the law, and thus prove that I was as fully capable of tracking and skilfully overthrowing the designs of the wicked as any detective of them all, Alfred Juggins into the bargain. I therefore remained motionless, and observed with an eagle eye the movements of the burglar.

He walked slowly along the upper balcony until he reached a window opening into a back room. The sash of this he noiselessly threw up and then lightly vaulted into the room, and in the intense stillness of the night, I could hear him gently stepping across the floor.

I decided to allow him time to become a little confident before I acted, in hopes that I would be able to take him by surprise. I calculated that he must be aware of the empty condition of the house, and would, therefore, fancy himself secure and take his time in the selection of his spoils. I was strengthened in this belief by the fact of his lighting the gas in the room he had entered, turning it very low, and closing the shutters immediately after to prevent the light being seen from without.

I thought the time had now arrived for making my own preparations. I must first arm myself, and then get out of one of my own downstairs windows into my neighbour's garden. When there, my further proceedings must depend on circumstances. I should either follow him into the house or be ready to confront him on his exit with a loaded pistol. I preferred the latter plan, as I am not the sort of person to enjoy climbing up a balcony-post.

First and foremost, I must procure my pistol. I ascended the stairs on tiptoe, hoping not to arouse Emilia. She must know nothing till the feat was actually accomplished, and I could overwhelm her with the evidence of my *coup d'état*.

I was reflecting whether I should march my prisoner at the pistol's point into my own bathroom for the night or hand him over to the police immediately, when I discovered to my dismay, that Emilia was sitting up and reading a paper. I recognised it at once. It was *Pearson's Weekly*. She was again absorbed in the doings of Alfred Juggins. I hoped she was too interested to notice what I was after, but unfortunately she looked up as I was lifting down my pistol from the shelf where I kept it.

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"What is the matter?" she cried in an alarmed tone.

"Nothing," I replied shortly. "Go on with your paper."

"What are you going to do with that?" she asked obstinately.

"My dear child, you are very curious," I replied warily, knowing Emilia's capabilities for making a scene. "However, if you must know, I am taking it to—to oil it."

I moved towards the door and had my hand on the latch, when Emilia called out timidly: "William."

"What?" said I sharply.

"You—you are not thinking of committing suicide, are you?"

This was too much. "Emilia," said I. "Your amount of childish folly really amazes me. *Am* I the sort of man to commit suicide?"

Emilia confessed that I was not.

"Then, for goodness' sake," said I, "leave me alone," and I left the room. As Emilia was quite capable of following me if the fancy seized her, and that would spoil all, I took the precaution of gently turning the key in the lock as I passed out.

I made my way softly downstairs again, and, with as little noise as possible, climbed through the pantry window into my neighbour's garden. The burglar was evidently hard at work, for I could hear muffled sounds from behind the closed blinds.

"Go ahead, my friend," I remarked satirically under my breath. "Enjoy yourself while you can. The day of reckoning is at hand."

Presently the noises ceased, and all grew still. I sat down beneath an unsteady arbour of honeysuckle vines which commanded the balcony and waited patiently. The fellow must be making up quite a goodly bundle, I thought, as two o'clock chimed from the clock in the church tower down the street. I waited fifteen minutes longer and began to grow impatient. I wondered if the burglar could possibly have seen me and made his escape from the other side of the house. The very idea made me angry, and I decided to lose no more time, but investigate the matter at once.

I therefore put my pistol in my breast-pocket and resolutely approached the balcony-railing, which I mounted. I chose the same post that the burglar had used, supposing he had probably made a good selection, and grasping it in my arms I began to climb. My principal feeling, as I made my way scrambling and slipping towards the upper railing, was extreme thankfulness that Emilia could not see me at the moment. A final effort and I thankfully felt solid planks beneath my feet once once.

Advancing to the window through which the burglar had made his entrance, I found that the shutters were unbolted and that I could open them with ease. I did so, and cautiously peered into the room beyond. It was in darkness, except for the moonlight, but by the help of this I could see tolerably distinctly. The room to all appearances was empty. The burglar, after completing his search here, must long ago have penetrated further into the house.

I carefully got in through the window and advanced into the room. I was about to leave it by the door into the hall, which was slightly ajar, when, happening to cast my eyes in the direction of the bed, I paused, scarcely able to suppress an ejaculation of surprise. Lying back amongst the pillows the outline of a man was distinctly visible in the moonlight, and even as I looked a slight snore broke the silence.

My blood boiled with indignation at the calm impertinence of the thing. The villain, after finishing his rascally work, must have been attracted by the comfortable appearance of the bed, and, with cool audacity, have decided to give himself a little rest after his labours.

"I have you now, my friend," I thought, and without pausing for further reflection I sprang upon the sleeper, and, in spite of his resistance, for he awoke immediately and began to struggle desperately, I gagged him with my pocket handerchief and got his hands and feet tied together with a skipping rope, which one of my small neighbours, under the direction of Providence, I supposed at the time, had left in a conspicuous position on the floor. Then, not waiting in my elation for a second glance at the creature, I flew through the window, skimmed rapidly and unpleasantly down the post, and precipitated myself through the pantry window into my own dwelling.

Triumphantly I rushed upstairs, and noiselessly unlocking the door of the room where I had left Emilia, (I had never felt quite sure as to whether she was ever aware of her imprisonment on that occasion or not), I faced her with victorious mien. She dropped her book and gave a little scream as I appeared. It is a curious fact that reading about murders at midnight is sufficient to upset a woman's nerves.

"Emilia," said I, "I was obliged to deceive you a short time ago for your own good. I needed that pistol for a desperate purpose. Don't be alarmed. You see me safe before your eyes; but for the last two hours I have been on the trail of a bloodthirsty ruffian who entered the house next door, with, who knows, what horrible intentions. Thank goodness, alone and unaided I have succeeded in capturing the villain. I have now only to put him in the hands of the law, where he will meet with the fate that he so richly deserves."

I then proceeded to give her a clear account of the whole adventure, being particularly impressive on the subject of the dangers I had gone through and the sagacity I had displayed.

Emilia listened with visible interest from the first, but as I went on she displayed an attention which caused her to sit upright and immovable in her chair. When I had finished she remained in the same position for a moment, and then, sinking back against the cushions, she said slowly: "William, do you know what you have done? You have committed an assault upon—you have tied and gagged in his own house—your neighbour!"

"What?" cried I, scarcely taking in what she meant.

"You don't know what you are talking about. My neighbour went off to the country a week ago with his family."

"He came back without them this morning," said Emilia. "I saw him arrive."

The full horror of the situation began to force itself upon me.

"You saw him arrive?" I repeated helplessly.

Emilia nodded her head emphatically.

"And why didn't you mention the fact?" said I furiously.

"I never dreamt you'd take an interest in it," replied Emilia warmly. "You certainly couldn't expect me to imagine the possibility of any such utterly absurd occurrence as this. Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! It's too ridiculous!—it's perfectly killing! Oh, dear! Oh, dear! You've broken into another man's house and gagged him and tied him up with, who knows, what horrible intentions. Oh! Oh! If I don't stop laughing, I shall die. Oh!"

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Emilia buried her face in her hands and giggled and screamed with laughter in a most underbred manner. It was not nice of her, considering that she was the cause of the whole disgusting adventure. I told her so, but she only laughed the more, and I heard her murmuring something about bloodthirsty ruffian and the hands of the law. It irritated me.

"But, Emilia," said I, "if this is true, why should he have entered his house in such a very unusual manner? You must be mistaken." I grew bolder as I reflected on the highly suspicious entrance the gagged gentleman had made.

"Why, he must have lost his latch-key, of course," said Emilia, still laughing absurdly, "or left it in another pocket or put it on his other bunch. The poor thing's wife is away, you know. And if a man hasn't the right to enter his own house through the windows, if he wishes, this isn't the land of liberty it's supposed to be. Oh! if I had only seen you scrambling up that post. Oh, dear! Oh dear!"

"Emilia," said I, "please be serious. It is childish in the extreme to give way to laughter in that uncontrolled manner. You don't realize how desperate the case is. He'll work off that gag in a few minutes and begin calling for help. The neighbourhood will be alarmed, and the whole thing will get out. I shall be a laughing-stock for the entire population."

I had hardly done speaking when a most unearthly yell echoed through the air.

"You hear," said I, getting up and rushing wildly up and down the room. "It's only a question of time I tell you. It's only a question of time!"

The screams continued, each one more ear-piercing than the last.

"Had I better rush over and pretend to know nothing about it?" I asked in an agony.

"Oh, no, no!" said Emilia, with a giggle. "You ought to see your clothes. Post-climbing doesn't agree with them. They'd give you away utterly. Wait a moment, and see what happens."

I was forced to take her advice. For a few minutes the screaming was kept up, then came an interval of silence, and then we heard an angry voice vituperating in excessively strong language, and a thinner, weaker one in tones of surprise and interrogation. The old servant had apparently come to the rescue.

I had a moment of intense relief. The neighbourhood was quiet. No one gave signs of having been disturbed. Perhaps I should never be suspected. It was more than probable, that in that moment of wild struggling, my neighbour had not recognised me any more than I him. Oh, blessed thought! followed by fresh agony.

"Emilia," I cried, "my handkerchief! I used it for a gag. Oh! I am done for! I am lost! My name will be discovered, and everything will get out."

Emilia considered. "If it's one of your new ones," she said, "I forgot to have them marked."

I refrained from rebuking Emilia for having neglected a domestic duty.

I passed a miserable and unpleasant night. I could not sleep, for my mind kept constantly recurring to the angry tones of my neighbour's voice. My spirits sank as I thought of the footprints leading to my pantry window.

I felt thankful duelling had gone out of fashion. I would not like Emilia to be left a widow. I went down to breakfast in a most uncomfortable frame of mind. I could not give my attention to the morning paper, and the muffins seemed to have lost their flavour.

A door slamming made me jump, and the tinkle of the door bell caused me perfect agony. Emilia was calm, cool, and collected. I reflected on the cold-bloodedness of women where they themselves are not personally concerned.

As we were finishing breakfast (Emilia showed a remarkably good appetite and ate most heartily—and heartlessly), the dreaded moment came. The servant, after answering a loud peal at the bell, returned with a card, and remarked that the gentleman who lived next door would like to see me for a moment. I went through a second of agony, such as I hope never to experience again.

"Shall—shall I say I'm not at home?" I was foolish enough to ask Emilia.

She smiled provokingly. "Certainly not," she answered. "Show the gentleman in, Thomas, and bring in some hot muffins."

"One moment, Thomas," said I, "is—is the gentleman alone?"

"Quite soliterry, sir," answered Thomas reassuringly.

"Put a bold face on the matter," said Emilia, when Thomas had left the room. "Look as if you knew nothing about the matter, and be very much surprised at everything he says."

Her eyes twinkled, and even at that moment I could not refrain from reflecting on the natural hypocrisy of women. Thank goodness, deceit is not so easy to a man!

The door opened and the gentleman from next door entered the room. I realized that he was at least three inches taller than I had supposed him to be.

"This is, indeed, a pleasure," said Emilia, holding out her hand and smiling brightly. "Please sit down and let me give you a cup of tea. Thomas, the muffins!"

My neighbour shook hands with me, accepted a chair and smiled at my wife People are apt to smile at Emilia. I don't know why.

"I must apologise," said my neighbour, "for this early intrusion. I am aware that there is nothing that needs apology more than this untimely invasion of other people's houses."

He casually glanced at me; my sensations were unpleasant.

"But I have come to confer with you, Mr. Willoughby, on a most unpleasant topic, which, I may remark, concerns us both deeply."

Cold chills permeated my entire being, but I forced myself to appear polite.

"Sir!" continued my neighbour with vehemence. "Last night as I lay on my bed asleep, in an empty house, for my family are at present away from home, my dwelling was entered by a murderous rascal who half throttled me before I awoke. In spite of my desperate resistance, he gagged me and tied me hand and foot. I have no doubt he intended to despoil the entire house, but, fortunately for me, he must have heard some sound that frightened him, for he had no sooner taken his hands from me than he disappeared like a whirlwind through the window and escaped by the balcony posts."

"You don't say so!" cried Emilia sympathetically. "The action of a villain, indeed, was it not William?"

"The rascality of the deed amazes me!" I replied brokenly, feeling Emilia's eye upon me.

"You may truly say so," continued my neighbour. "It is a nice state of things, certainly, when a peaceful householder is liable to be attacked and murdered in his own bed. By Jove! if I could get the scoundrel by the neck, I'd soon show him which was the better man

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standing. The cowardly villain! to spring upon me in my sleep!"

"Cowardly, indeed!" said Emilia warmly. "What sort of looking man was he?"

"I haven't a very good idea," replied my neighbour. "I only know he was a tall man, say of about your husband's height," casting his eye critically at me as he spoke. "He had a most murderous and malicious appearance—as thorough-paced a rogue as I ever saw."

I heard a slight titter from Emilia.

"I should say, too, from his dexterity," continued my neighbour, "that he was very much in the habit of climbing about balconies. I came over to put you on your guard. The garden is trampled over with footsteps, and some of these lead directly to one of your windows." (I quaked.) "This has led me to imagine that he must have intended breaking into your house also, but finding the window too strongly bolted, abandoned the attempt."

Thrice blessed moment! I could scarcely keep my countenance from becoming wreathed in smiles on hearing this charming supposition. I was safe! I even waved my hand to Emilia when my neighbour was looking the other way.

"The question now is what steps we are to take in the matter?" observed my neighbour. "Had I better put the case in the hands of a detective?"

"Oh, no, indeed!" cried I. "You have no idea how very unpleasant it would be."

"I think so myself," replied my neighbour.

"Much better leave the matter alone," I continued urgently. "Nothing was stolen, and it really doesn't matter in the least who did it. It was only a trifle anyhow."

"Trifle? Do you call it a trifle?" cried my neighbour indignantly. "It's a pretty trifle, to be sure, when a man is half murdered in his sleep. Trifle? It's anything but a trifle, I assure you."

"Of course," said I hurriedly. "I wasn't thinking of what I said."

"However," said my neighbour, "I suppose there's no use taking any steps in the matter. There's really very little to go on. I don't suppose I'd ever find the man," he ended disappointedly.

"No, not the slightest chance," said I delightedly. "Let us consider the incident as ended. A fine day, isn't it?"

"Well, I'll say good-bye," said my neighbour dejectedly. "If you are really of that opinion I suppose you are right, but I should like another chance at the fellow."

My neighbour rose. So did my spirits.

"Wait a moment," said Emilia. "I have something to suggest. I think decidedly something ought to be done in the matter."

I looked at Emilia in surprise. She had the mischievous twinkle in her eye with which she so frequently exasperates me.

"I have been thinking about the matter," she said, "and I believe that if that burglar ever comes back at all, it will be to-night."

"To-night?" said my neighbour.

"Yes," said Emilia. "It is the most unlikely thing in the world that such an attempt should be repeated the very night after its failure. A burglar would run an awful risk, if he should try it. Therefore, you don't think it necessary to take any precautions, because you are perfectly sure he wouldn't dare to attempt it. Now the burglar knows all this perfectly well, therefore, this is exactly the night he is going to choose to try the thing again, because he knows the chances are you'll be taken unawares."

"There is certainly something in what you say, Mrs. Willoughby," said my neighbour. "Now I think of it, I see you are quite right."

"Now, what I should advise," continued Emilia, "is that you and Mr. Willoughby should sit up to-night over at your house and be ready for the man when he comes. Sitting in a dark room, you will find it easy to spring upon him as he enters and secure him."

"An excellent scheme, Mrs. Willoughby," said my neighbour, visibly brightening. "Allow me to congratulate you on your judgment."

"Oh! that is nothing. I have been reading some detective stories recently," said Emilia modestly.

I looked gloomily and disapprovingly at Emilia. She is entirely too fond of a joke. I have never been able to see any amusement in things of the sort.

"Then I may count on you for to-night, Mr. Willoughby?" said my neighbour.

"Of course," said Emilia quickly. "There is nothing Mr. Willoughby enjoys more than a midnight adventure—is there, William?"

I tried my best to get out of it, but Emilia, who was completely off her head, gave me no chance to say a word. She settled the whole matter, and before I knew where I was, I was engaged to sit up all night in the company of my detestable neighbour. That is Emilia's idea of a joke!

"Well, I'll expect you at eleven," said my neighbour, and he took his leave.

While I went with him to the door, Emilia took the opportunity of putting on her hat and leaving the house through the back gate. It was an intelligent thing to do.

Such an abominable night I hope never to pass again. I shall always remember it against Emilia. Seated in the dark and obliged to listen to my neighbour's prosy talk, not even able to fall asleep in my chair, because of his numerous questions; I very nearly acknowledged to myself that Emilia had got the best of it.

At twelve o'clock Emilia sent over a tray with some coffee; also a pistol, the carving knife, and a pair of razors, with a message that she could not bear to think of my meeting the desperado insufficiently armed.

"How charmingly thoughtful of Mrs. Willoughby!" observed my neighbour. I said nothing, but added this to several other little things I have against Emilia.

At daybreak, worn and weary, my neighbour, in much disappointment at the failure of his hopes, released me, and I left his premises by the front door, which seemed an unnecessary lengthy way compared with the pantry window.

"Emilia," said I sternly, on reaching home, "you have had a good deal of amusement out of this affair. But I want you to understand one thing. You know me, I believe, to be a man of my word?"

Emilia assented, if silence means consent.

"Then mark my words!" I continued solemnly, "if you ever mention one of the events of the last two nights to a single living soul, I pack my bag and depart for Terra del Fuego at once."

Emilia promised silence, and I believe up to the present time has kept her word.

I have ceased attempting to strengthen her mind, however. She has intelligence enough already—for a woman!

LILLI HUGER SMITH.

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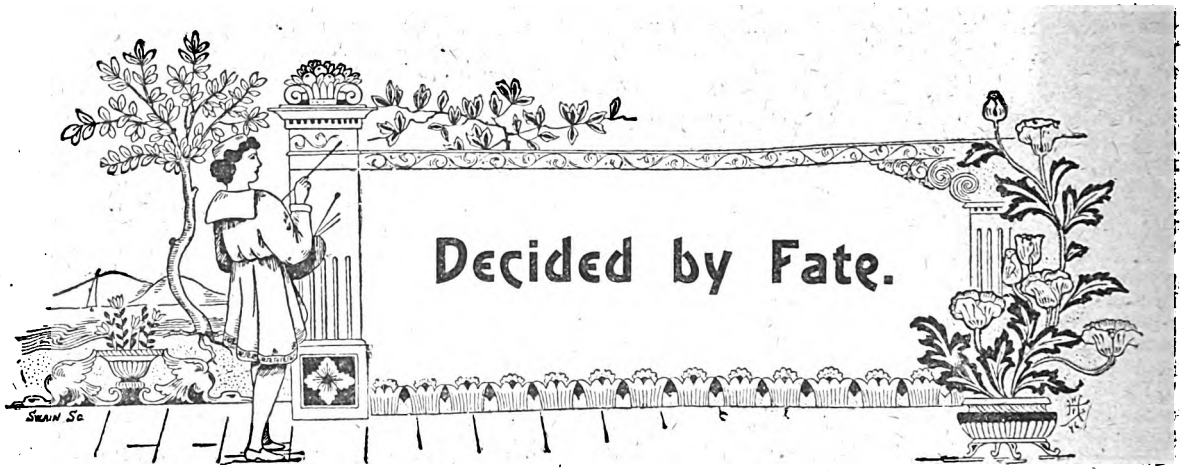

FATE was a cat and Leonard Herrick was a mouse. There had been some rare sport, but Herrick was of the opinion that it could not last much longer.

He had run this way and that way, and a thousand times he had fancied he was going to escape. But always the velvet paws, with the long, sharp claws springing out of them, had caught him just in time. So at last he lay still, panting, not knowing which way to turn.

He was in a big city all alone. The people who rushed by him were like the thoughts that whirled through his brain; they were shadows, and the everlasting train of them had no beginning or end.

He could not distinguish the real men and women whom he saw from those whom he merely remembered. Now and again there appeared in the throng the faces of the dead. He did not mind those, but there were others that he shrank from.

He stood with his back against the iron fence near St. Martin's Church. There was just light enough in the western sky to give the pile of stone a shadow, which fell upon hurrying thousands who did not notice it.

Herrick's hands were in his pockets. He jingled a few coins which meant that he could live several days longer if he cared to do so. As to a more extended future, he could not picture it. All the lines of his life seemed to end in a knot, which could by no means be untied, but must merely be dropped. He remembered that there were miracles, but he could not think of one to wish for.

He crossed Trafalgar Square and walked down Pall Mall, slowly and with hesitating steps, for he had no errand. A voice cried: "Cab, sir!" almost in his ear. He turned and looked up at the man on the box.

"Is it possible," he said to himself, "that I still look like a gentleman?"

He felt towards the cabman as towards one who had given him a helping hand. Why not pay the debt? To do so would cost him only a day of his life. He had about a sovereign in his pocket.

"Yes," he said as he got into the cab; "Frascati's."

It was the first place that had come into his mind.

The cushioned seat and the comfortable support for his head were very refreshing. A fancy came to him that he would dine decently and then go to a theatre. The extravagance would be trifling, for it was really of small importance whether he starved to death on Sunday or the following Wednesday. He was in a mood to make a jest of it.

A strong glare from an electric light flooded the cab and made visible to him a package in brown paper, that looked as if it might be a sandwich. The object protruded from under the seat. He thought it must be the cabman's supper, which had been hidden in some small locker and had fallen upon the floor. The idea that the food should be spoiled was disagreeable to Herrick, and so he picked up the little brown bundle.

It was smaller than he had supposed, and it did not feel like bread. But had it been food and he at the last pang of starvation, the touch of it would not have sent such a thrill through all his frame.

He knew that the contents of that packet was money. It felt like a mass of notes folded, awkwardly wrapped up, and fastened with elastic bands. Through the brown covering Herrick could feel the crispness of the government paper. The amount might be a poor man's hard-earned savings or a rich man's profit on a great transaction.

As to his own conduct in the matter, Herrick had no doubt whatever. Fate had thrown this money into his hands and Fate might take it away, but not if he could hold on tightly enough. His fingers trembled as he picked at the elastic bands. Suddenly, and without his knowing why, the rubber strings vanished with a loud snap that startled him, and the package sprang open on his knees.

He bent forward, eagerly scanning the notes in his hands, and counted them feverishly. There were forty of them, and each was £100.

Throughout the latter part of the young man's misfortunes he had had substantially but one wish—to rest. Rest has many forms, suited to a vast variety of individual tastes. To Herrick in his day dreams it had always taken the form of travel without care. All paths lie open to a man who has £4,000, and there is no reason why care should sit behind him as he rides.

Herrick had only the most shadowy thought for the person who had lost this money. He did not even speculate upon the manner of its loss. It had passed into the control of one who needed it, and that was enough.

He placed the notes in his pockets in the best interests of comfort and safety. Then he folded up the brown

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paper and pocketed that also, with a dim consciousness that if it were left in the cab it might get the driver into trouble.

The fellow was honest, no doubt, and Herrick did not wish that he should suffer a wrong. He preferred to keep the wrapper himself, and take the risk of it until he could find some means of disposing of it that would be safer than throwing it out of the cab window.

How to leave the cab was a question that concerned him greatly. He did not wish to confront the driver again, for there might be an investigation, and the question of identification might arise, in which case it would be well to have the man know as little as possible of Herrick's personal appearance. He reflected with satisfaction that the place in Pall Mall where he had entered the cab had been rather dark.

He decided not to complete his journey. Thrusting half-a-crown through the trap-door he sprang out and disappeared in the crowd.

He walked back to a small hotel in a street off Pall Mall, ordered a meal, and ate it with a relish. It was enchanted food. It was the fare of an Atlantic liner, the delicacies of European hotels, and the fruits of the tropics.

He cared little for his bed. It would be no more than a place to lie and think of the future. It was many a night since he had really slept. Certainly, with so much upon his mind, he could not sleep this night, even if he should try.

So, when he had been shown to his room in the hotel, he piled his pillows against the headboard of the bed, and reclined against them, fully dressed. He was very happy. No question of right or wrong in what he had done, or what he expected to do, came to torment him. For a long time he had borne his life like a tremendous burden. This had suddenly slipped from his shoulders, leaving his natural powers benumbed.

The next morning he found himself in a Metropolitan train going citywards.

His pockets were bulging with money, but there was something in one of them that he could not remember to have put there. He pulled it out, and found it to be the brown paper wrapper that had contained the money. As he held it in his hand it was concealed by his newspaper. No fellow-passengers could see it, and it was doubly fortunate, because, in plain sight upon the paper, were the name and address:

"Herbert Graham, 57, Broad Street, E.C."

The train was just stopping at Mark Lane. That was the station nearest the steamship office. Thrusting the brown paper wrapper back in his pocket, he left the carriage, and went with the throng up the street.

He was thinking about the accommodations he would choose on the steamer. He continued to think of that and kindred subjects, yet he walked back towards the Bank. Presently he found himself asking a lift boy in a big building if he knew where Mr. Graham's office was.

Mr. Graham happened to be in his outer office when Herrick entered. He was pouring out a story into a grey-haired Exchange man, and Herrick heard a few words of it—something about cabs, and cash, and carelessness.

"I have found the money that you lost," said Herrick. "Here it is."

The banker sprang to his feet, clutching the notes in his fingers. "My dear fellow, tell me all about it."

"There's nothing to tell," replied the young man. "I merely found it in the cab."

Mr. Graham eyed him a moment in surprise.

"You take it coolly," he said.

"I couldn't take it at all," responded Herrick, with a feeble smile. "I don't know why. It was instinct, I suppose. My ancestors must have been honest men."

"Upon my word, you must take one of these notes," said the banker. "I've offered it in an ad., and——"

"I can't do it," said Herrick. "I don't feel it to be right."

"But, my dear boy," exclaimed the old man kindly, "I must do something for you. I want to; believe me. At least come back and take lunch with me. Shall we say one o'clock?"

"It will give me great pleasure," said Herrick; and, bowing, he turned away and walked out of the office.

He didn't keep his appointment, however. He spent his last shilling in prussic acid. Fate decided it.

EVERETT HOLBROOK.

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2nd PRIZE	A Ten-Pound Note.
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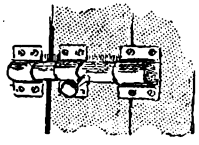
BELOW you will find ten pictures. Each represents the name of a Peer of the Realm. The title alone is indicated, not the family name.

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your lists until you are told to send them in.

Don't be discouraged if you cannot solve them all. Others may be no more clever than yourself. Send in fifty-five, or fifty, or even fewer.

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of six must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.

No. 21.....



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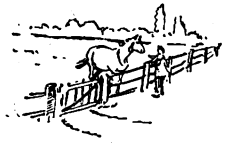

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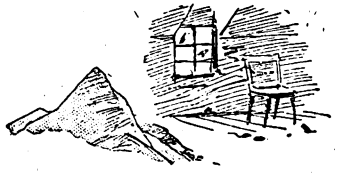

No. 26.....

No. 27.....

No. 28.....

Remember these Things.

YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the titles of the people. The family names are not depicted.

Name.....

Address.....

No. 29.....

No. 30.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of Peers.—Whitaker's Almanack, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

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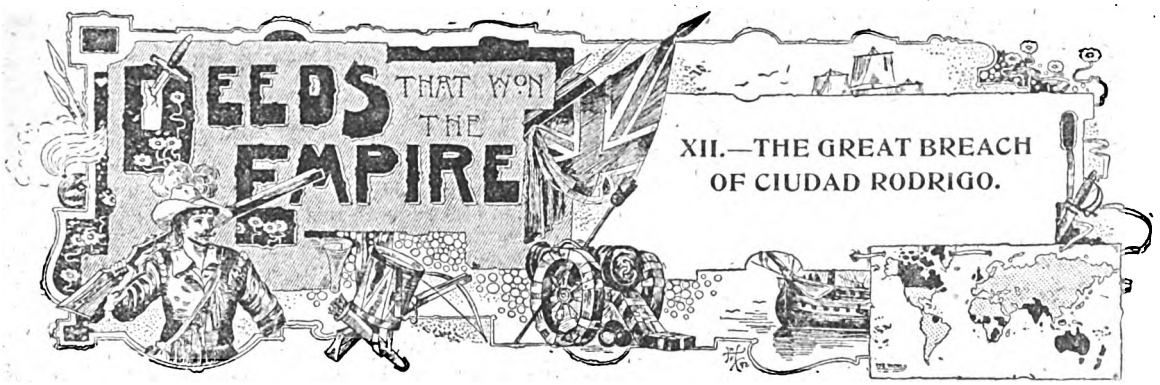

THE three great and memorable sieges of the Peninsular War are those of Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajos, and San Sebastian. The annals of battle record nowhere a more furious daring in assault or a more gallant courage in defence than that which raged in turn round each of these great fortresses. Of the three sieges, that of Badajos was the most picturesque and bloody; that of San Sebastian the most sullen and exasperated; that of Ciudad Rodrigo the swiftest and most brilliant.

A great siege tests the fighting quality of any army as nothing else can test it. In the night watches in the trenches, in the dogged toil of the batteries, and the crowded perils of the breach, all the frippery and much of the real discipline of an army dissolves. The soldiers fall back upon what may be called the primitive fighting qualities—the hardihood of the individual soldier, the daring with which the officers will lead, the dogged loyalty with which the men will follow.

As an illustration of the warlike qualities in our race by which empire has been achieved, nothing better can be desired than the story of how the breaches were won at Ciudad Rodrigo.

At the end of 1811, the British and the French were watching each other jealously across the Spanish border. The armies of Marmont and of Soult, 67,000 strong, lay within touch of each other, barring Wellington's entrance into Spain. Wellington, with 35,000 men, of whom not more than 10,000 were British, lay within sight of the Spanish frontier.

It was winter time; Wellington's army was wasted by sickness, his horses were dying of mere starvation, his men had received no pay for three months, and his muleteers none for eight months; he had no siege-trains, his regiments were ragged and hungry, and the French generals confidently put the British army as for the moment out of consideration.

And yet at that precise moment, Wellington, subtle and daring, was meditating a leap upon the great frontier fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo, in the Spanish province of Salamanca. Its capture would give him a safe base of operation against Spain; it was the great frontier base for the French; the whole siege equipage and stores of the army of Portugal were contained in it.

The problem of how, in the depth of winter, without materials for a siege, to snatch a place so strong from under the very eyes of two armies, each stronger than his own, was a problem which might have taxed the warlike genius of a Cæsar. But Wellington accomplished it with a combination of subtlety and audacity simply marvellous.

He kept the secret of his design so perfectly that his own engineers never suspected it, and his adjutant-general, Murray, went home on leave without dreaming anything was going to happen. Wellington collected artillery, ostensibly for the purpose of arming Almeida, but the guns were transhipped at sea and brought simply to the mouth of the Douro. No fewer than 800 mule carts were constructed without anybody guessing their purpose.

Wellington, while these preparations were on foot, was keenly watching Marmont and Soult till he saw that they were lulled into a state of mere yawning security; and then, in Napier's expressive phrase, he "instantly jumped with both feet upon Ciudad Rodrigo."

This famous fortress, in shape, roughly resembles a triangle with the angles truncated. The base looking to the south is covered by the Agueda, a river given to sudden inundations; the fortifications were strong and formidably armed, as outwards it had to the east the great fortified convent of San Francisco, to the west a similar building called Santa Cruz, whilst almost parallel with the northern face rose two rocky ridges called the Great and Small Teson, the nearest within 600 yards of the city ramparts, and crowned by a formidable redoubt called Francisco.

The siege began on January 8th. The soil was rocky and covered with snow; the nights were black, the weather bitter. The men lacked entrenching tools. They had to encamp on the side of the Agueda furthest from the city, and ford that river every time the trenches were relieved. The 1st, 3rd, and Light Divisions formed the attacking force; each division held the trenches in turn for twenty-four hours.

Let the reader imagine what degree of hardihood it took to wade in the grey and bitter winter dawn through a half-frozen river, without fire or warm food, and under a ceaseless rain of shells from the enemy's guns, to toil in the frozen trenches, or to keep watch—while the icicles hung from eyebrows and beard—over the edge of the battery for twenty-four hours in succession.

Nothing in this great siege is more wonderful than the fierce speed with which Wellington urged his operations. Massena, who had besieged and captured the city the year before in the height of summer, spent a month in bombarding it before he ventured to assault. Wellington broke ground on January 8th, under a tempest of mingled hail and rain; he stormed it on the night of the 19th.

He commenced operations by leaping on the strong work that crowned the Great Teson the very night the

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siege began. Two companies from each regiment of the Light Division were detailed by the officer of the day, Colonel Colborne, for the assault.

Colborne (afterwards Lord Seaton)—a cool and gallant soldier—called his officers together in a group, and explained with great minuteness how they were to attack. He then launched his men against the redoubt with a vehemence so swift that, to those who watched the scene under the light of a wintry moon, the column of British spanned the ditch, shot up the glacis, and broke through the parapet with a single movement.

The accidental explosion of a French shell burst the gate open, and the remainder of the attacking party instantly swept through it. There was fierce musketry fire and a tumult of shouting for a moment or two, but in twenty minutes from Colborne's launching his attack every Frenchman in the redoubt was killed, wounded, or a prisoner.

The fashion in which the gate was blown open was very curious. A French sergeant was in the act of throwing a live shell upon the storming party in the ditch, when he was struck by an English bullet. The lighted shell fell from his hands within the parapet, and was kicked by the nearest French away in mere self-preservation; it rolled towards the gate, exploded, burst it open, and instantly the British broke in!

For ten days a desperate artillery duel raged between the besiegers and the besieged. The parallels were resolutely pushed on in spite of rocky soil, broken tools, bitter weather, and the incessant pelting of the French guns.

The temper of the British troops is illustrated by an incident which George Napier—the youngest of the three Napiers—relates. The three brothers were gallant and remarkable soldiers. Charles Napier, in India and elsewhere, made history; William, in his wonderful tale of the Peninsular War, wrote history; and George, if he had not the literary genius of the one, nor the strategic skill of the other, was a most gallant soldier.

"I was a field officer of the trenches," he says, "when a 13in. shell from the town fell in the midst of us. I called to the men to lie down flat, and they instantly obeyed orders, except one of them, an Irishman and an old marine, but a most worthless, drunken dog, who trotted up to the shell, the fuse of which was still burning, and striking it with his spade, knocked the fuse out. Then, taking the immense shell in his hands, brought it to me, saying:

"'There she is for you, yer 'anner; I've knocked the life out of the crater!'"

The besieged brought fifty heavy guns to reply to the thirty light pieces by which they were assailed. Day and night the bellow of eighty pieces boomed sullenly over the doomed city and echoed faintly back from the nearer hills, while the walls crashed to the stroke of the bullet. The English fire made up by fierceness and accuracy for what it lacked in weight; but the sap made no progress, the guns showed signs of being worn out, and although two apparent breaches had been made, the counterscarp was not destroyed.

Yet Wellington determined to attack, and, in his characteristic fashion, to attack by night. The siege had lasted ten days, and Marmont, with an army stronger than the British, was laying within four marches. That he had not appeared already on the scene was wonderful.

In a general order issued on the evening of the 19th Wellington wrote: "Ciudad Rodrigo *must* be stormed this evening." The great breach was a sloping gap in the wall at its northern angle, about a hundred feet wide. The French had crowned it with two guns loaded with grape; the slope was strewn with bombs, hand-grenades and bags of powder; a great mine pierced it beneath; a deep ditch had been cut betwixt the breach and the adjoining ramparts; and these were crowded with riflemen. The Third Division, under General Mackinnon, was to attack the breach, its forlorn hope being led by Ensign Mackie, its storming party by General Mackinnon himself.

The lesser breach was a tiny gap, scarcely twenty feet wide, to the left of the great breach; this was to be attacked by the Light Division under Crauford, its forlorn hope of twenty-five men being led by Gurwood, and its storming party by George Napier.

General Pack, with a Portuguese brigade, was to make a sham attack on the eastern face, while a fourth attack was to be made on the southern front by a company of the 83rd and some Portuguese troops.

In the storming party of the 83rd were the Earl of March, afterwards Duke of Richmond, Lord Fitzroy Somerset, afterwards Lord Raglan, and the Prince of Orange—all volunteers without Wellington's knowledge.

At seven o'clock a curious silence fell suddenly on the battered city and engirdling trenches. Not a light gleamed from the frowning parapets, not a murmur arose from the blackened trenches. Suddenly a shout broke out on the right of the English attack; it ran, a wave of stormy sound, along the line of the trenches. The men who were to attack the great breach leapt into the open. In a moment the space betwixt the hostile lines was covered with the stormers, and the gloomy, half-seen face of the great fortress broke into a tempest of fire.

Nothing could be finer than the vehement courage of the assault, unless it were the cool and steady fortitude of the defence. Swift as was the upward rush of the stormers, the race of the 5th, 77th, and 94th regiments was almost swifter. Scorning to wait for the ladders, they leapt into the great ditch, outpaced even the forlorn hope, and pushed vehemently up the great breach, whilst their red ranks were torn by shell and shot. The fire, too, ran through the tangle of broken stones over which they climbed; the hand-grenades and powder-bags by which it was strewn exploded.

The men were walking on fire! Yet the attack could not be denied.

The Frenchmen—shooting, stabbing, yelling—were driven behind their retrenchments. There the fire of the houses commanding the breach came to their help, and they made a gallant stand.

"None would go back on either side, and yet the British could not get forward, and men and officers falling in heaps choked up the passage, which from minute to minute was raked with grape from the two guns flanking the top of the breach at the distance of a few yards. Thus striving and trampling alike upon the dead and the wounded, these brave men maintained the combat."

It was the attack on the smaller breach which really carried Ciudad Rodrigo; and George Napier, who led it, has left a graphic narrative of the exciting experiences of that dreadful night. The Light Division was to attack, and Crauford, with whom Napier was a favourite, gave him command of the storming party.

He was to ask for 100 volunteers from each of the three British regiments—the 43rd, 52nd, and the Rifle Corps—in the division. Napier halted these regiments just as they had forded the bitterly cold river on their way to the trenches.

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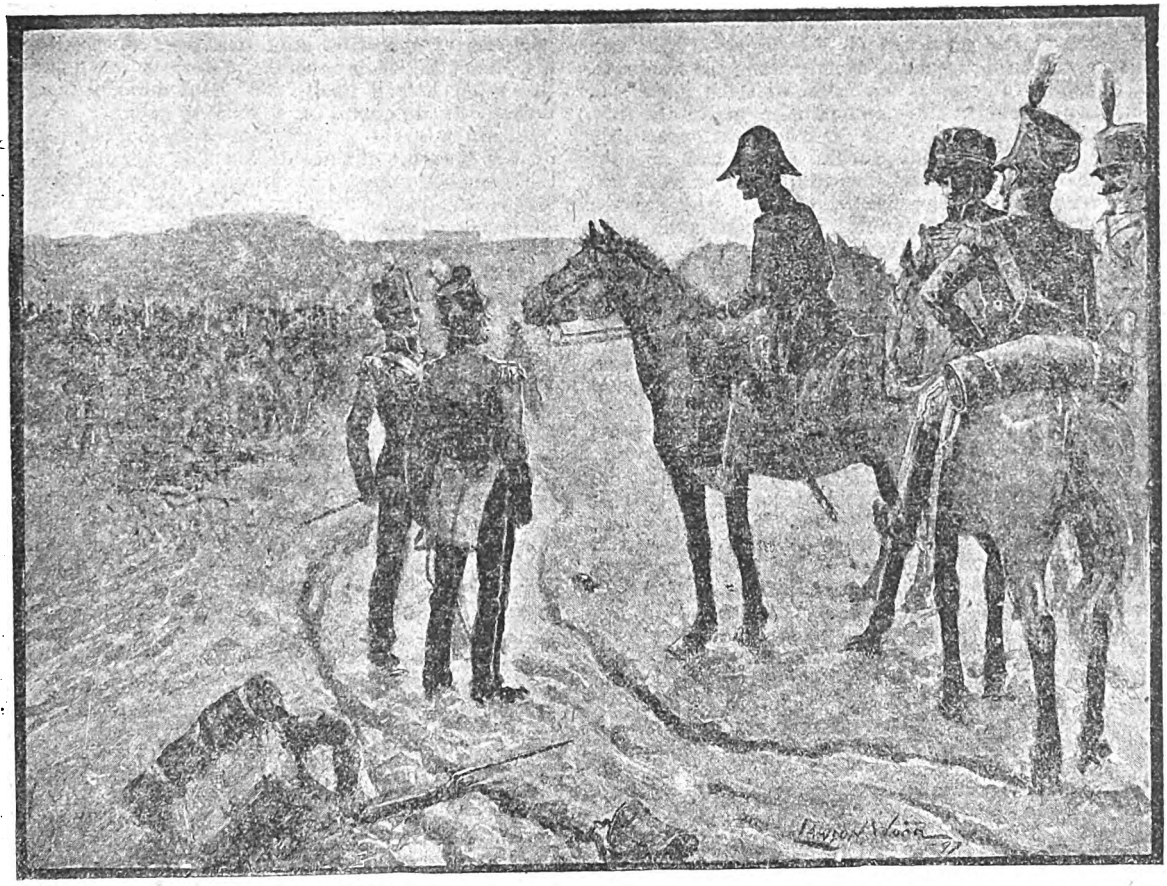

"Let him alone," said Wellington. "Let him go his own way!"

"Soldiers," he said, "I want a hundred men from each regiment to form the storming party which is to lead the Light Division to-night. Those who will go with me come forward."

Instantly there was a rush forward of the whole division, and Napier had to take his 300 men out of a tumult of nearly 1,500 candidates. He formed them into three companies, under Captains Ferguson, Jones, and Mitchell; Gurwood, of the 52nd, led the forlorn hope, consisting of twenty-five men and two sergeants. Wellington himself came to the trench and showed Napier and Colborne, through the gloom of the early night, the exact position of the breach.

A staff officer looking on said:

"Your men are not loaded. Why don't you make them load?"

Napier replied:

"If we don't do the business with the bayonet we shall not do it at all. I shall not load."

"Let him alone," said Wellington. "Let him go his own way!"

Picton had adopted the same grim policy with the 3rd Division. As each regiment passed him, filing into the trenches, his injunction was:

"No powder! We'll do the thing with the *cold* iron."

A party of Portuguese carrying bags filled with grass were to run with the storming party and throw the bags into the ditch, as the leap was too deep for the men. But the Portuguese hesitated, the tumult of the attack on the great breach suddenly broke on the night, and the forlorn hope went running up, leapt into the ditch, a depth of eleven feet, and clambered up the steep slope beyond, while Napier with his stormers came with a run behind them.

In the dark for a moment the breach was lost, but found again, and up the steep quarry of broken stone the attack swept. About two-thirds of the way up Napier's arm was smashed by a grapeshot, and he fell. His men, checked for a moment, lifted their muskets to the gap above them, whence the French were firing vehemently, and, forgetting their pieces were unloaded, snapped them.

"Push on with the bayonet, men!" shouted Napier, as he lay bleeding. The officers leapt to the front, the men with a stern shout followed; they were crushed to a front of not more than three or four; they had to climb without firing a shot in reply up to the muzzles of the French muskets.

But nothing could stop the men of the Light Division.

A 24-pounder was placed across the narrow gap in the ramparts; the stormers leapt over it, and the 43rd and 52nd, coming up in sections abreast, followed; the 43rd wheeled to the right towards the great breach, the 52nd to the left, sweeping the ramparts as they went.

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Meanwhile the two other attacks had broken into the town, but at the great breach the dreadful fight still raged, until the 43rd, coming swiftly along the ramparts, and brushing all opposition aside, took the defence in the rear. The British there had, as a matter of fact, at that exact moment pierced the French defence.

The two guns that scourged the breach had wrought deadly havoc amongst the stormers, and a sergeant and two privates of the 88th—Irishmen all, and whose names deserve to be preserved—Brazel, Kelley, and Swan—laid down their firelocks that they might climb more lightly, and, armed only with their bayonets, forced themselves through the embrasure amongst the French gunners.

They were furiously attacked, and Swan's arm was hewed off by a sabre stroke; but they stopped the service of the gun, killed six of the French gunners, and held the post until the men of the 5th, climbing behind them, broke into the battery.

So Ciudad Rodrigo was won, and its Governor surrendered his sword to the youthful lieutenant leading the forlorn hope of the Light Division, who, with smoke-blackened face, torn uniform, and staggering from a dreadful wound, still kept at the head of his men.

In the eleven days of the siege Wellington lost 1,300 men and officers, out of which 650 men and sixty officers were struck down on the slopes of the breaches. Two notable soldiers died in the attack—Crauford, the famous leader of the Light Division, as he brought his men up to the lesser breach, and Mackinnon, who commanded a brigade of the 3rd Division, at the great breach.

Mackinnon was a gallant Highlander, a soldier of great promise, beloved by his men. His "children," as he called them, followed him up the great breach till the bursting of a French mine destroyed all the leading files, including their general. Crauford was buried in the lesser breach itself, and Mackinnon in the great breach—fitting graves for soldiers so gallant.

Alison says that with the rush of the English stormers up the breaches of Ciudad Rodrigo "began the fall of the French Empire!" That siege, so fierce and brilliant, was, as a matter of fact, the first of that swift following succession of strokes which drove the French in ruin out of Spain; and it coincided in point of time with the turn of the tide against Napoleon in Russia. Apart from all political results, however, it was a splendid feat of arms. The French found themselves almost unable to believe the evidence of their senses.

"On the 16th," Marmont wrote to the Emperor, "the English batteries opened their fire at a great distance. On the 19th the place was taken by storm. There is something so *incomprehensible* in this that I allow myself no observations."

Napoleon, however, relieved his feelings with some very emphatic observations.

"The fall of Ciudad Rodrigo," he wrote to Marmont, "is an affront to you. Why had you not advices from it twice a week? What were you doing with the five divisions of Souham? It is a strange mode of carrying on war."

This is the end of this series. Next week we shall start a fresh series under the general heading:

"Men Who Made the Empire,"

By MR. GEORGE GRIFFITHS.

Result of "Short Stories" Picture Puzzles

(No. 1 SERIES).

23 Prizes Offered; 32 Awarded.

No one succeeded in forwarding an absolutely correct list. Two competitors sent lists with only two solutions incorrect. The first of these to be dealt with came to hand from

P. F. LARKMAN, 23, Weltje Road, Hammersmith, W.,

who therefore receives the first prize of £20, the second prize of £10 going to

R. STEPHENS, 34, Buckingham Street, Aylesbury.

Thirty competitors forwarded lists with only three mistakes, and to these the prizes have been awarded according to the order in which they were dealt with. Third prize of £5,

Miss A. CONRADI, 334, City Road, E.C.

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W. R. May, 6, Ringmer Avenue, Munster Road, Fulham; G. E. Pescud, 99, Fairfoot Road, Bow, E.; Miss Batterbury, Berkhamsted; L. O'Callaghan, 17, Alma Road, Monkstown, co. Dublin; E. Storey, 17, Dale Street, Burslem, Staffs; E. A. Goudge, 480, Seven Sisters Road, N.; Mrs. D. L. A. Dove, St. Michaels, Sunbury-on-Thames; Miss. J. McLellan, 166, Great Hamilton Street, Glasgow; Miss M. Faunthorpe, Elmfield, Bromley Common, Kent; E. D. Clark, 30, Chelsham Road, Clapham, S.W.

Nine Consolation Prizes of 10s,

O. Holman, Cliffnook, Newark; Miss G. Clark, 30, Chelsham Road, Clapham, S.W.; W. E. F. Walker, 25, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, W.C.; J. J. Cowhey, 13, Haydock Road, Liscard, Cheshire; E. Goodwin, Goat Street, Haverfordwest, S. Wales; A. F. Northcote, Holmwood, Streatham, S.W.; J. J. Cowhey, 13, Haydock Road, Liscard, Cheshire; A. J. Smithers, Elm Road, Green Street, Green, Orpington, Kent; F. T. Price, 55, Lowesmoor, Worcester.

The correct list is as follows:

1st Set.	2nd Set.	3rd Set.
1. Butcher	11. Wickham	21. Abel Smith
2. Hart Dyke	12. Pennant	22. Monckton
3. Maple	13. Ferryman Bowles	23. Dunn
4. Webster	14. Austin	24. Ashton
5. Gorst	15. Baker	25. Firbank
6. Coghill	16. Bass	26. Jonathan Samuel
7. Brigg	17. Wingfield Digby	27. Horniman
8. Woodhouse	18. Gully	28. Cochrane
9. Martin Dane	19. Bill	29. Hutchinson
10. Carson	20. Arch	30. Weir

4th Set.	5th Set.
31. Howell	31. Willoughby de Eresby
32. Holburn	32. Pickard
33. Phillpotts	33. Newdigate
34. Fisher	34. Wylie
35. Holland	35. Hall
36. Owen	36. Strutt
37. Green	37. Daly
38. More	38. Hatch
39. M'Cartan	39. Spicer
40. Curran	40. Darling

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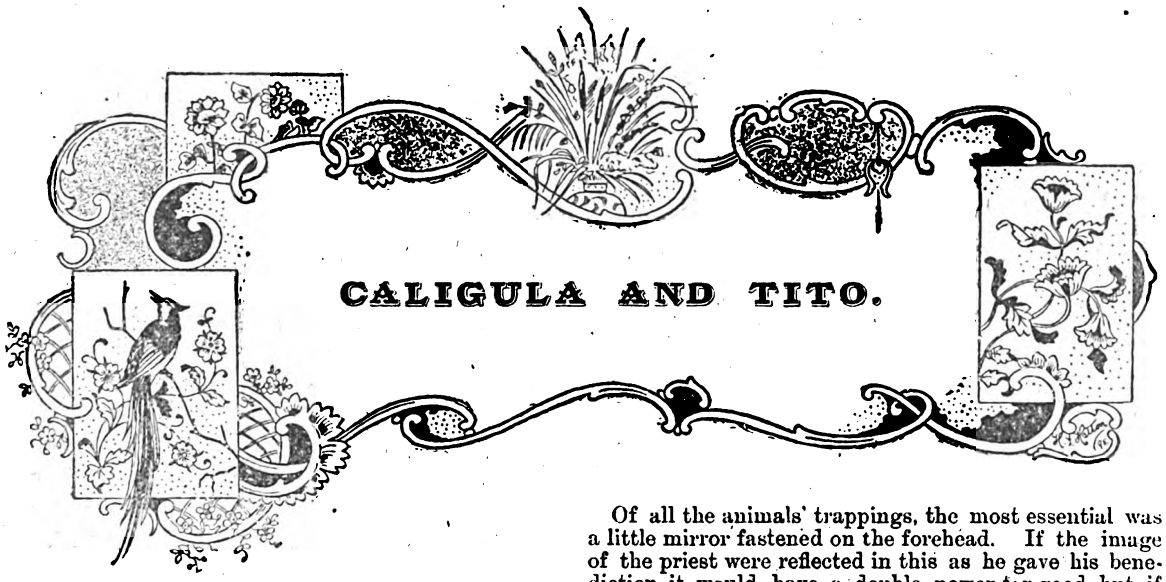

CALIGULA AND TITO.

I.

It was the eve of the feast of St. Antonio, and Oreste Lavigni, the handsomest muleteer in Nervi, by Genoa, was busily grooming Caligula, more familiarly known as 'Gula, who was also the handsomest mule in Nervi. True, he had a somewhat dangerous rival in Tito, and thereby hangs the tale which follows.

Tito was the property of Beatrice Foscetta, who was not only the prettiest girl on the countryside but a proprietress to boot, since she was an orphan, and had inherited from her parents a snug little farm some distance up the valley and all the live-stock, the gem of these last being the rival of 'Gula. Oreste and Beatrice had been friends since the time when they had run barefooted and bare-legged on the sands at Nervi, chasing the waves back to the sea, and then fleeing in childish mock terror from them as they rolled back up the beach.

If Oreste had had his way they would now have been something much nearer and dearer than playmates, but Beatrice, although only twenty, was a young lady of a distinctly practical turn of mind, and although no other of her many suitors had ever been given the slightest reason to believe that she would choose anyone else, still, when Oreste himself pressed the question, she told him plainly that she had no intention of confiding herself and her property to a man who was too lazy to work at his father's trade, and preferred to dress himself up and trust to the effect of his smartness and good looks on the English and American ladies who hired Gula and himself for excursions into the mountains. There were ill-natured gossips who said her objection was not altogether founded on worldly prudence, but be that as it may, Beatrice had certainly spoken so plainly on the subject that in the end they were hardly on speaking terms.

Now, the great function of the feast of St. Antonio was the blessing of the animals by the priest in front of the little church up the valley. The good man's words and the dash of holy water that he sprinkled over them would protect them from sickness and accident for the whole year, and so, naturally, the occasion was worthy of the greatest pains on the part of their owners.

Of all the animals' trappings, the most essential was a little mirror fastened on the forehead. If the image of the priest were reflected in this as he gave his benediction it would have a double power for good, but, if not, it was a bad omen. Now Oreste, to make sure of this, put two mirrors on 'Gula, and very smart and handsome he looked, as he rode up the hill on his shapely and well-groomed beast.

Not very far behind him came Beatrice with Tito, and presently when the road began to get steep, she dismounted to save her favourite's legs, and as she went to walk by his head, she saw to her dismay that the mirror was gone, shaken off no doubt lower down the road, and by this time probably trodden to fragments.

What was to be done? To go on without the mirror was to seek only half a blessing, perhaps not even that, and yet to go back—no, that was not to be thought of, since everyone would say that she had feared to challenge comparison between Tito and 'Gula.

She was walking on with downcast eyes when, suddenly, as though put there by some miracle, she saw a little brass-framed mirror lying in the road right under Tito's nose. She sprang forward and picked it up, not thinking in her delight that it had most likely fallen from some other mule, and fastened it on Tito's forehead.

Oreste, who had arrived first before the chapel, was standing chatting with some friends as she came up. He looked round at her out of the corners of his eyes, and she saw him start and turn swiftly round towards where 'Gula was standing. One of his mirrors was gone, and there it was hanging between Tito's ears! With a loud cry he ran towards her, shouting:

"Where did you get that? You would not ask me for it. You didn't think I was worth that, I suppose, so you stole it. Are you not rich enough to buy one for yourself! Give it back to me."

Then, ignoring the look of amazement on her face, he snatched away the mirror and began to vent his rage upon the innocent Tito with his whip. Several of the by-standers, seeing this, ran up. One snatched the whip away from him, others tried to pull him away.

Then he drew his knife, and the matter might have been serious if just then the bell had not sounded for the animals to be brought up to receive the benediction.

The sound seemed to bring him to his senses, and he went away to 'Gula, considerably ashamed of himself,

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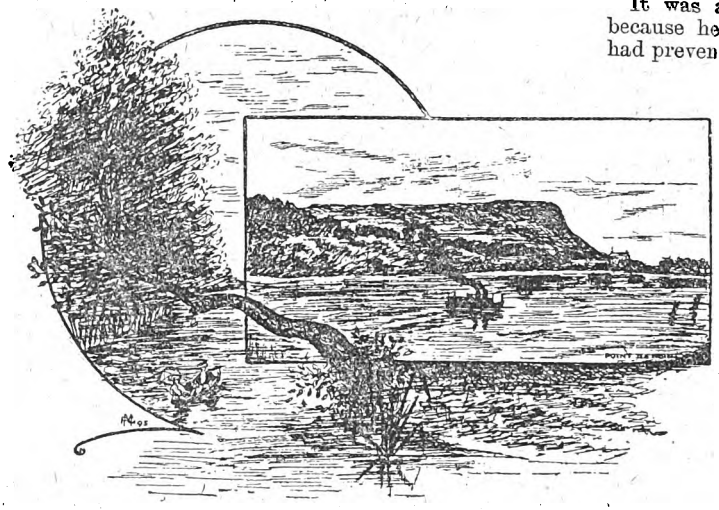
and after a time his turn came to lead 'Gula before the priest.

His anger had calmed down as quickly as it had risen, but the penalty for it was yet to come. As he advanced



towards the church steps, the priest, to his dismay, waved him aside and lowered the brush with which he sprinkled the holy water. He had seen the fight, and therefore refused the blessing. There was no appeal. 'Gula could have no benedict on that year because his master had profaned the festival.

With tears of grief and anger in his eyes, Oreste slowly retraced his steps, his mind divided between fear for the future and rage against Beatrice, whom he regarded as the cause of his misfortune.

"It is all her fault," he said to himself, as he rode back down the hill; "she must have forgotten her mirror, and stolen mine when my back was turned. Now her Tito will be safe, and I have nothing!"

He sprang from his mule, threw his arms round its neck, and whispered:

"Keep well and strong, 'Gula; keep well, my beauty!" and he kissed its forehead with remorseful tenderness.

Beatrice returned from the fête in very bad spirits, too, for she could now see why Oreste had been so angry, and she wished from her heart that the mistake had not occurred. Once she thought of explaining the whole matter to him, but then her pride forbade that.

He had accused her of theft before all the people, had beaten her mule, and behaved like a madman. He did not deserve an explanation. What a good thing for her that she had refused to marry him, for with a temper like his no woman's life could be happy, or even safe. Still she was miserable, the unlucky incident weighed upon her mind and took all the zest out of her enjoyment.

II.

There are often strange coincidences in this life. For three years 'Gula had never ailed anything, but had eaten his food and done his work in the most satisfactory manner; however, about a week after the feast of St. Antonio he was off his feed, and stood in his stall with drooping ears and half-closed eyes. Oreste felt very anxious, and tried every remedy, but in vain—the third morning he found his friend and means of sustenance lying dead in his stable. His grief knew no bounds.

It was all his own fault, for the mule had died because he had not been blessed, and Oreste's violence had prevented it. He had since learnt the truth about the mirror, therefore he had no one but himself to blame.

His income was gone, and he was unable to earn money any other way, unless he went to the stone quarries, and that was hard work, badly paid. What was he to do? There was nothing but death for him, so he shut himself up in his room and refused to eat.

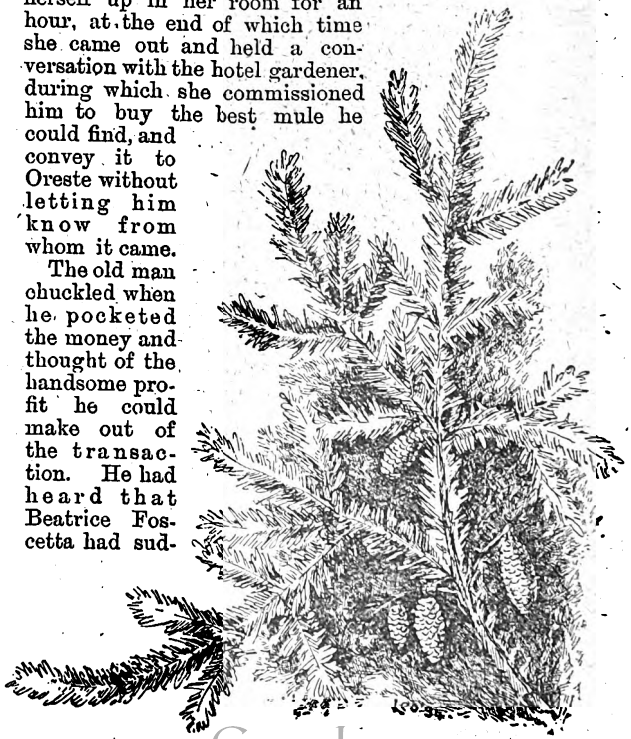
At last the authorities broke open his door and forced him to come out and take some food, for they could not let the foreigners know that anyone had died of starvation in Nervi.

A few days after this a rich American lady staying at the Hotel d'Inglese, sent to hire Oreste and his mule for a day's expedition, and as she was one of his best customers, he sadly sent back a message that his mule was dead, and he was too poor to buy another, so she must please to find someone else. She generally paid him twice as much as he asked, and gossip had been very free in discussing her great infatuation for the good-looking Italian.

He thought her old and ugly, but that had not prevented him from practising those arts upon her which vexed Beatrice so bitterly.

When Miss Grantley received this message she shut herself up in her room for an hour, at the end of which time she came out and held a conversation with the hotel gardener, during which she commissioned him to buy the best mule he could find, and convey it to Oreste without letting him know from whom it came.

The old man chuckled when he pocketed the money and thought of the handsome profit he could make out of the transaction. He had heard that Beatrice Foscetta had sud-



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denly decided to leave Nervi, and was selling her live stock at very moderate prices.

He determined therefore to buy Tito and keep the balance for himself.

Since Oreste's trouble people had looked rather coldly on Beatrice, some had even told her that it was her pride which had helped to ruin her old playmate, and this growing unpopularity affected her pocket, as the neighbours were not so ready to buy her butter and milk, so she made up her mind to go and live with her aunt at Genoa.

She was very unhappy, and often said to herself:

"If only Oreste were not so idle! There is no one so clever or so handsome, and I shall never love anyone else! If he would only alter, how different it might all be!"

The old gardener came to her, and bought Tito without saying a word about Miss Grantley or what was to be done with the mule.

Meanwhile Oreste had been wandering about the neighbourhood in search of work, doing what he could to earn just enough to keep himself from starvation; he could not hope for more, as he was unskilled in any trade, and had not been accustomed to hard manual labour.

He had lost all pride in himself, and many a time he ran short of food. One morning he had slept late, for he had no work and little breakfast to look forward to, when he awoke with the familiar sound of a chain rattling in the adjoining shed. He thought he was dreaming, but got out of bed to assure himself. Upon opening the door he saw a fine mule in 'Gula's stall. He could scarcely believe his eyes. He seemed to know the animal; *could* it be *Tito?*

He called it by name, and the mule looked round at once.

"Ah! Tito, it *is* you!" he cried, falling on his knees beside it.

"*She* has sent you. Beatrice—Beatrice—she will not forsake me in my misfortune. She loves me in spite of all I have done! She is the best and dearest girl in the world. Now, Tito, all will go well."

Oreste dressed himself quickly, and hurried off to Nervi to see Beatrice. As he was going along the main street, he chanced to look at the chief wine merchant's restaurant and there he saw her in earnest conversation with the proprietor. Forgetting everything but his delight and gratitude, he rushed up to her and threw his arms round her, exclaiming:

"Thank you, dearest, a thousand times! You have saved me! You have a noble heart! If I had not loved you so much I should not have been so angry with you!"

For a moment Beatrice thought that trouble had unhinged his mind; she was in the act of withdrawing from his embrace and calling for help, when she saw his sorrowful, loving gaze, and knew he was no madman. Another look showed her the lines of care and suffering in his face, and pity mastered all other feelings. She did not know what had happened to him, but to avoid further publicity, she told him to go and wait at her house till she joined him.

Seeing the amusement his appearance had caused the bystanders, she treated the matter as a joke, and soon followed her lover, whom she found anxiously waiting for her in the garden. Before he could renew his endearments she quietly said:

"Now, Oreste, tell me what all this means, and what you are thanking me for?"

"What this means?" he stammered. "*You* ask me! Will you deny that you still love me, and have shown your forgiveness in the most generous manner?"

"That I like you is no secret, Oreste; but how have I shown it lately?" asked the girl in bewilderment.

"Did you not put Tito in my shed this morning?"

"I?" she asked in astonishment.

"It was *not* you? Oh! do not trifle with me; it is cruel! Who else could have done it?"

"I know nothing about Tito now, for I sold him a few days ago."

"You have sold him—to whom?"

"To the gardener at the Hotel d'Inglese."

"Gardener—Hotel d'Inglese!" he gasped. "Ah, *maladetto!* Then it is the sallow American who has given me the beast!"

Oreste turned pale with disappointment and vexation.

"Yes; now you know, and you had better go at once to thank the rich, ugly lady you have always been so attentive to, and arrange for more long rides together," said Beatrice bitterly.

"No!" he said firmly; "I will give it back to her."

"No? do you really mean to return it? You will not take it from *her?* Then we will go together and I will buy back Tito."

"We? Together?" he repeated joyfully.

"Yes," she said calmly. "I know you love me, and I love you, and if you had been willing for my sake to give up your lazy ways and love of attracting the foreigners, all this would never have happened."

"But, Beatrice, I am completely cured of that nonsense, and have suffered terribly for my sins."

"Yes, I believe you, dear, but you must swear to me by St. Antonio, who has brought us together at last, that you will start a work-shop and keep steadily to it."

"I swear it by St. Antonio!" he said earnestly, and sealed his oath with a kiss.

"Now we must take Tito back," said Beatrice laughing.

He readily agreed, and they started off, hand-in-hand, as was the custom of engaged couples, to fetch the mule from Bogliasco. But rumour had been before them. Oreste's loving greeting in the restaurant that morning had given rise to the report that they were engaged; moreover the truth had leaked out about Miss Grantley's having bought Tito to replace Oreste's lost mule.

When all this came to the lady's ears, she made one of her rapid decisions, packed up, paid her bill, and had taken her seat in the express for Rome a few minutes before Beatrice and Oreste reached the Hotel d'Inglese.

When they heard that she had gone away so suddenly, leaving no address behind her, they looked at each other and laughed knowingly. It was impossible to carry out their intention, so they decided that she could well afford to lose the money, therefore they would regard Tito as a wedding present from Oreste's eccentric friend.

MARY FERMER.

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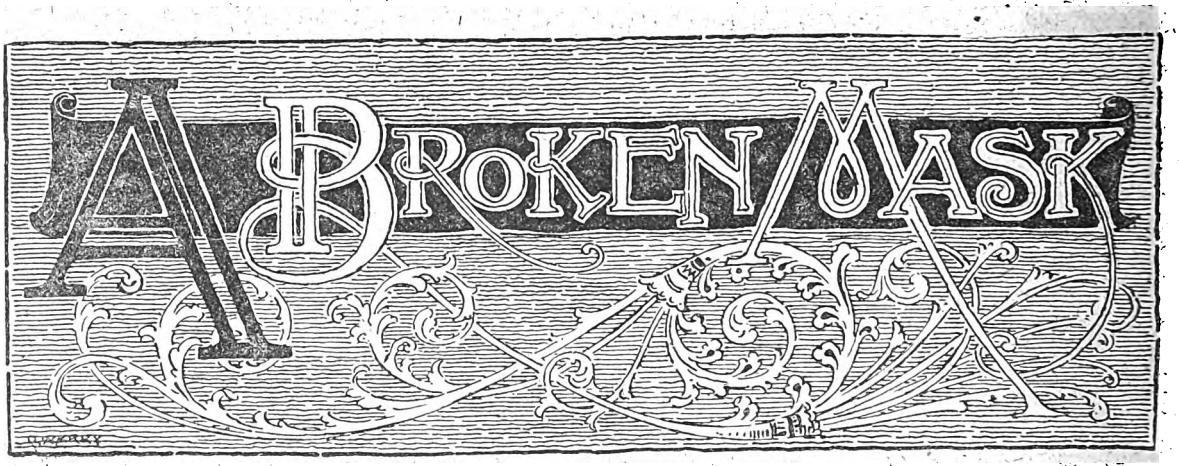

BY JOAN BARRETT.

SUMMARY.

The story opens with an introduction to the inmates of two farm-houses in an English village named Thorneydene. Honeypots Farm has recently been taken by a young stranger, John Gillway, about whom there seems to be a mystery.

His neighbour, Farmer Strange, is a widower with twin daughters, Diana and Kitty, who have been brought up for the most part by a wealthy aunt, Mrs. Caffyn, who is about to take them on the Continent.

Gillway has already fallen in love with Kitty, who was at first pleased by his attentions. She soon wearied of them, but being half afraid of him, makes many promises of fidelity before going abroad with her sister and aunt, which she never intends to keep.

At Capri they meet with Bernard Eliot, nicknamed "the Nabob" on account of his wealth. He speedily wins the affections of all three ladies, but seems to prefer Di's society.

At the end of three months they return to London, and as the two girls have now attained their majority they are given the option of remaining with their aunt or returning to their father for good. Kitty chooses the former and Di the latter.

Henceforth Diana devotes herself to the management of her father's house and dairy. She meets Gillway, and hears for the first time of the relations which had existed between him and Kitty. Soon after, the Stranges are surprised by the arrival of Kitty and the Nabob, who explain that they were married that morning, and have come to spend their honeymoon at Greyhouse Farm!

CHAPTER VI.

Kitty Makes a Confession.

"It was a very pretty wedding, only we kept it quiet because of that horrid John Gillway," said Kitty, as she arranged her hair in Di's room before going down to tea—the Nabob and Farmer Strange were in the farm-yard. "I had heaps of lovely presents. I was so afraid of it—the wedding—getting to John's—to Mr. Gillway's ears, you know, and if he had come up and made a scene—shot *me*, for instance, how awful it would have been! I am so sorry I flirted with him. Hasn't he really said anything about me, Di?"

"He, asked me if you were coming home, and he was angry when he heard that you had deceived him. He won't hurt you, Kitty. He said he should not."

"But he's so dangerous—and I'm afraid of him! I shall never dare to go out-doors while we're here. I begged Bernie not to bring me home. He only laughed. He has no idea what a revengeful man John—Mr. Gillway is. If you only knew the awful threats that he used once—when he forced me to promise to marry him! He said that there was no harm too deadly for him to do to the man who married me."

"Men often say foolish things in excitement."

"Ah, but he is different to any other man! I shall try hard to get Bernie away after a day or two. Di—were you greatly surprised to-day? At Capri auntie and I thought that Bernie was in love with you. He—told me at the Malets—when he proposed, you know—how greatly he admired you—but—but—of course, you knew all along that he didn't love you—didn't you, dear?"

"Yes," Di answered quietly.

Kitty patted a stray curl into its proper position as she said: "He's such a dear boy, Di! So kind, and as gentle as a woman! I'm a very lucky girl, don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Di again.

Kitty heaved a sigh, looked out of the window, and then coming to Di's chair, she said in a very low tone: "I'm so unhappy, Di! I've got to tell Bernie something, and I'm afraid. You know that I never could confess things like you. I'm too nervous. Oh, I've got such a wretched lump here—you can't think," she added, touching her breast—"it makes me miserable!" Kneeling by Di's side and clasping her hands in her sister's lap, she added: "It can't really matter to Bernie—because he's so awfully rich, isn't he, and I know that he loves me dearly, so that the loss of the money is really nothing. I should have told him at once—if he had been poor—as soon as ever auntie explained things to me. She didn't want me to marry Bernie so soon. I believe she thought he was going to marry *her*: she wore such stupid little bonnets and *such* tight corsets! She cried, too, when I told her that he wanted to marry me, and she made a lot of fuss, and said that I was too young, and she should withold my dowry until she saw how my marriage turned out, and she told me to tell Bernie that I was penniless. I didn't like to, Di! It did seem such a humiliating thing after Mrs. Malet had told him that I should have thirty thousand pounds!"

"Does he believe that aunt has given you the money?" asked Di quickly.

"He thinks it is settled upon me. He has never asked me a word about it. Mrs. Malet told him; you know what a chatterbox she is. The worst of it is," said Kitty, with a long sigh, "aunt asked me if Bernie knew that I had no money, and I said he did. It was wicked to tell such a falsehood, I know—but, oh, Di, you can't think how much I love Bernie! and I was so dreadfully afraid that aunt would do something to stop our wedding."

"Oh, Kitty!" Di exclaimed, rising from her chair, "you must tell the truth to your husband at once! You can never hope to be happy with a secret standing between you——"

"I shall tell him some day," Kitty interrupted, pouting her pretty, rosy lips. "Of course I shall! I always intended to. But not just yet, Di. It might spoil our honeymoon."

"It may spoil your whole life! Don't you understand that it will hurt your husband to discover your want of candour? And every day that passes will make it harder for you to tell him. Let him know everything to-day."

Kitty skipped back to the mirror, gave another pat to her curls, and drew aside the short curtains. She kissed her

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hand to someone in the garden below, nodding her head and smiling.

"They are coming in," said she. "Do I look nice?"

Di paid no attention to the question. The expression of pain deepened on her face.

"Kitty," she said, "promise me that you will tell everything to your husband now. It is so easy to forgive when one loves, and he loves you dearly. Tell him to-night."

"Oh, I couldn't! Indeed, I couldn't," cried Kitty. "It is very easy for you to talk like that. You always could tell dad or Aunt Lou-lou when you had done anything wrong. It makes me feel cold with fear even to think of confessing. I hate aunt! A nasty old thing to break her promise in this cruel way. It's all her fault that I've got this worry!"

"I wish you would tell your husband now," persisted Di, pushing one hand through her hair. "I feel sure that you would be happier afterwards!"

"So do I. Only I *can't* tell him. And it isn't as though I shouldn't have the money later on, you know. When

"I'm so unhappy, Di."

aunt sees what an exemplary couple we are, she is sure to give me the money. Besides, Bernie didn't ask me if I had any fortune."

"Did he ask Mrs. Malet?"

"I don't know. She told me she had told him."

Di reflected with serious eyes and lips. To her, this secret that Kitty treated so lightly was a grave and terrible matter.

"Did your husband make any marriage settlement upon you, Kitty?"

Kitty nodded as she ran from the room.

"Fifty thousand pounds," she answered over her shoulder, and the next moment Diana heard her laughing in the passage with the Nabob.

She joined them, looking so pre-occupied and troubled that her father noticed the shadow upon her face.

"Butter not up to the mark?" he asked, looking lovingly at her as she sat behind the big tea-tray in the sitting-room, with the Nabob at her left hand and Kitty upon her right. "Di turns out rare butter," he added, speaking now to his son-in-law; "as firm and as sweet as a nut, sir."

"This is delicious butter," said the Nabob politely, while Kitty flushed scarlet and touched her father's foot beneath the table.

"Hey?" said Farmer Strange, turning to her. "What is it? You always was a first-rate hand at putting away lardy-roll. Take the plate, my girl, take the plate."

"I hate lardy-roll," exclaimed Kitty petulantly.

"You've changed then since you was home last," said her father. "If you don't want anything from my end of the table, what did you knock me for?"

"Oh, I didn't mean to touch *you*," Kitty cried, lowering her eyes.

Her father looked at the Nabob and chuckled. The young man had succeeded in winning the farmer's heart already by his discrimination in discerning good cattle from indifferent ones, and his interest in everything appertaining to the farm.

"Oh, I see," said he. "Well, I know what it is to be married myself. When I brought your dear mother home here, I let everything about the place go to rack and ruin for high on a month. I couldn't believe, somehow, that she really belonged to me—no, I couldn't, and I followed her about like a little lap-dog. Lord! what a time ago that seems!"

Di looked at the Nabob. He was watching Farmer Strange with a kind expression in his blue-grey eyes. His face was so candid and sympathetic that Di felt sure he would not be angry with Kitty if she confessed her deception that night. Di's greatest fear was that the Nabob would feel wounded at the lack of trust in his love that Kitty had betrayed. She thought of John Gillway's bitter words. Would Kitty's husband despise her if by this want of honesty she fell from the pedestal upon which every person in love stands the object of his or her affections? Kitty had made a wrong start in her new life; but it was not—it could not—be, too late to make a fresh beginning.

"She *must* tell him!" thought Di, growing more and more troubled.

"Butter's A1," said her father, again observing the worried look in her frank eyes. He stuck his knife into the heart of a golden pat, and dug out a lump, smelt it, and spread it upon a slice of bread, disdaining with a jerk of his elbow the plate of wafer-like bread-and-butter that Kitty offered him. "I never did care for those mouthfuls," said he, indicating the plate with a second jerk. "I like a good thick hunk that I can stick my teeth into."

The distress in Kitty's crimson face was so acute that Di felt sorry for her suffering. Farmer Strange had insensibly fallen into the manners of the rough farm-hands, in whose sole society so much of his lonely life had been passed. Sometimes Di winced when she saw him eat, and occasionally some of his rough and ready expressions jarred upon her. But one glance at her father's face acted like a panacea.

"It's very hot," said Kitty, "Let us go into the garden."

She pushed back her chair, cast a commanding, loving glance at her husband, and, going to the door, lingered there while he drank his tea and smiled at her.

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"Hot!" exclaimed her father, pausing with his great slice of bread-and-butter in mid-air. "What a one you are for getting cranks in your head. It's as cool as a cucumber here."

"Well, I'm hot," said Kitty a little sharply.

The Nabob handed his tea-cup to Di, throwing a laughing glance at Kitty's pouting face.

"Half-a-minute, Kitty," said he. "I'm so jolly thirsty, and I've never tasted such exquisite tea as this in all my life. What do you put in it, Di? Is it the cream, or have you found out the secret of making nectar?"

"Bernie, are you coming?"

"Di always was a capital hand at making a good cup of tea," said her father fondly. "Lord, sir, you can't think what a difference it makes having her about the place! There ain't many gals as would have given up fifteen thousand pounds, and the chance of being a lady, to come here and make butt——"

"Bernie, *are* you coming?" called Kitty, with the sound of tears in her voice.

The Nabob rose at once, and, smiling at Di and her father, went from the parlour with his arm round Kitty's waist. Farmer Strange looked after him with approval.

"As nice a young man as ever stepped in shoe-leather," said he, nodding his head. "And that affable, and no more pride in him than you'd find in my old hat! Says I to him: 'You don't object to my smoking a clay-pipe?' 'Not I,' says he. 'There's nothing like 'em for sweetness and drawing,' and with that, out he pulls one from his pocket, and we lit up together in the yard yonder and had a whiff. Smart young chap, too! He's got a lot in him! Knows how many beans make five, and don't make any fuss about his knowledge. He gave me to understand—delicately—of course, that he didn't hold with separating children from their parents, and that when he bought an estate, the best room in the house 'ud be for *me*. He's my sort, Di. Kitty's a lucky girl as well as a pretty one."

Betty carried away the tea-things, Farmer Strange went out with his pipe to look after the men, and Di, tormented with anxiety, sat alone in the low parlour and stared in despair at the gay Japanese fans and Liberty hangings with which she and Kitty had adorned its walls. She was still sitting there when the Nabob came hastily into the room.

"I've come to take you out," said he in his bright, cheery voice. "Kitty's found a swing in the orchard——" He paused and added anxiously: "I say, you're not in trouble, Di?"

Di hesitated a moment, looking with shadowed eyes into the handsome, concerned face bending over her.

"I don't suppose I can help you," said the Nabob. "We men are such clums*y*, tactless fools; but if I could, Di, you ought to know how readily I would. You are my sister now, you know. Won't you try me? I could see at tea that you were worried. I knew the butter was not responsible for the anxiety in your eyes. Tell me what is the bother," he said in a gentle tone, and drawing a chair by her side.

"I don't quite know if I ought," Di said. "It is not my secret—it is Kitty's. It troubles me—because I know she is miserable. She can't summon the courage to tell you. Kitty never did have much pluck, as dad calls it. She can't help it, you know—and I am sure you will forgive her—when she tells you."

The Nabob had taken her hand, and now he looked into her eyes with smiling good-humour.

"A secret of Kitty's!" he repeated in amusement. "Oh, I know what's bothering your little head. It's that flirtation of hers with the ferocious farmer—I forget his name——"

"No, no, it isn't that. It's a much more serious matter. Something about—about—money."

"About money," said the Nabob in the same gay voice. "Money, now. Let me see if I can help you. What could Kitty have to conceal from me about money?"

Holding Di's hand in one of his, he passed the other reflectively over his face, hiding it from her anxious regard. The clock upon the high black mantel-board seemed to have ticked a very long while before he uncovered his features, and turned to Di with a smile.

"I think I know," said he, pressing Di's fingers so hard that she winced with pain. "Poor little Kitty! Mrs. Caffyn has altered her mind about giving Kitty some money that she intended to give her. That's it! Eh? I can see it is! Poor Kitty! What on earth made her worry about such a trifle? And you, too, Di? As if money matters, when I've such a pile!"

"Oh, I am so glad!" cried Di with a gasp of relief. "Kitty said you wouldn't mind. Only—I thought it so awful to begin your new life together with a secret between you—and it has made her so wretched."

"Has it, though? Poor little girl! I say, she didn't think that I was marrying her for her money, did she, Di? Hang it all, *I shouldn't* like my wife to let such an unworthy suspicion enter her head."

His eyes had grown very bright and hard. He dropped Di's hand, and putting his own in his pockets, he strode to the end of the room, rattling the coins in them.

"No, by George, I wouldn't! There's something so infernally mean in a fellow who could do a dirty trick like that! Excuse me, Di—women are different. No one thinks it shabby in a penniless woman to marry a man with a pock-marked face and a fat banking account. If Kitty thought *that* of me—I don't think I could forgive her—no—I——"

"Oh, she didn't; indeed, she didn't!" cried Di, starting from her chair. "Please don't think that. How could she entertain such an idea when you are so rich? If you had been a poor man the case might have been looked at in that light——"

She paused, and a deep red flush crept to the roots of her hair. Was Kitty's conduct excusable? Would her husband think that she had married him for the very motive he was so fearful Kitty had attributed to himself?

"She loves you so much," Di added, and her voice had a desperate ring in it that struck harshly upon her sensitive ears, "so *very* much!"

The Nabob smiled as he pulled his tawny moustache.

"Dear little woman!" said he in a soft, tender tone. "Love is everything in this life, isn't it, Di? If I lost every penny piece to-morrow, it would make no difference in Kitty's love for me. That's good to think of, though we should be a pair of penniless love-birds then—Kitty having no money—for, of course, Mrs. Caffyn didn't give her a red cent?"

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He looked questioningly at Di, with the same bright light shining in his clear eyes.

"Not a farthing," said Di sorrowfully. "She is going to wait—to see how—your marriage turns out."

She was sorry the moment that she had said the words. The Nabob's face turned crimson with mortification, and—yes—Di felt sure that she was right in thinking that he was furiously angry.

"How kind of her!" said he. "How amiable and wise! Thank Heaven, we are not compelled to regulate our conduct in order to gratify her whims, and I'll answer for Kitty and myself, too. We shan't try to be good children just to please Mrs. Caffyn! Let her keep her money!"

He had returned to Di's side, but he was not looking at her. His regard was fixed upon the window where a fat bee was stupidly buzzing against the panes. From the garden Kitty's petulate voice called: "Ber—nie! Ber—nie!"

The Nabob turned and the shadows fled from his face. His habitual sunny expression settled once more in his eyes—the look of a man who feels that life is sweet and good, and that the world is full of pleasant paths that lead to happiness.

"I'll tease Kitty about this," he whispered. "The little puss! Come, Di, let's go out and swing. I feel since I've got into the country just as a school-boy feels when he goes home for the holidays; a kind of throwing up my cap in the air impulse, and I'm sure it would not take much to make me shout: 'Hip-hip-hurray!'"

Kitty . . . . watched Di flitting from room to room.

CHAPTER VII.

A NEW DEPARTURE.

LIFE flowed very smoothly at Greyhouse Farm during the first week of the Nabob's and Kitty's visit. Kitty was at all times intensely ashamed of her father, and it hurt her pride to see Diana going about the house in a servant's print gown and big white apron, and to know that Di made butter and packed it early every Thursday morning for a neighbouring market. But the Nabob was so delighted with the simple home-life, so keenly interested in learning every detail of farming, and so determined to close his eyes to the little rough places and to see only the bright sunshine about the farm, that Kitty could not help being influenced by his conduct. She grumbled when her husband left early in the morning to tramp over the corn-fields and meadows with her father, or when the two men rode away to attend the markets, and she was alone with Diana in the house sometimes all the day. She had not married to mope in that dull place, she told Di, and Bernie had promised to buy a country estate and to settle down in a home of their own.

She thought him selfish and unkind in staying on at Greyhouse Farm, where she had no amusements, and there was nobody to see her smart gowns and things.

"He wants to learn the management of a farm before he buys an estate," said Di, "and he gets on so splendidly with dad. Just think, Kitty, what a delightful companion dad finds him!"

"Oh, anybody is good enough to moon about stupid old turnip and rape fields with dad!" exclaimed Kitty peevishly. "And I don't believe Bernie likes it! He only does it just to please dad. I'm sure of it!"

"But he is so interested in everything," said Di in astonishment.

"How do you know? I don't believe he cares a pin about Shorthorns and Alderneys, white pigs, and black pigs, and all the rest of the horrid animals. It is his stupid good nature that makes him pretend he does. He's got the softest heart in the world!"

John Gillway had not once visited the farm since Kitty's arrival. Diana wondered if he had heard that Kitty was married, and if the wound in his heart had healed. She so often thought about him, and she missed his visits in a way that astonished and puzzled her, considering that she had so rarely talked with him when he came to see her father.

One morning at the mid-day meal in the great kitchen, Farmer Strango mentioned the mysterious tenant of Honeypots Farm, and told Di that he had taken the Nabob to see some prize heifers in Gillway's yard. Kitty blushed and played nervously with her serviette as she asked if Gillway had been amiable.

"He's a bit of a bear," said the Nabob lightly. "Seems to have had a University education. Something queer about him—I feel sure I've met him—or seen his portrait somewhere—he's got a remarkable face, eh?"

He looked at Di. She answered simply that she thought John Gillway was handsome.

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Gillway was still leaning against the wall.

"Oh, very," said the Nabob. "He's not exactly my son. I never can care for people who don't seem quite open. That man impressed me disagreeably. But I'd forgotten I couldn't expect him to throw himself into my arms, considering that I've deprived him of Kitty."

She was sitting at his side. He passed his arm around her shoulder.

"No wonder the fellow scowled so murderously at me, you little flirt, Kitty!"

"I wish you wouldn't go near him," said Kitty, jerking herself away. "He's dangerous. I know he'll hurt you—or me!"

Her husband laughed and tried to stroke her hair as he said:

"Not he! He's quite got over his disappointment. You should have heard the tender way in which he asked after Di."

"*Di!*" exclaimed Kitty incredulously.

Di laughed. She knew she had blushed. It was very silly—but, somehow she felt quite happy to think that John Gillway had asked after her. All that day she sang as she moved about the house. Some of the June sunshine seemed to have entered her heart. Kitty, huddled disconsolately in a deep arm-chair with a book upon her knee, watched Di flitting from room to room.

"It's all very well for you," she grumbled. "You're like Bernie. You adore the country. If Bernie doesn't go away soon—I—I shall go mad!"

July came with its roses, and still the Nabob showed no sign of taking his wife away. His interest had not flagged in agriculture, and he was as keen as ever in losing no opportunity of attending markets with his father-in-law, and in learning all that the elder man could teach him of farming. The Nabob's fine friends would hardly have recognised him in the sunburnt strong young fellow who wore rough tweed clothes and smoked clay pipes, and who ate his meals in a flagged kitchen. He knew all Farmer Strange's acquaintances, and he was made welcome and liked by all. His unchanging good-humour, his pleasant, easy manners, and handsome face won him friends wherever he went. It was useless for Kitty to pout and sigh and remonstrate. The Nabob simply laughed at her exhibitions of hurt pride and bad temper, and accompanied her father to the village inn where nearly all the farming people assembled in the evenings, and drank ale or inferior whisky and listened to the gossip about the big county families, the crops, and the latest news in the papers with kindly interest.

When August came Kitty began to cry. She appeared late at breakfast, with red and swollen eyelids and pallid cheeks. Sometimes she would not speak to her husband, and the hitherto cheerful meals were marked with gloom and depression. The Nabob gave up the long walks with Farmer Strange, and endeavoured to get Kitty to accompany him in her father's place. Usually she refused with angry petulance. Then he sat patiently with her, trying to interest her in his conversation. He read aloud to her, and was rewarded by peevish words and yawns. He took Di into his confidence, and asked what was to be done. Much crying both by day and night had taken all the brightness from Kitty's face and eyes. Her little nose had a swollen, red appearance. She took no interest in her toilette, she who had always been so coquettish and dainty in her dress.

"I think," said Di frankly, in answer to the Nabob's question, "that you must take her away. She needs a change. She never did care for Thorneydene."

They were standing in the dairy. Kitty sat in the rose-covered porch, slatternly clothed, with untidy, roughened hair drawn into a fuzzy knot upon the summit of her head.

She looked years older than Diana as she sat staring with regretful eyes at the tall, gay hollyhocks and round, big-eyed sunflowers.

The Nabob's vexed, troubled regard wandered from Kitty and rested upon Diana's sweet serious face, and tall, simply clad figure. She looked brave and courageous. There was truth in every line of her face; strength in her hands with their long, broad-tipped fingers and well turned-back thumbs. As she stood watching Kitty with tender maternal solicitude in her beautiful eyes, the Nabob must have compared her with her sister, for a sudden impatient sigh escaped him.

"We are all so happy—all but Kitty!" said he regretfully. "Di, I sometimes wonder if I can ever make her happy."

"She will be happy if you give her more excitement. You see," said Di in an apologetic tone, "she has always been used to a lot of gaiety. It is dull here."

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"*You* never find it dull."

"I am different."

"I remember your telling me at Capri how you loved the country, and I can understand it. There is a fascination in leading the simple, good, homely life that we have been leading together lately. *Must* I go, Di? Must I take Kitty away? Decide for me. I cannot!"

He had taken her hand, and unconsciously he pressed it between his, looking into her face with an expression that troubled her.

"I think you ought," she faltered. "Yes—I think you must go."

"If you tell me that it is my duty I will do it."

Di turned her eyes away, feeling strangely embarrassed, though she could not have told why.

"It must be your duty to make your wife happy," she

The Nabob took Kitty by the shoulders.

was about to say, when a shadow fell before them. John Gillway stood in the open doorway.

The Nabob dropped Di's hand and went forward with an unconstrained greeting, but Di knew that her cheeks were crimson and her lips twitching.

She heard Gillway saying that he had met Farmer Strange, who had asked him to let Miss Strange know that he must return late to dinner; a dog had got into a sheep-pen and had worried and injured some of the sheep.

"In Longacre field!" cried the Nabob. "I must go and see if I can help." With a bright nod to Di and a clasp of the hand to Gillway, he hurried away.

"It's a long time since we met," said Gillway, looking at Di with a curious compression of his lips.

She had recovered her self-control, though her heart was beating quickly, so quickly that she wondered if its rapid throbs were audible to the man leaning against the dairy door.

"Yes," she answered. "You never come to see dad now."

She had not meant to speak reproachfully, for what right had she to criticise John Gillway's actions? Perhaps it was only her fancy that there *was* an accent of reproach in her tones.

"I am afraid of meeting your sister."

Di drew up her head. A wave of angry indignation had surged over her.

"Afraid!" she cried, and Gillway winced beneath the scorn in her clear eyes. "Come and see her now; she is in the porch."

"Thanks. I'd rather not. It would be uncomfortable for both of us. Don't you understand, Miss Strange, that I might find it difficult to forget, and——"

"You ought to have forgotten everything," said Di. "I—I should be *ashamed* of myself if I were you."

She spoke passionately, angry at thinking that this man still loved Kitty—Kitty, who was making her husband miserable by her selfishness, and who had done her best to spoil John Gillway's life. Di had never seen how very much Kitty was to blame until John Gillway told her that he was afraid to meet his former sweetheart.

"I do feel ashamed—very often—but I don't find that it helps me," said Gillway in a quiet voice.

"Then it ought to help you," cried Di in fine indignation. "What is the use of being a man if you are not strong?"

She saw Gillway smile. She knew that she was illogical, and she suspected that she was ill-tempered. Di hardly knew her own emotions that day.

"If you don't mind," she said, "I should like to pass. I want to go into the house. I won't ask you to come, since you are *afraid*."

Gillway drew back at once. His face had whitened.

"I beg your pardon," he said, and Di read the concentrated passion in his dark eyes. She felt ashamed, and, once on her way to the kitchen, she half paused, asking herself if she had not acted foolishly and rudely, and whether she ought not to return and tell Gillway that she was sorry.

"No," she said to herself. "Why should I?"

And yet, almost with the last thought in her mind, she found herself hurrying back between the flaunting hollyhocks. Gillway was still leaning against the wall.

"I came to say that I don't know at all why I was so rude," said Di, holding out her hand. "But I *was* rude, fearfully rude, and it doesn't matter at all to me whether you're afraid to meet Kitty or not, but I am sorry—you *must* know that I'm sorry for speaking as I did."

Gillway's eyes had widened in surprise. As Di blurted out her sentences the muscles of his set face relaxed. It was as though a carved stone figure had been suddenly endowed with life.

He opened his lips to speak, but Di had once more flitted away, and he was left alone among the flowers and honey-seeking bees.

At the end of that same week, the Nabob took Kitty to inspect a fine old property called the Towers. The estate was about fifteen miles from Thorneydene. Its owner, Lord Powers, was compelled to reside abroad for two years, and he was anxious to find a tenant for the period of his absence.

The dwelling was an odd mixture of many styles and periods. It had been begun in the reign of Elizabeth, and added to from time to time according to the taste and requirements of its occupier. It took its name from a disused part of the house—an old wing with a couple of small towers, that looked like a pair of bloated pepper-pots.

Kitty brightened up at the pleasant prospect of becoming the mistress of a finer house than she had ever imagined reigning over in her wildest, and most ambitious dreams. True, it was still near hateful Thorneydene; but the prospect of filling the house with guests and of showing off the jewels that were now locked away in a bank was delightful to her.

And in addition to these joys, her husband had promised that in May she should rent a house in London for the season. The Nabob appeared resigned to quitting the simple life that he had so much enjoyed. He exacted promises from Di and Farmer Strange that they would visit him and give him an opportunity of returning their hospitality. At this period Di heard the Nabob for the first time speak harshly to Kitty. The house and all its appurtenances had been rented. Kitty's trunks were locked

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and strapped waiting to be carried away, and Kitty and the Nabob were standing in the sitting-room as Di came came down the passage.

"Your father must come for the shooting," the Nabob was saying jovially. "There's not any sport for the poor old chap here."

"Oh, Bernie!" exclaimed Kitty. "You *can't* ask dad! If you do we must shut up the house to everybody else. Just think how bad his manners are!"

Di had almost reached the door. She saw the Nabob's face pale, and a furious light spring in his eyes.

"By George, Kitty!" he exclaimed in a disgusted voice. "If you can't help thinking such things, you might keep from saying them! You make me *despise* you!"

Di drew back, uncertain whether to advance or recede.

"Oh, I know you don't love me any longer!" cried Kitty with quick resentment. "I'm not blind! I—I know quite well what has changed you—it is because Aunt Caffyn gave me no money, there!"

The Nabob took Kitty by the shoulders and looked fixedly into her eyes. Di shuddered and trembled as she watched. "It only wanted that," said the Nabob. "So you can think that of *me!*"

Did he shake her? Di could not tell. She ran back to her room and threw herself down by the bedside. Kitty came up for her at last, and marvelled at the pallor and anguish in her sister's face. She was all smiles, and looked as though she had never been angry or ruffled in her life.

"Bernie is waiting to say good-bye; the new carriage has come. I shan't be able to come over to see you to-morrow—I shall be so busy, and Bernie says it takes four hours, here and back—but the day after *you* might come. I'll send a carriage for you. And, Di, don't bring dad; he would feel so out of place in our surroundings, poor old dear!"

Di went down again and shook hands with the Nabob. His face was very pale, though he tried to smile.

"God bless you, dear Di," he said; "I can never thank you and your dear old dad enough for all your goodness to me! It's an understood thing, mind, that while we are at the Towers it is as much your home and your father's home as it will be mine and Kitty's, and at Christmas we will have a real, good, old-fashioned house-warming, with mistletoe and a big ball, and all the rest of it."

(*To be continued.*)

ALL ABOUT "THE SUNDAY READER."

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In *The Sunday Reader*, every week, a Guinea is offered as an award for some slight task.

If you want a guinea you have, therefore, a very easy chance of earning one. A guinea is not to be despised, and so go to your newsagent at once, pay a penny, buy a *Sunday Reader*, and see what you have to do.

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THE MOTH AND THE STAR.

I SAW her first in the Old Salon in Paris. She was standing before Paul Langdon's picture, "The Moth and the Star," which at that time was creating a sensation in the artistic world.

It was early—too early for the gay, laughing throng that would an hour or two later fill these rooms, criticising, admiring, rejecting. At this time in the morning one expected only to see artists scattered sparsely here and there, and they were too absorbed in contemplation and study of the feast before them to waste idle words with one another. It was, therefore, with a feeling of curiosity that I scrutinised the girl standing before "The Moth and the Star." That she deeply loved and reverenced art could be seen by her air of rapt devotion her utter unconsciousness of her surroundings. Something within me said she was not an artist herself, though she might and must have had the artistic instinct.

Perhaps it was the sight of a maid in attendance, standing respectfully near the entrance-door, that precluded any such thought, for the women artists never hesitated to come to any of the exhibitions unattended—one saw them everywhere alone.

The picture which I could see made so deep an impression upon the girl before me, represented a solitary vestal virgin in white flowing Grecian costume, which was adorned at the throat by a single jewelled star; even on the canvas it shone with the lustre of a real gem.

She was engaged in lighting the tapers on the altar of an old church; two are already burning—when she is surprised by the appearance of a dashing young courtier, dressed in the magnificence of a knight of past ages.

That he breaks into a passionate avowal of love can be read in the expressive portrayal of his countenance, but there is no answering sympathy in the virgin's beautiful face—only calm wonder and dismay. The exquisite carved work of the church's interior—the solemn gloom of the subdued light—form a fitting background for these two figures, and I, as an artist, am free to confess that it was worthy in almost every respect the admiration it excited from all Paris. There was something wonderfully fascinating in the grace of the maiden's unconscious pose—in the strong man's passionate appeal—and in every detail of colour and form. I have seen people gaze at this picture and wander away to others, only to come back to it again and again as though drawn by some unseen force.

The woman, or rather girl, who at present was the sole devotee before this shrine, was herself a study for an artist. Taller than the average height of woman, she was slender and lithe, though perfectly rounded in form; every turn of the head was queenly, and her skin fair, and as delicately tinted as the first flush of Aurora stepping out of the realms of dew-kissed night. The crown of all was her hair, a deep, rich gold-brown, with just the faintest suspicion of a crinkle; this was worn, not after the disfiguring English fashion nor the exaggerated knot of American women, but simply in a soft, graceful coil lying close to the head. I thought I had never seen anything more lovely or effective, and a great desire seized me to paint her.

She must have stood fully fifteen minutes almost motionless before me, but I was so absorbed in studying her that sense of time was forgotten. At length, however, she turned; a quick, ecstatic sigh escaped her parted lips, for one fleeting moment her eyes met mine, and then she was gone, followed at a short distance by the maid at the door.

I drew a long breath; all my artistic sensibilities were on the alert. Sitting down on the nearest chair, I drew my note-book out and tried to sketch her from memory, just in profile as I had seen her standing; the result was unsatisfactory, and I put it back in my pocket dissatisfied. People were already beginning to throng into the rooms; the rustle of satin gowns swept to and fro over the polished floor; mingled perfumes made the air heavy, and before the picture she had admired were grouped half-a-dozen women of fashion whose extravagant exclamations fell incongruously on my ears.

How different women are: Some cannot admire without voluble verbal attestation; others say nothing, because the appreciation of the soul cannot be expressed by mere words—their emotion is of the silent kind, which touches an artist most deeply

I rose and went out, and after walking aimlessly for a half hour or so, proceeded to my rooms in the Rue Montmartre. As I was about to mount the stairs which led to my apartments, a newsboy rushed over with the *Figaro*. Lighting a cigarette, I threw myself on a couch near the window and proceeded to read the news.

The absorbing topic of interest I perceived to be the announcement of the betrothal of a certain Princess Marie Louise Dolores Aimée de Vandois to the notorious Russian Count Vlagmasdi, who was closely allied to the house of Romanoff. I do not know why I waded through three columns of this, for I cared not whether the prospective bride was gifted with the charms of Venus and Minerva combined, or that she was descended from one of the most ancient families of France; neither did the Count's accomplishments and praises interest me, for I knew him to be one of the fastest men of gay Paris—and delighting in the fact. Truly a fitting match for a beautiful and innocent girl; I turned away in disgust.

My reflections were here interrupted by the entrance of two artist friends, Jean Doubet and Jules Busoni. "*Ma foi!*" said the former, "what are you doing up here on a day like this? Throw away the newspaper and come with us out to Passy."

"Yes," urged Busoni, "I can't imagine any one reading the paper on a day fit for the gods; besides, there's nothing but the fair Princess in any paper to be had—Vlagmasdi is a lucky dog—a man to be envied, ah!"

"He has it badly," laughed Doubet good-naturedly. "Fortunately she's a little too far above his reach or we'd lose him from our ranks in the twinkling of an eye."

"That you would, indeed," assented the would-be

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lover with such earnestness that both Jean and I burst into laughter.

It was three days later before I again had an opportunity of visiting the Salon, as on returning from Passy I found a telegram from a friend in Marseilles desiring me to meet him there at once. I must confess to a strong reluctance to leaving Paris just then, but it was for my own interest to go, as this friend had secured a buyer for one of my pictures, and my presence was necessary to complete the bargain.

The morning after my return found me again in the Old Salon. Need I explain that my earnestness to behold my devout adorer of "The Moth and the Star" was the sole object of my visit! I was doomed, however, to disappointment. In vain did my eyes travel over the vast rooms—she was not there. I sat down in front of the picture, feeling a little surprised at the great chagrin which surged through me; still I waited, half expectant, until twelve o'clock, and then went down to the Palais-Royal to breakfast. I began to fear I should never see her again, and the more such a contingency presented itself, the more determined I was to find her—to see her again, if only once. So the following morning I was again at my old station, and within five minutes after I had entered, she came. I felt repaid a hundredfold for my pains, she was such a goodly sight to artistic eyes.

I gazed at her in her radiant loveliness—furtively, delightedly. This time she bestowed passing interest on a dozen or more pictures, but came back and seated herself before Paul Langdon's. At last a sudden irresistible impulse seized me to hear her speak. I advanced slowly towards her and addressed her in English: "Madame, may I ask, as an artist, your opinion of the picture before you—pardon me my presumption, but I would like to know how an outsider is impressed by it."

She turned her eyes to me, and though she replied in excellent English, there was a very charming French inflection in her words.

"I am flattered, monsieur, that you, being an artist, should wish for my humble opinion on the lovely picture before us. I cannot say more in its praise than that it is perfect."

The French maid in the distance was eyeing us a little curiously, but I was too delighted at having *her* speak to me to object to anything so trivial as that.

"Ah," I said, "you think it is perfect—this indeed is delightful praise, and I would that its creator himself might hear, but despite my boundless admiration for the picture there is something wanting in it to me."

"Wanting!" she echoed, in surprise. "I do not understand you. What is it, monsieur?"

"Well," I replied, a trifle embarrassed under her searching, perplexed gaze, "that woman's face wants a soul, she is unmoved by the adoring love offered her; having felt the divine motion of love, she could not stand there unmoved, unpitingly, unsympathetic, merely disturbed by the inability to perform her duty."

"But don't you think, monsieur," asked the clear voice beside me eagerly, "that she, as a vestal virgin, might never have known—never have felt this divine emotion of which you speak?"

"What woman, be she vestal virgin or the woman of fashion, has lived a score of years on this tumultuous planet of ours and can own the flame of Love's passion has never burnt her soul?" I questioned incredulously. Then it occurred to me—could my beautiful companion be speaking of herself—was it possible that love was an abstract to her? Though unbelieving, the words rose involuntarily to my lips: "Have you never loved?" I asked abruptly.

A sudden carmine dyed the exquisite oval of her cheek, her eyes grew dark a moment, and then she said in a low voice: "No," and I felt she had spoken the truth. A silence fell between us, and in that silence the white-robed vestal virgin in the picture shone out as never before; she was no longer an unknown myth of some past age, but symbolized an ideal type—that of the woman beside me.

It was her voice that broke the stillness. "I would rather have her as she is," she said musingly. "Love in her case would only mean sadness."

"And yet," I said impressively, "it comes to all; wanted or unwanted, the chaste star shall tremble into light; it is not only the moth whose wings are burnt, for in that awakening, perhaps, the star shall be consumed in its own flame."

"I do not like to think of such things," said my companion, restlessly plucking the petals of a crimson rose to pieces. "You shall not exterminate my star in so ungracious a fashion; the painter has interpreted better; it is well she has never known love."

I bowed and was about to reply, when there was a stir at the other end of the vast room, and someone whispered the ex-Empress Eugénie was about to enter. My companion grew very pale. "Adieu, monsieur," she said hurriedly; "I must go."

"But the Empress is coming," I began. "Surely you would like to see her?"

She appeared disturbed. "No," she replied; "I have engagements; I must go," and she passed on, leaving me wondering and half inclined to believe I was dreaming. Most puzzling of all, why should she wish to hurry away just because the ex-Empress was coming? Women were generally delighted to catch a glimpse of her.

The days somehow passed very rapidly about this time, and I continued to haunt the Salon assiduously. Sometimes I saw her, but more often not; she was always attended by her solemn-looking maid, and was invariably gracious, though I began to notice the radiancy which attracted me so much at first had almost vanished.

There was a deep thoughtfulness in her eyes, in the repose of the exquisite mouth. She told me once in our brief conversations that Paul Langdon the artist was an old friend of her family's, and that years ago he had loved, unrequited, her elder sister, who had been dead now nearly ten years.

"Ah," I said, "that probably explains his picture of 'The Moth and the Star.'"

"Yes," she answered, half sadly; "you see his own experience disguised; the face and form of this vestal virgin before us are those of my sweet dead sister. Do you wonder now, monsieur, why I come here so often?"

Her voice was mournfully reflective, as though she were travelling over long-past scenes. It was on this day that I asked her to sit to me for her portrait; she hesitated and demurred at first, but I urged her so strenuously that she finally consented to give me half-a-dozen sittings if that would content me, and then she gave me one of her dazzling smiles, and I thought I was the most fortunate man in the world. Promptly at ten she came the first morning—oh, the delight of having her sit so near me, bewildering my eyes with her loveliness, beautiful beyond the dream of man, in a gown of rich, shimmering white satin that showed her fairness to perfection. The time being so limited, I was forced to strain every nerve to accomplish a certain amount of work at each sitting.

Her grim maid, who sat near the door, I soon learnt

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could understand no English, and this consoled me in some measure for her presence. My studio, after *she* left, seemed illumined with her personality until she came again—it was joy simply to live.

On the morning of the fifth sitting, just as she was preparing to go, conversation turned in some unaccountable manner to the coming marriage of the Princess Marie de Vandois. I cannot remember which introduced the subject, but my sentiments were unvarnished and plain. "I would rather my sister were lying dead than married to the Count Vlagmasdi," I said quietly.

"Why?" she asked with spirit; "he is handsome, rich, and fascinating—what more would you have?"

"I would have him hold women a little higher than the lightest thing God ever created," I replied with some heat; surely everyone in Paris knew the Count's reputation. I could not refrain from quoting to her a few lines of Coventry Patmore's that rose in my mind;

> "Ah, wasteful woman, she that may
> On her sweet self set her own price,
> Knowing he cannot choose but pay,
> How has she cheapen'd paradise;
> How given for nought her priceless gift,
> How spoil'd the bread and spill'd the wine,
> Which spent with due, respective thrift,
> Had made brutes men and men divine!"

She was standing erect, drawing on her glove; the smile had died from her lips, and I saw tears standing in her beautiful eyes. In some way I felt I had hurt her, and in a moment my long pent-up passion burst forth. Time, place, maid—all were forgotten, I only knew that I loved. Twice she tried to interrupt me, but I would not—she must hear how she had come to be the light of my life itself, that I lived but on her smiles from one day to another.

She stood motionless when I had finished, her eyes dark with pain, her lips white and tremulous. "*Mon Dieu!*" she murmured; "what have I done—I would have been your friend. Forget me, I am not worthy of your love." Her voice broke into something like a sob, I looked up and she had vanished—a mist swam before my eyes.

The next thing I remember was walking out to the Bois, striding madly, feverishly on, I knew not whither. Late in the afternoon, retracing my steps back towards the Champs-Elysees, I encountered Jules Busoni. His gay pleasantries and jocular remarks jarred on my nerves, and it was with difficulty I could answer him civilly; he took the hint, however, and soon left me.

The Bois was black with a continuous stream of carriages. It seemed as though all the beauty and fashion of Paris had turned out to bask in the warm June sunshine. Suddenly my eyes were riveted on an approaching carriage. Were my senses suddenly leaving me, or did I really behold *her* sitting there in regal state beside the Count Vlagmasdi? No; it was true; she was looking in my direction, and, with one of her dazzling smiles, bowed in recognition; the Count, too, glanced half carelessly round—and they had passed. A terrible fear possessed me. I grasped a passing boy by the arm.

"Who is that lady riding there with the Count Vlagmasdi?" I demanded hoarsely.

"*La belle Princesse Marie de Vandois; la fiancée de Monsieur le Compte,*" replied the boy, shaking himself free from my tight hold.

I fell back stunned; a dozen little things rose up in my mind to confirm his statement. How blind I had been, how wilfully! It was indeed a case of the moth and the star. I laughed bitterly. No wonder she did not wish to see the ex-Empress Eugénie that day in the old Salon; her mother was one of the Empress' dearest friends. Fool that I was not to have seen it all, I groaned in spirit.

At any cost I would quit Paris. I would not witness her triumph, I would not stay to hear the very street resound with her approaching nuptials. Paris had suddenly grown hateful to me. Yet I found it vain to strive to forget in the whirl of London season. Like a beautiful vision of unrest, *her* face floated ever before my eyes, but its joyousness mocked me. My remembrance of England must always be a painful one, for 'twas there I spent the most bitter three weeks of my life.

At last I could stand it no longer. I had thought to drown pain by fleeing from the cause, but it seemed only to increase with the distance from her, and I determined on the very eve of her wedding to return to Paris, if only for one more glance at her. From the Gare du Nord I went straight to my rooms in the Rue Montmartre. It was raining in torrents, and I found that in the suddenness of my flight to England I had left the east window of my studio open. Alas, what a sight met my eyes! The easel on which her unfinished picture stood had blown over and the portrait lay face downward on the floor. I raised it tenderly, it was blurred almost past recognition and soaked through with rain. A rap sounded at the door, and the *concierge* entered, bringing me a batch of letters that had accumulated in my absence. There were two lying on top which arrested my attention; the writing, in a woman's fine hand, was unknown to me. Was it possible she might have written? I tore open the first and glanced at the signature. It was dated over two weeks back and was signed with *her* name—"Marie de Vandois."

There was no beginning.

"You told me once," it ran, "that some day the soul of every woman awakens. Life until I knew you was simply a joyous passing to and fro—a song that had no minor strain—endless—beautiful! Then I knew you! It was you who taught me the supreme value of a woman's soul and I would have given for nought the priceless gift. I thought to forget you—strove to put you out of my life The power to do so is beyond me. If you love me as you said three days ago, come to me—save me from a worse fate than death. Until then I wait, counting the hours.—Marie de Vandois."

The world suddenly grew radiant again. Oh God, was it too late? I tore open the second note with feverish haste; what must she think of my silence! It was dated this morning, and read: "I ask not why you have not come, it is but just that you should despise me, but for the love you once bore me, pray for me—pray for my soul. When the clock in St. Dunstan's strikes eight to-night, I shall be *his* wife. Do you remember the day you told me that when the star awoke there was danger of being consumed in its own fire? I was incredulous, yet that fate has o'ertaken me. The moth singed his wings, but pity the star that has been burnt out by its own flame."

It ended abruptly. My star—mine—my own! even at the eleventh hour I would save her! In my frenzy and exhultation. I groped blindly about for my hat. The candle flickered and went out. The rain poured in through the open window (I had forgotten to close it), and through the blackness and desolation sounded the death-knell to my hopes—the clock in St. Dunstan's struck eight.

Blanche Schreiner.

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TOLD BY THE DOCTOR.

III.—THE MESMERIST'S DAUGHTER.

(Concluded from last week.)

"Surely you are Dr. Favel whom we are expecting?" she said, cordially; and, when I bowed, she inquired how I had managed to come so far out of my way.

"They must have misdirected you at the station," she said in her musical voice; and I confessed candidly to my presumptuous faith in my own powers of local discovery.

"You must trust to it no longer," she said, with a smile as sweet as her voice; "but accept my guidance, or you will inevitably be lost before you reach the château."

I thanked her, and called her naturally, "My lady." I never doubted that Lord Aldwyn had made her his wife. But as soon as the name was out of my mouth, I saw by the colour which flashed to my companion's face that I had made a mistake.

"You must not call me that," she said with a little laugh; "I am only Miss Vaudary."

I was startled, and murmured an apology awkwardly. I looked forward to seeing my host, and knowing exactly how the case stood.

When I arrived at the house, however, under Miss Vaudary's pilotage, I found that the Marquis was absent, while the old Marchioness, his mother, was confined to her room, as my guide had already informed me. I was shown to my own chambers in the east wing of the fine old mansion, where Lord Aldwyn called upon me as soon as he got in. He seemed extremely glad to see me—so much so that I began to fear that his mother's health was worse than his letter had led me to expect.

I inquired anxiously whether such was the case, and discovered at once from the careless manner in which the Marquis replied, that it was not.

He seemed extremely glad to see me.

"She has been pretty much the same for months now, but I thought she was perhaps getting a little weaker, under the care of her doctor here. Possibly you can do something for her, although there is little that can be done, I know, in cases like hers, where the heart is at fault."

I was a little surprised to hear this, after travelling so far and with some haste, expressly on the Marchioness's behalf.

Possibly I made my surprise evident, for the Marquis seated himself by my side, and told me in a confidential undertone the true reason why he was so anxious for my presence.

"It is not often that I am in want of other men's advice or sympathy," he said; "but I am just now. You promised, you remember, to assist me once more in relation to my curious love-story, if I found assistance to be necessary."

"Certainly," I said, wondering what was coming.

"It is scarcely as a doctor or as a student of mesmerism that I wish to consult you this time," he went on, "but rather as a man whose judgment I know is sound, and whose sympathy can be relied on. You are the only man, too, except Canise, who knows the early part of the history; and I shrink from taking more into my confidence, especially now that it promises to end so unhappily for me."

"Indeed!" I said in some surprise. "I should have thought from Miss Vaudary's presence at the château, that an unhappy termination to the affair was impossible."

My companion only shook his head.

"You will recollect that at our last meeting at the Professor's," he went on, "I surprised you by expressing my intention to avail myself of that wicked man's influence over his daughter, to marry her while under the effect of his mesmerism. I was led to that determination by two considerations; the chief one, you will do me the justice to believe, was the fear that a refusal on my part to go on with the case would merely lead to the substitution of another bridegroom or protector. The old man, I could see, had had his appetite whetted both for personal profit and for professional achievement; and if I withdrew, it was almost certain that some rich man, probably less scrupulous and more brutal than myself, would take my place.

"That was the chief consideration. Then, again, I made no pretence of denying my love for the old charlaton's daughter. I hoped that, if I removed her from her father's influence into my own care I should in time manage to awaken in her heart some love for me. I believed, you see, that Paul Terry was dead."

"Paul Terry—the man whose personal attractiveness for Miss Vaudary you borrowed? Surely you did not accept the Professor's word as sufficient authority for the fact of the man's death?"

The Marquis shook his head.

"Certainly not. I wrote to the address in Paris, which, you may remember, appeared on the young man's

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card. I received a reply, assuring me that the young artist had indeed died as the Professor stated."

"Ah, that is well," I said, with a sigh of relief. "I was very much afraid you were going to say that this Paul Terry was still living."

The Marquis answered quickly:

"He *is* still living. I presume that the *concierge* at his lodgings had been bought over by Vaudary before my letter reached him."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"And has he met Miss Vaudary?"

The Marquis's answer startled me a little.

"He has met the lady who was Miss Vaudary, but who is now my wife."

"Your wife!" I could not help exclaiming. "She assured me that she was unmarried."

It was Aldwyn's turn to be startled.

"You have met her and asked her the question?" he inquired excitedly.

And I related to him all that had happened. As I did so his look of anxiety gradually disappeared, and he asked me, when I had done, the most minute questions as to the lady's appearance and manner when she informed me that she was not "My lady."

"Thank you," he said at last, when he had made me tell him every conceivable detail of the scene in the lane. "Perhaps I had better continue my story now, then I shall be able to ask your advice in the horrible situation in which I find myself. Possibly my life will depend upon it."

I needed nothing to quicken my interest, and assured my companion of the fact.

"Well, to begin with," he went on, "I married Miss Violet Vaudary just a week after our visit to the Professor, in the house which he still retained at Paris."

"While the bride was under the influence of mesmerism?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Under the name of Paul Terry?"

"Yes."

"Pardon me," I said. "Does that fact make the marriage invalid?"

The Marquis shook his head.

"I am afraid not. If it did, the fact would provide an easy way out of my difficulty—a way which would render necessary the sacrifice only of my own happiness. But a false name given by one of the parties to a marriage does not invalidate the tie, unless the other party is aware of its falseness. To proceed, however. Immediately after the ceremony we started by train for Dildac, where I had lately bought the château, and where my dear mother, who knew the whole story, had promised to take care of my wife.

"The beginning of that journey was a honeymoon; for Violet, still under the influence of her father's will, believed herself travelling with the man of her heart. Before long, however, she fell asleep with her head resting on my shoulder. The sleep was deep and heavy. You are aware, no doubt——"

"That the sleep which follows mesmerism is akin to a stupor. Yes. Pray go on."

"During that sleep I took pains to change her position so that she no longer rested upon me, and to remove the wedding-ring from her finger. Of course, we were alone in the compartment. Luckily we had not to change—Dildac, as you found, is on the main line to Lyons—and my newly-made wife did not wake until we were within a few miles of our destination.

"As I anticipated, she no longer viewed me with affection, but was startled to find herself travelling in the express without having the least idea whither she was going. In a few moments I looked up from my paper, which I had been pretending to read at the other end of the compartment, and addressed her with distant and respectful courtesy. My story was all prepared, of course, beforehand.

"Her father—of whom, poor girl, it was easy for her to believe any evil—had plotted to marry her, against her will, to a stranger, while she was in a state of mesmerism. I had been begged by a friend of hers, whose name I was able to give, to rescue her, and place her out of her father's power. We were on our way to a place of refuge, where she would be safe in the care of my mother. I had the story ready, in its most convincing

To remove the wedding-ring from her finger.

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form, and Violet listened, in a sort of startled fear, from beginning to end. I am afraid she did not believe me, and I am sure that nothing would have persuaded her, friendless and quite lost as she was, to accompany me to the château, had not my dear mother met us at the station.

"She achieved everything. You have not yet seen my mother, I believe; when you do, you will understand how she won my wife's confidence in a few minutes. Their friendship is beautiful, and I am inclined to be jealous of the affection of both.

"My wife took up her residence with us quite willingly, and has remained since, without question. She is too conscious of her father's villainies to wonder at my story. She has no curiosity, apparently, as to its details. She is happy to enjoy our friendship without inquiry, although I have had to invent a distant relationship between us, to account somewhat for our care of her welfare.

"I thought it best to keep myself and my own part in the affair as much as possible in the background, at first. I made a point, therefore, of making trips to various parts of France, and also to London, and of visiting only occasionally at the château.

"During those visits, I was beginning to think that my wife—whom we still call by her maiden name, and has not the slightest idea that she is my wife—that Violet was beginning to extend to me, in a slight measure, the affection with which she certainly regarded my mother. I decided to 'hasten slowly'—it is the motto of our house. Then came the death of her father and with it a revelation, which destroyed my peace.

"Paul Terry was not dead. Vaudary wrote me a letter on his deathbed, to inform me of the fact—'as a duty he owed me,' he said. The artist's death was a fiction, he confessed, invented solely by himself, to obtain for his daughter a more aristocratic alliance than Terry could offer. Inclosed was the young man's photograph, to enable me, the Professor said, to be on my guard, and prevent my wife ever meeting him."

"But they have met?" I asked.

"Yes; a week ago. He came here sketching, of all places in the world."

"And your—the lady retains her affection for him?"

"I have no doubt of it."

CHAPTER III.

"Now, I want your advice as to what I can do," said the Marquis. "It may seem a little thing to drag you over from England for, when the whole thing is so clear; but if you knew how I have worried my poor brain, thinking the thing over and over, until my mind is sick and dizzy, you would understand how necessary it is for me to have somebody to talk it over with. Although I have had but two conversations with you, I can think of nobody with whom I would rather do so than yourself."

I bowed and smiled, really pleased by the confidence which he had in me.

"I see your difficulty," I said. "If you keep secret any longer the fact of your marriage, you stand the risk of this Paul Terry paying addresses to your wife, under the impression that she is still 'Miss Vaudary.' If, on the other hand, you announce the fact of your marriage, you lose the chance of gradually winning your wife's affection while she considers herself unbound."

The Marquis interrupted me with an exclamation of irritation.

"Great Heaven! no," he said. "You mistake me. What troubles me is the thought that I have raised an insuperable barrier between the woman I love—and happiness. Do you think I am considering my own happiness? Why! man, I would willingly die to-morrow, knowing that my death would unravel the web I have woven round poor Violet's life. The questions are these: Is there a way of setting her free? Is Paul Terry as devoted to her as she is to him, or is he only trifling with her love? The latter I want you to find out. As to the possibility of annulling the marriage, I should like your opinion. If there is no other way, and the young artist loves her, and is worthy of her love, I shall remove my embarrassing presence with the aid of a revolver. But for my dear mother's sake, I hope that course will be unnecessary."

"You must not think of it," I said gravely. But the Marquis took no heed of my words.

I tried then to persuade him that the marriage could be annulled in a court of law. "If the judges accept the fact of Miss Vaudary's mesmerism," I said, "they will certainly decide against the marriage, which, I believe, has not been consummated."

"Of course not," said the Marquis irritably. "But no judge will accept the fact that my wife was mesmerised and unconscious of her actions."

"Then she must have been aware, in their opinion," I said, priding myself on my logic, "that you were marrying her under a false name, since her father, no doubt, introduced you on the first occasion by your true name."

"It is uncertain whether he did so," said the Marquis; and the melancholy with which he said it almost made me laugh in spite of myself. It seemed so grimly humorous for a man to be trying with might and main to prove that no tie held to him the woman he loved.

I promised, finally, to cultivate the acquaintance of Paul Terry, with a view to finding out the state of his feelings with regard to Violet, and also his worthiness to her hand.

"I shall go away," said the Marquis. "It is impossible for me to stay here and see her every day, knowing that I shall never be able now to win her heart. It would drive me mad. I know I can depend upon you to find out everything, and let me know the result. I shall start for Paris this evening."

"Tell me, before we part," I said, "what makes you so sure that the lady cares for this painter?"

"Why, it stands to reason," said the marquis, "when she married the man she believed to be him. However, that is nothing. I judge entirely from her manner. Before I knew that he was in Dildac, I knew she had seen him, from the joyousness of her manner. Afterwards her air has become sad and melancholy. It breaks my heart to see her and to know that I am the one barrier which she evidently unconsciously feels existing between herself and the man of her choice."

"I hope you are mistaken," I said. "At any rate I shall soon be able to see the state of her feelings, and his, I trust, if I get a chance of seeing them together."

"You will have the chance before long," said the Marquis, "as Paul Terry is often at the château."

"What!" I exclaimed, aghast. "You have invited him here? You throw them together?"

"Certainly. I can always drop out with the aid of a pistol shot if the position becomes too complicated."

I looked hard at his honest, matter-of-fact face, and could not restrain myself from taking his hand.

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"Most men would call you mad, my lord," I said candidly; "I think you a hero."

The marquis shrugged his shoulders.

"I am neither," he said quietly. "I am simply in love. To possess my wife at the cost of her happiness, and without possessing her heart, would be as painful as life under any circumstances without her presence. Can I trust you to act for me as I have stated? I should like you to give my mother what attention you can at the same time. Probably I shall not see you again before I leave for Paris, so here is my address—and good-bye."

Lord Aldwyn handed me a card with the name of a large hotel in Paris, and shook hands with me. It was, as he said, the last time I saw him before he left the château.

Next morning I visited my patient, the old Marchioness, a dear old lady, who charmed me. I was pleased to find that her illness was due less to her heart than to her liver, and eventually her health considerably improved. This is by the way, however, and does not concern my story.

I was anxious to see how she regarded the girl of her son's choice, and must confess that I was a little surprised to find her speak enthusiastically in her favour.

"My poor boy has told you his story, I believe," she said. "Oh, I do trust that you will be able to find out that there is some hope left for him — some loophole of escape from the terrible state of affairs which he believes to exist. You will give him what encouragement you can, won't you, Dr. Favel?"

There were tears in the old lady's eyes as she placed her hand pleadingly on my arm, and I hastened to assure her that all my sympathies were excited for her son, the Marquis, and that nothing in the world would give me greater pleasure than to find his fears unfounded.

Walked towards me with her arm in his.

The old lady went on speaking of Violet.

"I will confess," she said, that I was a little prejudiced when Cyril told me about his love; but, of course, I knew that he alone had the right to choose whom he should marry. And my prejudices vanished almost as soon as I saw dear Violet. She is indeed the woman of all others I would have chosen to make Cyril happy. I feel, somehow, as though you would find out that he need not lose her."

It seemed to me that everybody was expecting a great deal from me; and, as far as I could see, there was not very much for me to do. The first thing, of course, was to find out, if possible, the true state of the lady's feelings towards Paul Terry, who was staying, I understood, in a picturesque little tavern near the château gates.

I seized the opportunity next morning, when the Professor's daughter offered to show me over the grounds, of accepting promptly and turning the conversation round to the young artist, whom I regret to state, I spoke of as an acquaintance of mine.

The pious fraud availed nothing. Madame turned to me quickly and, with flashing eyes, startled me with a sudden thrust.

"You have an object in speaking to me of Monsieur Terry?" she said, looking straight into my face—so straight that I could not deny the truth of her assertion.

"Yes, Miss Vaudary," I said instead.

"It is useless, I suppose," she went on, "inquiring what that object is?"

I had to confess to her that it was useless.

There was silence then for a few minutes, while we walked onward side by side through the beautiful English-like park which surrounded the château. Then my companion startled me once more by asking, as if the question was led up to by a train of thought:

"Can you tell me, Dr. Favel, if a marriage would be binding supposing the bride entered into it unconsciously?"

"Unconsciously?" I repeated.

"In a stupor — or under the influence of mesmerism, say?"

"I think it would be binding," I said honestly. For the question of a false name was not concerned in her question.

"You have heard of such a marriage?" she said quickly, making me regret the celerity with which I had replied; and I changed the conversation determinedly as soon as I had given the inevitable affirmative.

By some means or other my lady had arrived very near to the truth, I thought; and it occurred to me that Miss Vaudary was prospering a good deal more with her questioning than I with mine. I felt quite ashamed of my impotence to assist my host as he expected me to do. For though Miss Vaudary had satisfied herself on some points by my answers, I had gained nothing at all from hers.

I was quite relieved when the walk was ended and I was back in my own rooms, away from the young lady's clear-reading eyes. I sincerely hoped, though, that the old Marchioness would not want to see me and question me about my success. The Marquis, I knew well enough, would be expecting a letter on the subject by the next morning's post; but I had no news to give him, and

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therefore did not write. After Miss Vaudary's thrust I had decided not to seek Terry out immediately, for fear of further awakening her suspicious curiosity.

After the post had gone that night, however, I felt bound to telegraph to Aldwyn. And this was the message I sent:

"V. V. has left the château; it is believed with P. T."

I trust that the Postmaster at Telliers, our nearest telegraph office, did not recognise in the message the initials of Violet Vaudary and Paul Terry.

This is how the message came to be sent. After spending all the day in my room, I was summoned by the Marchioness at eight, and found her in considerable alarm, Miss Vaudary had not been seen since the morning. Subsequent inquiries showed that she had taken a ticket for Paris, and travelled by the noon train. Also, that she had received a letter by post some little while before starting. On hearing which I hastened to the tavern in the village, and inquired for Paul Terry, only to be told that he, too, had left by the same train for the same destination as the Marquis's wife.

To say that the news filled me with consternation, is is to speak too mildly. To think that after Lord Aldwyn had reposed such trust in me, and had counted upon me so confidently to give the best turn to affairs that was possible—that I had allowed the worst to happen, and most probably hastened the horrible *dénouement*. All this filled me with a shame that was scarcely bearable.

Instead of assisting the noble-hearted Marquis to arrange matters in the best manner, I had allowed the woman, for whose happiness he cared so much, to guess from my words and manner what she had evidently only suspected before, that she was legally married to my friend, and had thus driven her to bring shame upon herself and him by an elopement with the man she loved. I upbraided myself bitterly, and dared not face the thought of seeing the man who trusted me, and confessing to him how I had bungled everything.

The more I thought of it, the worse the ordeal appeared to me, and by the evening of the next day I had resolved not to face it. I had given my patient a prescription and certain rules of diet, which I considered would do wonders for her; and towards evening I packed up my baggage, and leaving a letter for the Marquis to have when he returned to the château, set out for the station.

I decided not to return to Paris, for several reasons, one of which was the chance of meeting Lord Aldwyn Instead, I purposed going down to the Rivi-ra, for a short visit. I had to wait, therefore, for the train which passed through Dildac on its way from Paris to Lyons, I regretted the fact since it suggested the chance of my meeting the Marquis if he returned from Paris that day. We had received no word from him, and did not know when to expect his arrival.

I hung back nervously as the train steamed in, and eagerly looked for the exit of passengers from the train. The Marquis had come after all; for I saw him open the door of a compartment and step on the platform.

Judge of my surprise, however, when he helped from the train—his wife, and walked towards me with her arm in his. When I saw that both looked radiantly happy, my surprise became so great that I lost my train and forfeited my ticket—to hear Lord Aldwyn's explanation.

The full explanation, however, I did not learn till after our arrival at the château, when the Marquis tapped at the door of my room, as he had done on the night of my arrival, and came in to set my mind at rest.

"Since you have heard so much of my love-story, of course you must hear the rest," he said, "although it seems almost too sacred to speak of now."

I had a hard struggle with my conscience before I could make the necessary reply, which, luckily for my curiosity, Lord Aldwyn ignored.

"Thanks to your telegram, I met my wife on her arrival at Paris," he said. "She was not aware that Paul Terry was in the train. She would have been even more unhappy had she known it, for it was to avoid Paul Terry that she left Dildac. From the first my poor little wife—who I shall marry once more in my own name, as soon as it can be done—had some latent suspicion that when I took her away from her father's guardianship he had already compelled her unconsciously to go through some form of marriage. Later she began to suspect that it was with me, and was well content, for, thank Heaven! she had learned to love me at Dildac. When she met Terry he assured her for a fact that she was married, having heard it from her father. He was ignorant however, of the bridegroom's name, and finding Violet equally ignorant, amused himself by hinting after awhile that it was himself. My unfortunate encouragement of the artist made her more steady to believe him, as did also your show of interest in him.

"Meanwhile my poor wife had written to a friend she remembered in Paris, begging her to make inquiries among the marriage-records there; and, when the friend discovered the mention of Violet's marriage to a Paul Terry—whose name, you remember, I assumed under the belief that the man was dead—of course my poor little wife had no longer doubt on the subject. Since her heart was given to me, the thought of belonging to another was terrible to her. You understand everything now?"

"Yes," I said, somewhat startled. "Her affection for Terry, in the first place, was a myth, of course?"

"Not altogether; she was prepossessed in his favour at their one interview; so much so that she did not care to make my acquaintance afterwards. But all the rest—the falling in love, the engagement, the marriage—belong to her mesmerised existence, and have no relation whatever to her real life and feelings."

Such was the Marquis's explanation; and I suppose it is all I need tell of the strangest love-story which ever came under my observation, except that a week later Dildac was *en fête* to celebrate the prettiest wedding I have ever seen.

I sometimes wonder what would happen if the Marchioness of Aldwyn were mesmerised once more; but I think I can trust the noble Lord, her husband, not to allow the experiment to be made.

HERBERT FLOWERDEW.

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Answers to Correspondents.

IF any readers would care to collect any money for the FRESH AIR FUND I shall be pleased to forward any number of printed forms to facilitate their work. It is the best possible means of swelling the F.A.F., for where one person cannot himself give a substantial sum he will find it a comparatively easy task, and certainly a pleasant one, to induce his friends and relations to give a little. A post-card addressed to the secretary of the FRESH AIR FUND, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., will bring along the number required.

SMOKER.—The most valuable pipe in the world is the property of the Shah of Persia. It is set with precious stones, and is worth £80,000. The "Vesuvian" column in *Pearson's Weekly* was discontinued some time ago.

SYBIL.—Yes, it is quite possible to judge character by the eyes to a certain extent, although the mouth is a much better indicator of a person's disposition.

S. B. A.—Ireland was first called "The Emerald Isle" in a poem written by a Dr. Drennan in the latter half of the last century.

C. G.—Try an ostrich egg at your next party, for a change. Ten people can make a meal off one, and it takes an hour to boil.

R. E. W.—Half-farthings were coined in the year 1843, but not being of much use they were soon withdrawn from circulation.

T. T.—Ordinary dreams, by which I mean the dreams of healthy people, which generally occur a few minutes before waking, are perfectly harmless. Dreams, however, which are the result of mental anxiety or over brainwork are decidedly injurious.

No, the letter was not received.

V. N.—Audiences are forbidden to applaud in Russian theatres.

TEETOTALER.—The quality of the various kinds of tea depends almost entirely upon the season of the year when the leaves are picked, the best tea being that made from the youngest leaves.

CLERK.—Certainly forty words a minute is very good speed for writing in longhand. The majority of people do not write faster than twenty-five words a minute.

VIOLET.—Yes, the old story of "The Mistletoe Bough" is really founded on fact. The sad event occurred in the family of the Hawkesburys in the year 1689.

F. D.—Your dog has certainly a remarkable appetite. A similar instance came under my notice recently. This time it was a bullock, which evinced a great liking for nails, gun shots, skewers, or any other delicacies of the kind.

F. H. G.—The reason is that the Chinese have a horror of a straight line; to them it is suggestive of death and demons. They employ only curves and zigzags.

H. L. B.—Many thanks for your letter, and the interesting facts it contains about bees. The venom of the bee is considered by some people to be a remedy for cancer, rheumatism, snake-bite, and other ills.

M. M.—You should certainly sleep with your bedroom window open, unless you are exceptionally delicate.

B. A.—The coin of which you speak may be good, in spite of the fact that it does not ring when tested. Gold and silver coins often get slightly cracked, causing them to sound "dead."

H. D.—A detective's salary varies from £3 to £10 a week.

MINNIE.—The rate of growth of the human hair varies. In some instances it has been known to exceed two inches a month.

E. W.—About 4,000,000 tons of potatoes are used annually in France in the manufacture of starch and alcohol.

A CONSTANT READER.—Ants are certainly not the most delightful guests to have in one's house. Try the following method of getting rid of them: Wash the wood-work round their haunts with turpentine and water; strew camphor about, and dust insect powder, or snuff, wherever they appear.

T. R. R.—Bangkok is the capital of Siam, not of Annam. It is a floating city, containing 70,000 houses, each of which floats on a raft of bamboo.

U. R.—No, it is not correct for a man to walk arm in arm with his *fiancée* in the public street, but people in love do not always stop to consider etiquette.

INQUIRER wishes to know which is the best British regiment.——Do you mean physically, or morally, or what? The 17th Lancers and Scots Greys in the cavalry, and Black Watch (42nd Highlanders) in the infantry, have all wonderfully good records.

H. M.—The three holes in the top of a cocoanut are for the purpose of allowing the young tree to issue from the shell when the nut is planted, and are not intended for the purpose of taking out the milk. The poem never appeared in *S.S.*

GINGER.—You should be proud of the colour of your hair, instead of wishing to change it. Auburn hair is fast becoming rare, and in years to come it will probably be quite extinct.

V. C. W.—The Bank of France is much the larger of the two. It does more than four times the amount of business done by the Bank of England.

SUSAN.—You are not the only girl in Britain dissatisfied with the Christian name given you by your parents. It would almost seem better if one could choose one's own name; but as that is impossible, the best thing is to make the best of it.

H. H.—If the skin of a human being were to be dressed and made into leather, it would very closely resemble pig skin.

T. H. W.—The oldest police force, as distinguished from the *gendarmerie*, appears to be our own. The principals engaged in the Tichborne trial and the de Goncourt frauds were far superior to any others in the detective force, past or present.

W. F.—I know of no cure for left-handedness. Constant effort and strength of will may do a lot towards overcoming it.

G. F.—The British Crown is worth nearly £300,000.

R. C.—"Bluenoses" is the nickname given to the inhabitants of Nova Scotia.

E. E. W.—The reason you are asked to write your manuscript on only one side of the paper is not that the editor may use the other side for scribbling, but for the convenience of the printers.

G. C. B.—No, it is very seldom that both sides of a face are exactly alike. The left side has almost invariably a softer outline and more pleasing expression than the right, and you will generally find that it is the left side which is portrayed in a photograph.

W. R.—You might be able to sleep better if your bed were turned towards the north. Many people cannot sleep with their heads to the south, east or west.

F. F.—I believe there is only one plant whose perfume is fatal to life. It is found in the volcanic districts of Java and Sumatra.

Notice to Competitors.

IN all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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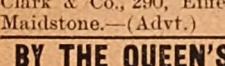

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or "Maggots," Pimples, Blotches, etc., immediately and permanently removed by my Skin Cleansing Lotion, "CUTISOLINE." Never fails. Hundreds of testimonials. Post free with directions, 1/6, 3/- and 5/-. AUSTIN LENNOX, Skin Specialist, 1, Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, LONDON.

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If you require a reliable remedy for the relief of superfluous fat, send for a box of my "H.D." Pills. No starvation required; you may eat and drink what you like, yet I guarantee to either sex a permanent reduction of 5lb. to 7lb. weekly. They are a harmless vegetable preparation; successful in the most stubborn cases, and improve health and figure. Their action is rapid, certain, safe, tasteless, and highly recommended. Prices, 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 11s., post free, plain wrapper. PROFESSOR F. T. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

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FOR THE HAIR

ROYAL TESTIMONIAL.

"Berlin, Alsenstrasse,
"February 25th, 1896.

"'KOKO' for the Hair is the best dressing I know. It keeps the head cool, promotes growth, and is in every way excellent.

"PRINCESS HOHENLOHE."

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"I beg you to forward by return 6 Bottles of 'KOKO.' It is for H.R.H. Princess Victoria of Schaumburg-Lippe"

(Grand-daughter of Queen Victoria and sister to the German Emperor.

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1s., 2/6, and 4/6, of all Chemists, Hairdressers, etc.

The Celebrated Authoress,

MRS. E. LYNN LINTON,

"Brougham House, Malvern.

Dear Sir,—"I have used your 'KOKO' now since June last, and I have not only stopped the falling out, which has been excessive after a severe illness, but I have an entirely new growth of hair, while the old hair is longer. As I am not a young woman, but an old one, I think this is a convincing test of the value of your preparation."

I was Quite Bald.

Mr. EDGHILL COLES, a wealthy City merchant, writes: Arundel House, Putney, July 9, 1896. "Gentlemen,—I am now convinced that, without exception, 'KOKO' is the best preparation possible for restoring hair. I was quite bald on the front, top, and back of my head, and I have now a fine crop of hair. I am strongly of opinion that if the Duke of Cambridge, the Prince of Wales and his good brother knew your 'KOKO,' they would use it. . . I am willing to answer any question from anyone on the subject.

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"KOKO" is an invigorating Preparation for the Hair. It eradicates scurf and dandriff, prevents hair falling and turning grey, strengthens the roots, and acts as a stimulating tonic to the hair. — Sold Everywhere, or sent post free by the KOKO MARICOPAS CO. LTD., 16, Bevis Marks, and 233, Regent Street, London.

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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 439. FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 29TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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THE WONDERFUL FOOD BEVERAGE.

A Food Beverage such as Dr. Tibbles' Vi-Cocoa, with its unique powers of nutriment and exceptional vitalising properties, is a means whereby strength and nervous energy is gained as a rational outcome of increased vitality.

It has the refreshing properties of fine tea, the nourishment of the best cocoas, and a tonic and recuperative force possessed by neither, and can be used in all cases where tea and coffee are prohibited.

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Inventors and Manufacturers:

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Sick Headache, Constipation,

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WONDERFUL RESULTS. LONG KNOWN.

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Ellaline Terriss writes from the Gaiety Theatre: "I have tried Dr. Mackenzie's Complexion Soap. I think it is quite one of the best I have ever used, and can thoroughly testify to its excellence."

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HAIR DESTROYED.

A lady will send, on receipt of stamped envelope, free particulars of a new French Remedy, which permanently removes all Superfluous Hairs, *without injuring the skin.* Address, in confidence, Madame F. B.," c/o Fontaine et Cie., 1, Piccadilly Circus, London.

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In commemoration of "Her Majesty's Record Reign," we intend presenting every person in the British Isles with a **SOLID SILVER WATCH** (list at 42s.) To gain this, send the answer to above and a stamped addressed envelope to know if correct. If so, we simply stipulate that you shall purchase one of our English Silver Chains to wear with the Presentation Watch. Note.—Money refunded if dissatisfied.—**Finch & Co.,** 280, Strand, London

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SHORT STORIES

No. 439.] [One Penny.

For the Week ending May 29th, 1897.

MEN WHO HAVE MADE THE EMPIRE.

By GEORGE GRIFFITH.

FOREWORD.

THE Epic of England has yet to be written. It may be that the fulness of time for writing it has not come yet, or it may be that Britain is still waiting for her Homer and her Vergil. Perhaps the matured genius of a Rudyard Kipling, that strong, sweet Singer of the Seven Seas, may some day address itself to the accomplishment of this most splendid task, and perhaps it is his only to sound the prelude. That is a matter for the gods to decide in their own good time, but this much is certain: that when this work has been worthily done the world will hear echoing through the ages such a thunder-song as has never stirred human hearts before.

It will begin, doubtless, with the battle-cries of the old Sea-Kings of the North, chanted to the music of their churning oars and the rush and roar of the foam swirling away under the bows of their longships, and from them it will go on ringing and thundering through

EDITED BY C. Arthur Pearson

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the centuries, ever swelling in depth and volume as more and more of the races of men hear it rolling over the battle-fields of conquered lands, until at last—as every loyal man of English speech must truly hope—the roar of the Last Battle has rolled away into eternal silence, and north and south, east and west, the proclaiming of the Pax Britannica heralds the epoch of "The Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World."

But in the meantime, while we are waiting for the coming of the singer whose master-hand shall blend the song and story of Britain into an epic worthy of his magnificent theme, materials may be gathered together, old facts may be presented in new lights, and the great characters who have played their parts in the most tremendous drama that has ever occupied the Stage of Time may be re-grouped in such fashion as will make their subtler relationships more plain, and all this will make the great work readier to the hand of the Master when he comes.

It is a portion of this minor work that I have set myself here to do. The making of a nation and the building of nations up into empires is, humanly speaking, the greatest and noblest work that human hands and brains can find to do, for the making of an empire means, in its ultimate analysis, the substitution of order for anarchy, of commerce for plunder, of civilisation for savagery—in a word, of peace for strife.

Now, the British Empire as it stands to-day is unquestionably the greatest moral and material Fact in human history, and hence it is permissible to assume that the makers of it must, each in his own way, whether of peace or war, have been the greatest empire-builders the world has yet seen, and it is my purpose here to take the greatest of these and tell with such force and vividness as I may, the story of the man and his work. I am not going to write a series of biographies arranged in prim chronological ranks, nor am I going to confine myself to the narration of collated facts so dear to the hearts of educational inspectors and scholastic examiners. Such you will find already cut and dried for you in the school-books and in many ponderous tomes, from the reading of which may your good taste and good sense deliver you!

I shall seek rather to show you the living man doing the living work which his destiny called him to do. The man will not always be found of the best, nor the work, seemingly, of the noblest, but what I shall seek to show you is that the work *had* to be done that a certain end might be accomplished, and that the man who did it was, all things considered, the best and, it may be, the only man to do it. In so far as I do not do this I shall have failed in the doing of my own work.

One more word seems necessary in order to anticipate certain possible misconceptions. Our empire-making is not yet complete, even at home. The centuries of strife during which the hammering and welding together of the nations which now make up the United Kingdom has been progressing, have naturally and necessarily left certain national jealousies and antipathies behind them, and the last thing that I should desire would be to arouse any of these.

There are two kinds of patriotism, a smaller and a greater, a National and an Imperial. Both are equally good and noble, and it is necessary that the first should precede the second. But it is equally necessary that it should not supersede or obscure it, and it is to this later and greater, this Imperial patriotism that I shall appeal, and I would ask my readers, whatever their nationality, to remember that on the burning plains of India and the rolling prairies of Canada, in the vast expanses of the Australian Bush and the African Veld, there are neither Englishmen nor Scotsmen, Welshmen nor Irishmen; but only Citizens of the Empire, brothers in blood and speech, and fellow-workers in the building up of the noblest and stateliest fabric that human hands have ever reared or God's sun ever shone upon.

I.—WILLIAM THE NORMAN.

Pirate and Nation-Maker.

It may strike those of my readers who have only got their history from their school-books as somewhat strange that I should begin my record of British Empire-Makers with a man whom they have been taught to look upon as a foreigner, an invader, a conqueror, and a ruthless oppressor of the English.

The answer is simple, though manifold. The school-books are only filled with potted facts and are therefore wrong and unreliable. It has been well said that England was made on the shores of the Baltic Sea and the German Ocean. The so-called Englishmen who occupied it at the time of the Conquest were not Englishmen at all, for the simple reason that the true English race had yet to be born, and, after it, the true British.

The England and Scotland of the eleventh century were peopled, not by nations, but by tribes mostly at bitter and constant war with each other. There were still Jutes and Angles, Picts and Scots, Danes and Swedes and Norwegians, each occupying their own little stretch of country, and governed, more or less ineffectually, by their chieftains, in proof of which it is enough to recall the fact that Harold's last fight but one was against his own brother, who had come across the Narrow Seas at the head of a miscellaneous crowd of hungry pirates to steal as much as he could of the ownerless heritage that Edward the Confessor had left behind him.

A good deal of sentiment, more or less born of deftly-written romances, has glorified the memory of this same Harold. Whether it was deserved or not does not concern us now, any more than does his right or unright to the throne of England. It is enough here to grant him all honour as an able leader of armies, and a man who knew how to snatch victory from defeat, and glory from disaster, by dying like a hero surrounded by the corpses of his foes.

The idle question whether he or William had the better right to the crown of England may be left to those who care for such quibbling. Let us, at the outset, in the words of the Sage of Chelsea, "clear our minds of cant." There is no "right" or "wrong" in these things, saving only the eternal right of the strongest and wisest—the fittest or most suitable, in short, to wield power and dominion whether the less fit like it or not. The peoples are thrust headlong into the fiery crucible of War, and, on the adamantine anvil of Destiny, the Thor's Hammer of Battle beats and crushes them into the shape that God has designed for them. It seems a rude method, but in many thousands of years we have found no other, so at least we may conclude that it is the best one known.

There is a very deep meaning in the seemingly flippant and almost impious saying of Napoleon: "God fights on the side of the biggest battalions." He does—but you

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must reckon the bigness of the battalions, not only by their numbers, but by the value of their units, remembering always that one man with a stout heart and a cause he honestly believes in is worth a score who have neither heart nor faith.

Just such a man was William the Norman, son of Robert the Magnificent, otherwise styled the Devil, and Arlette the Fair, daughter of Fulbert the Tanner of Falaise. It is in this birth of his that we find the first clue to his real greatness. He was born of a union unhallowed by the sanction of the Church, among a people proud beyond all modern belief of their royal sea-king ancestry.

How did he come to achieve this almost miraculous triumph over a prejudice and hostility of which we can now form but little idea of?

We have to look no farther than his cradle to find the answer. Lying there, the little fellow used to grasp the straw in his baby fists with such a grip that it could not be pulled away from him. The straw broke first, and ever after what William the Norman laid hold of he held on to; and that is why he became the first of our Empire-Makers.

No doubt it was the strain of the old pirate blood which ran so strongly in his veins that made him this. If we have successfully cleared our minds of cant, we shall see plainly that, since all nations begin in piracy of some sort, it is natural to expect that the best pirates will prove the best Empire-Makers. That old strain is, happily, not yet exhausted. When it is, Great and Greater Britain will be no more.

Drove the good steel through mail and flesh and bone.

Few men have passed unscathed through such a stormy youth as his was. When he was seven years old his father, Duke Robert, having exacted an oath of unwilling fealty from his under-lords to his bonny but base-born heir, went away on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, from which he never returned, leaving him to the wardship of his friend, Alan of Brittany, and soon after Duke Robert's death was known Alan was poisoned. After that for a dozen years the Boy Duke was in constant peril of his life.

One night two lads were lying sleeping side by side in

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the Castle of Vaudreuil, and in the silence and darkness of the night one of the Montgomeries, bitter enemies of the Lords of Falaise, to whose hate Alan of Brittany had already fallen a victim, crept up to the bed-side with a naked dagger and drove it blindly into the heart of one of the boys and fled.

Young Duke William—he was only a lad of twelve then—woke up to find himself wet with his playmate's blood, but all unknowing then how nearly the history of the world had come to being changed by that foul and happily misdirected dagger stroke. Had it found his heart instead there would have been no Norman Conquest, no blending of the two strains of blood from which has sprung the Imperial Race of earth, no British Empire, no United States of America—without all of which the world would surely have been very different.

Seven more years of plot and intrigue, of strife and turmoil young Duke William lived through after this, growing ever keener in mind and stronger in body, and, as we may well believe, hardening into the incarnation of ruthless and yet wisely-directed Force which was so soon to make him a power among men. Before he was twenty he shot his arrows from a bow which no other man in his dukedom could bend, and he was already a finished knight, a pattern of the gentleman of his age, good horseman, good swordsman, gentle towards women and stern towards men, pure in his morals and moderate in his living, a good Christian according to his lights and the idea of his day, and above all faithful to the ideals that he had set before himself.

Already at nineteen—that is to say in the year 1044—not only had he shaped his plans for reducing the disorder of his turbulent dukedom to discipline, but he had made his designs so manifest that the lawless lords and robber barons could see for themselves how stern a master he would make—as in good truth he did—and the deadly work of conspiracy started afresh. One night when he was sleeping in his favourite castle of Valognes, Golet, his court-fool, came hammering at his bedroom door with his bauble, crying out that some traitor had let the assassins into the stronghold. He leapt out of bed, huddled on a few clothes as he ran to the stable, mounted his horse, and galloped away all through the night toward Falaise along a road which is called the Duke's Road to this day. No sooner was he safe across the estuary of the Oune and Vire and in the Bayeux district than he pulled his dripping, panting horse up in front of the church of St. Clement, dismounted and knelt down to say his prayers and thank God for his merciful deliverance. Such was the youth who was father to the man justly styled William the Conqueror.

It was not long after this that the years of intrigue and plotting ended in armed revolt. Guy of Burgundy, William's kinsman and once his playmate, looked with greedy eyes on the fair lands of Normandy. He was master of many provinces already, and among his hosts of friends there were not a few of William's own underlords in whose breasts still rankled the shame of owning a bastard for their master. To his side came the Viscount of Coutance, Randolph of Bayeux, Hamon of Thorigny and Creuilly, and that Grimbald of Plessis whose hand was to have slain William that night in Valognes, and in the end this long-gathering storm burst on the grassy slopes of Val-ès-Dunes.

Master Wace the Chronicler, in his "Roman de Rou," gives us a brilliant little picture of that long-past scene where the future Conqueror won his spurs—of many a brave and gallant gentleman clad *cap-à-pie* in shining mail, seated on mighty chargers impatiently pawing the ground, of long lances gay with fluttering ribbons tied on by dainty hands that morning, of waving plumes and flaunting pennons, and mild-eyed cattle grazing knee-deep in the long wet grass in peaceful ignorance of the bloody work that was about to be done.

But with all this we have little to do, and one episode must suffice. The starkest warrior among the rebels was Hardrez, Lord of Bayeux, and he, like many another, had sworn to slay William that day with his own hands. The oath had proved fatal to others before it did to him, but at length his turn came. Young Duke William saw him from afar, and with lance in rest made for him at a gallop. One of the knights who had followed Hardrez to battle charged at him in mid-course. The next moment horse and man went rolling in the grass, and William, dropping his splintered lance, drew his sword, and, the Lord of Bayeux coming up at the instant, he drove the good steel with one shrewd, strong thrust through mail and flesh and bone, and Hardrez never spoke again.

That stroke won William his dukedom, and the Chronicler, though a man of Bayeux himself, tells in stirring lines how the young lord and his faithful knights hunted the flying rebels off the field and rode them down like sheep.

This was not the last fight that William had for the mastery of his own land, but it left his hands free to begin the work that he had set himself to do, and he did it. To him unity was strength, and he was ready to go to any lengths to get it. His methods then, as afterwards in England, were severe—we should call them brutal nowadays, but these days are not those.

When the citizens of Alençon defied him they indulged in the pleasantry of hanging raw hides over the walls and beating them, shouting out the while that here there was plenty for the tanner's son to do. He set his teeth and swore his favourite oath—by the Splendour of God—that they should have work enough ere he had done with them. When the city lay at his mercy he had two-and-thirty of the humourists sent out to him and cut off their ears and noses and hands and feet and had them tossed over the walls as a sort of hint that he was not quite the kind of person who could appreciate jokes about his ancestors. It was an inhuman deed, but history records no other public aspersions of the good name of Duke William's mother.

Yet one more battle the young Duke had to fight before he crossed the Narrow Seas to the famous field of Senlac. Henry of France, his titular over-lord, and Geoffrey of Anjou, jealous of the fast-growing power of Normandy, united their forces in an expedition which was half an invasion and half a plundering raid. Duke William, with infinite patience and a quiet, marvellous self-restraint, held his own fiery temper and the angry ardour of his knights in check, watching the invaders burn town after town and village after village, and turning some of his fairest domains into a wilderness.

He never struck a blow until, one fatal afternoon, he swooped down from Falaise and caught the French army severed in two by the rising flood of the river Dive. Then he struck, and struck hard, and when the bloody work was over, Henry was glad to buy a truce and his liberty from his vassal with the strong castle of Tillières and all its lands, and so heavy-hearted was he at his defeat that, as the Chronicler tells us, "he never bore shield or spear again."

Normandy had now become the most orderly and best governed country in Europe. Robbers, noble and

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Hanging raw hides over the walls and beating them.

otherwise, were ruthlessly suppressed, and the poorest possessed their goods in peace, while William himself had time to turn his thoughts to gentler and yet not less important matters of policy and love-making.

The old story of his courtship of the fair Matilda of Flanders with a riding whip is evidently a myth manufactured by some Saxon enemy, for Duke William was in the first place a gentleman, and, moreover, the lady and her parents were as anxious as he was for the marriage, for he was now the most desirable of suitors. The truth is that the Church opposed their union on some shadowy grounds of consanguinity, and it did not take place until after a courtship of four years.

And now, having got our Pirate Duke happily married and seen him undisputed lord of his own realm, we may go with him to St. Valery on the coast of Ponthieu, and watch him working and praying and offering gifts at the old shrine, during those fifteen long days that he watched the weathercocks and prayed for the south wind that was to waft his fleet and army over to the English shore.

It was on Wednesday the 27th of September that the wind at last veered round. The eager soldiery hailed the change as the granting of their prayers and the consent of Heaven to the beginning of their enterprise, and flung themselves into their ships like a great host of schoolboys setting out on a holiday. Soon the grey sea was covered with a swarm of craft, and it must have seemed as though the old Viking days had come back as the great square sails went up to the mast-heads and the shining shields were hung along the bulwarks.

William himself, in his golden ship *Mora*, the present of his own dear Duchess, led the way with the sacred banner of the Pope at his mast-head and the three Lions of Normandy floating astern. The *Mora* was lighter heeled or lighter loaded than the rest, for when morning dawned she was alone on the sea with the coast of Kent in plain sight. But presently a great forest of masts and clouds of gaily-coloured sails rose up out of the grey waters astern, and the whole vast fleet came on, urged by oar and wind, and by nine o'clock that morning the fore-foot of the *Mora*, close followed by her consorts, struck the English ground in Pevensey Bay.

It has often been told how William, as he landed, stumbled and fell on his hands and knees, and how those near him cried out that it was a fatal omen. The story may be myth or fact, but nothing could be more characteristic of the true man than his springing to his feet with both hands full of sand and laughing out in that great voice of his:

"Nay, by the Splendour of God, not so. See! Have I not taken seizin of my new kingdom and lawful heritage?"

But the army of the so-called English that they had come to seek was nowhere to be found, and some days were spent in uncertainty and debate as to whether they should march on London or await battle on the shore with their sea communications open, and in the end they took the latter and the wiser course.

Meanwhile, as has been said, Harold was away in the North fighting and conquering his brother Tostig and his fellow robbers, and the news of Duke William's landing was flying northward to him. It must have been something of an anxious time for both—the Norman waiting day after day in that deadly inaction which is most fatal of all things to the courage and discipline of an army, and Harold hurrying southward at the head of his victorious troops, knowing that he was about to try conclusions with the best leader and the finest soldiery in Europe.

It is of little import here and to us now which of them had the best right, as the lawyer-quibble has it, to that which they were about to fight for. The point

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is that such claims as either had they were going to submit to the stern and final ordeal of battle—and in good truth a stern ordeal it proved to be.

As he came to the South the standard of Harold—the Fighting Man—was joined by troops of recruits attracted by the fame of his northern victory, and it was a great and really formidable army which at length assembled between London and the Kentish coast. Meanwhile the Normans, after the fashion of the pitiless warfare of those days, were dividing their time between the building of entrenched camps and ravaging, plundering, and burning throughout the pleasant Kentish land.

Of course messages and parleyings passed between them. Harold from his royal house at Westminster bade Duke William come and fight him for his capital and his kingdom, to which Duke William warily replied: "Come and drive us into the sea if you can!" This at length King Harold was forced to attempt. And so it came to pass that, at length, on the 14th of October, the hosts of the Saxon and the Norman confronted each other on the field of Senlac by Hastings, on the morrow to strike blows whose echoes were to ring through many a long century, and to do deeds more mighty in their effects than either Harold or William dreamt of.

The Norman host has been called a horde of mailed robbers and cut-throats, eager only for plunder, and the Saxon army has been almost canonised as a band of heroes, gathered together to die in defence of their native land and their lawful king. Yet, strangely enough, the robbers and cut-throats spent the best part of the night confessing their sins and praying for victory, as well as in making the best dispositions to attain it. The patriots spent the same hours feasting and drinking, and swaggering to each other about the brave deeds they had done in the North and the greater things they were going to do on the morrow.

So the night passes, and the morning dawns grey and chill on the two now silent hosts. Then, from the Norman ranks rises the solemn cadence of the Te Deum, and as this dies away the archers move out—forerunners of those stout yeomen whose clothyard shafts were one day to win Creçy and Agincourt. Then came the foot-men with their long pikes, and after them the mailed and mounted knights, in front of whom rides Taillefer—Iron-Cutter and Minstrel—tossing his sword into the air and catching it, and singing the while the Song of Roland and Roncesvalles. As the archers and pikemen spread out in skirmishing order he sets spurs to his horse and charges at the Saxon line. He kills two men and then goes down under the battleaxe of a third.

Then the arrows flew fast and thick, and charge after charge was made upon the palisades of stakes that fenced the Saxon position, high above which floated the Dragon Standard of Wessex and the banner of the Fighting Man.

But the double-bladed Saxon axes were no playthings, and they were swung by strong and strenuous arms, and every time the Norman front came up to the breastwork it was hewn down in swathes by the deep-biting blades. The arrows fell blunted and broken on the big Saxon shields and stout Saxon armour, and so Duke William, with that ever-ready resource of his, bade his archers shoot up into the air, and then down from the grey sky there fell a rain of whirring, steel-pointed shafts, one of which, winged by Fate, struck gallant Harold in the eye—doubtless as he was looking up wondering at this new manœuvre—and, piercing his brain, laid him lifeless in the midst of his champions.

Soon after this a cry went up that Duke William too was dead, and he, hearing this, tore off his helmet, a somewhat unsafe thing to do in such a fight, and roared out that he was alive, swearing—as usual by the Splendour of God—that the land of England should yet be his by nightfall.

So they laid on again. William's horse went down under a pike-thrust. He clove the pike-man to the chin and asked one of his knights to lend him his horse. The knight refused, thinking more of his skin than his loyalty, whereupon William pitched him out of the saddle, swung himself up and led another charge against the ever-dwindling ring of heroes who were still hammering away with their battle-axes—and this time the stout line wavers and breaks, the mail-clad warriors pour up the slope, shouting that the day is won; axe and sword ring loud and fast on helm and mail, the Saxons reel back, closing round the body of their king and the staff of his banner.

"*Dex aide! Dex aide! Ha-Rou! Ha-Rou!*"

Duke William's men yell and roar again as they scramble over heaps of mangled corpses filling the trenches and blocking the breaches in the palisades. Another moment or two of brief, bitter, and bloody struggle and the last Saxon ring breaks and melts away, and Hastings and England are won.

What followed is history so familiar that few words more from me will suffice. What Duke William had done in his own land he did after the same methods in the land that had been the Saxons'. Cruel, bloody and savage they were beyond all doubt, but it is a question whether, even in the doing, they were more disastrous than the ferocious anarchy and the unceasing plunder and outrage and murder that had disgraced the weak and divided rule of the Saxon kings. In their effect they were a thousandfold better. Duke William believed that order was Heaven's first law, and, by whatever means he had at hand, he was honestly determined to make it earth's as well. And he succeeded, which after all is not an unsatisfactory test of honest merit. How well he did so let us ask not one of his own chroniclers or troubadours, but the man who wrote the story of his own conquered people, and this is what he will tell us:

"Truly he was so stark a man and wroth that no man durst do anything against his will. Bishops he set off their bishoprics, and abbots off their abbacies and thanes in prison. And at last he did not spare his brother Odo. Him he set in prison. Betwixt other things we must not forget the good peace that he made in this land, so that a man that was worth aught might travel over the kingdom unhurt with his bosom full of gold. And no man durst slay another though he had suffered never so mickle evil from the other."

Such was this grim, stern, Thor's-Hammer of a man, who by his strength and cunning hewed into shape that which in after days was to become the corner-stone of the glorious, world-shadowing fabric which we call the British Empire.

("*Edward Longlegs*" *next week.*)

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A Heroine FOR A Story.

A TALE OF THE TIME OF RICHELIEU.

"SPEAK! Let me know the worst!"

The Countess of Armile fell back in her chair with a gesture of despair. Her daughter, Isabelle, and the Abbé de Rainy stood by her, endeavouring to afford some consolation in this dark hour. The young man whom she had addressed stood before her, hesitating to say the words which should fill both mother and daughter with anguish.

"Dear aunt," he said at last, "I would not permit anyone else to convey this news; but now that the moment has come for me to fulfil this sad duty, my heart fails me. My unfortunate uncle has been found guilty of treason and sentenced"—he hesitated and then added—"to death."

A groan escaped from the lips of the Countess. Isabelle turned paler, but made no sound.

"He made no defence," continued the young man. "There is some mystery about his strange silence. It is incomprehensible." He was about to continue when the priest stopped him.

"The Countess can bear no more now," he exclaimed. "Leave us, and communicate to your cousin in another room the details of the trial."

At a sign from the Abbé, Isabelle followed her cousin into an adjoining room.

Once out of sight and hearing of her mother, Isabelle gave way to her pent-up feelings and wept bitterly. Henri tried to comfort his fair cousin, but he was forced to wait until the paroxysm was over.

"Oh, Henri," she exclaimed in broken accents. "They will kill my father!"

"I have an important message from him for you," was his reply. He felt that he could do nothing to alleviate her sorrow, which almost unnerved him. He hoped that his words would have the effect of distracting her attention somewhat, and he was not disappointed.

"What is it, Henri? Tell me! Quick!" She took a step forward and, placing her hand upon his shoulder, looked at him entreatingly.

"I saw your father and was able to speak to him for a few seconds; I saw him as they brought him from the torture chamber."

A shudder ran through Isabelle's frame at the last words.

"He was lying on the cold stones," continued Henri, "and his guards left him for a while alone. I slipped to his side and spoke to him."

"My poor father!"

"This is what he said: 'Henri, listen! The secret which I have suffered so much to keep would become known if my enemies obtained possession of a certain letter. I was reading that letter—I had just finished it—when the officers came to arrest me. I had no time to destroy it; all I could do was to drop it quickly into Isabelle's jewel-case and shut the lid down. Tell my daughter that I command her, as she loves me, whether she has read it or not, to burn that letter. I am dying to preserve the secret which it contains.'"

"A letter in my jewel-case!" said Isabelle wonderingly. "I have not opened the case since my father was arrested. What can it mean?"

"I feel that it contains proof of your father's innocence, but for some reason he wishes the contents of the letter to remain unknown," replied her cousin.

"Can nothing be done to save my father?" cried Isabelle, her tears flowing afresh.

"There is only one chance," said Henri dubiously, "and that is but a poor one. The Cardinal is coming into this town to-night. A word from Richelieu would save him. Can that word be obtained from him? I fear not. This conspiracy of the Duke de Montmorency, had it succeeded, would have overthrown the Cardinal, so he is not likely to forgive anyone who took part in it."

"I will try to get an audience with him," exclaimed Isabelle, a ray of hope lighting up her pale features. "Can you think of any way of helping me, Henri?"

"There is a man who might be able to assist me," replied the young fellow. "I will go to him and see what he says."

"Yes, yes! Go at once!" said Isabelle eagerly.

Henri lifted his cousin's hand to his lips, and hurried from the room without uttering another word.

Left to herself, Isabelle stood for a second with her hand up to her forehead as though trying to collect her thoughts; then she remembered the message delivered by Henri, and ran into the drawing-room, where the case had remained untouched, forgotten, since the day of the Count's arrest, when she had locked it. She hastily opened it. There lay the letter as it had been dropped on the jewels.

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Her father had said "whether she has read it or not." Then he thought she had most probably read it. Would it be a breach of honour to read it now? It contained a secret which might save his life; why should she not save him? The temptation was a strong one; she hesitated—and then read the letter.

It was from the Duke of Montmorency, and it clearly proved her father's innocence, but it implicated several important personages who were not suspected.

It was a reply to a letter written by the Count, urging the Duke to give up his "mad project, in which I will take no part." Her father's very words were quoted. Then the Duke tried to persuade the Count to alter his decision, and mentioned the names of those highly-placed persons who were secretly ready to assist. Now she understood her father's silence; he refused to purchase his life by destroying others whose names had been given to him in confidence. What could she do? Nothing! She could not make use of the letter, yet it proved that her father had not taken part in the conspiracy. Her brain reeled; she staggered to a chair and sank into it in a swoon.

How long she remained in that unconscious condition she knew not. Strange sounds reached her in a dreamy fashion; gradually they became more distinct, and consciousness came back with a rush. She sprang up to find herself face to face with a young officer and half-a-dozen soldiers. The officer held something in his hand, which he was about to read; a pang of fear shot through her heart as she recognised the fatal letter.

"That letter belongs to me!" she exclaimed, in as calm a tone as she could assume, holding out her hand. "I was not aware that it was part of the duty of an officer to read private letters which he might find in houses he entered so unceremoniously as you appear to have entered this residence."

"I have authority for entering this house," replied the officer, flushing. "And I am here in search of a letter."

Isabelle had great difficulty in keeping her composure. The existence of the letter was known—or at least suspected. A thought flashed across her mind. If she allowed the letter to be taken, her father would be saved. But at what a cost! And she would be guilty of a base act of treachery if she let it go without doing her utmost to prevent it. Her doubts were quickly dispelled; her duty was clear and she must do it—even at the cost of her father's life!

"That letter is mine; return it to me!" she said in a tone of command. And as he still hesitated, she stepped forward and deftly drew it from between his fingers before he was aware of it.

Isabelle breathed again; the letter was safe and had not been read. The officer's face clouded angrily at being thus baulked in front of his men. Isabelle expected that he would try to regain possession of the letter or make a strict search for the one he had come to find, but to her delight and surprise, he uttered a sharp word of command to his men, and all marched from the room.

* * * * *

Cardinal Richelieu paced up and down the spacious apartment, while his secretary waited for him to begin. It was a favourite amusement of the great Minister, when State affairs were running smoothly, to turn his attention to literature and write some treatise or dissertation. The discovery of the conspiracy initiated by the Duke of Montmorency, and the punishment of the Duke and his accomplices, had cleared the political atmosphere, and the Cardinal was busy with a drama, the subject of which he regarded as a splendid conception.

"Where was I when that fellow disturbed me with his story about the letter?" he asked. "Oh! I know! I fear he has upset my train of thought; there may be something in that letter after all."

But the Cardinal was doomed to be interrupted that morning. He had scarcely began to dictate when a servant announced that the daughter of the Count of Armile begged an audience of him on a matter of great importance. The great man frowned.

"Show her in here," he said, after reflecting for a few seconds.

Two minutes later Isabelle entered, followed by Henri.

"Monseigneur," stammered Isabelle, her carefully prepared speech taking wings as she found herself confronted by the powerful Cardinal, "my father is innocent." She could say no more; her heart was too full.

"Your father was a friend of the Duke of Montmorency," said the Cardinal after sharply scrutinising the condemned man's daughter. "He received a letter which he wished to have destroyed—gaolers sometimes have sharp ears. That letter was from the Duke."

Isabelle's heart sank. The officer had recognised the handwriting. Her father's fate was certain unless she produced the letter, but that meant betrayal of the Duke's unsuspected friends. It was a terrible trial; the Count's life was at stake, she could prove his innocence, yet——

"Monseigneur! That letter proves that he is not guilty of taking part in this conspiracy. As you are powerful, spare him. Let me die in his stead. Oh, have pity, have pity!" cried Isabelle, falling on her knees before him.

"If you have proof of his innocence, produce it!" said the Cardinal coldly.

"It is here." Scarcely knowing what she did, the girl arose and drew the letter from her pocket. As she held it towards Richelieu, the face of her father seemed to rise before her eyes and she remembered.

"No!" she exclaimed, drawing back her outstretched hand. "I cannot show it! I will be true to my father, even though it cost him his life!"

She walked to the fire and threw the letter on the flaming logs. All present watched it as the flames devoured it. Then, with a heavy heart, Isabelle saluted the Cardinal and turned to go.

"Stay!" commanded Richelieu. "You are a heroine such as I am trying to portray in my drama. My secretary says that such a one is not to be found in all France, but you have proved the truth of my conception. I believe your story and I will pardon your father!"

Unheeding the incoherent words with which Isabelle tried to express her thanks, Cardinal Richelieu sat down at the table and wrote a few words on a sheet of paper, which he handed to Henri, who was endeavouring to calm his cousin.

"Take her away and see that she has every attention," he said in a kindly tone. "And tell the Count of Armile not to meddle in conspiracies against the State."

With a motion of his hand he waved them away. As they left the apartment in bewilderment he turned to his secretary, and, with a gleam of triumph in his eyes, said:

"Who is right—you or I? Now I can go on."

GEO. DAY.

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A PARDONABLE SIN.

Sir Robert Melton sat at the writing-table which had belonged to his dead wife. In his hand was a paper, slightly yellow with age, which he was reading for the hundredth time; a letter, written on a delicate kind of note paper which he had never used. It was dated ten years previously, addressed to his wife and signed "Lionel."

He had been seated in that position for over an hour, a look of intense anguish on his handsome face, convulsively clutching the missive with one hand while the other was pressed against his forehead.

What was the meaning of this letter, which, judging by the piece of silk ribbon found attached to it, was not the only one received from the writer?

His wife had been dead two weeks only. The day before her death she had been found insensible on the floor, close to this writing-table. Letters and papers were strewn about the floor, as if she had hurriedly sought for something, and there was a smell of burning. She had left her death-bed—for everyone knew that her case was hopeless, and she herself had perceived it by the doctor's earnest manner—and had made her way into this (an adjoining) room, where she had been discovered insensible.

The next day she had passed away with strange words on her lips, crying that she heard sweet music as she had heard it years before, talking of her child—their union had never been so blessed—and calling: "Lionel."

He had taken it for delirium; all of it. And now, on looking over her knick-knacks, performing a last labour of love, he had drawn from the back of a drawer, where it had slipped and remained hidden, this—love letter?

Had her eight years of married life been one long lie? No, no! He could not believe it! Yet——? Once more he read the letter:

Margaret,—The child is dead. The last link between us is broken. *I* am sick unto death and shall soon follow the little one. Then you will be free.—Lionel.

At the bottom of the sheet was a piece of music; was it the music that his wife had spoken about? Was this child hers? Who was this Lionel? Oh, what horrible mystery was this?

A thought struck him. He went to the piano and tried to play the bars of music written at the end of the letter. At first he could not find the right keys, although he was a good musician; he struck the wrong ones and produced wild discords. But at length he mastered his feelings sufficiently, and played it correctly. A weird piece of composition; sad and melancholy, it pictured the last moments of a human creature in such a vivid manner that Sir Robert shuddered and hastily snatched up the letter and quitted his seat. Whoever composed that work, for he was convinced that it was but a fragment of a masterpiece, was a genius. And he was Margaret's lover? What else could he think? He walked up to her portrait and gazed at it.

"No, Margaret!" he exclaimed. "I cannot—I will not believe it. There is some mystery here which must be cleared up. For your sweet sake I will unravel it, and until then I will believe nothing!"

And it seemed to him that there came over the features of the portrait a look of gratitude and happiness.

The first thing to be done was to find this man Lionel; the task seemed a hopeless one, but he must make the effort. Where could he be found? If that music were his own, he would be amongst the foremost composers of the day, but he could discover none bearing that name. Probably it was not his own composition, or "Lionel" might be an assumed name. Or the man was dead—did not the letter say as much? Ah! Then there was no chance of clearing up the mystery of that letter! Nevertheless, he would make the effort; he could no longer stay in Melton Abbey.

For two years Sir Robert Melton wandered from place to place all over Europe in search of "Lionel," trying to discover the opera of which he knew just a few bars. But all in vain. He returned to his home at the expiration of that time, broken in spirit, weary of life.

Strange are the ways of Fate. He had been home but two days when, as he was passing through the main street of the nearest town to Melton Abbey, a man thrust into his hand the programme of a circus. His first impulse was to throw it down, but out of curiosity he glanced at it. It was of the usual kind—wonderful acrobatic feats of persons with names almost unpronounceable, performing horses and the like. With a smile of contempt he began to screw it up into a ball, but stopped and started as though struck by some unseen hand. Smoothing out the paper, he read the last item:

THE GREAT LIONEL

The Wonderful Musical Clown.

Was this the man he had been hunting for all over Europe? A clown! Surely not! He dismissed the matter from his mind, but some strange power impelled him to go and watch this man's performance. It was nearly time for the circus to begin; he hurried towards the hall and entered.

With ill-disguised indifference he watched the performers. He was not in the least interested in the marvellous (?) doings of the acrobats with the hard names; he was waiting to see the clown, the man Lionel.

When Lionel made his bow to an admiring audience, the supercilious curl of Sir Robert's lip became more pronounced. He was only an ordinary clown. *He* could not be the man for whom he had been searching so long. But the programme said he was a musical clown. He would wait a little longer.

After indulging in a few of the usual antics, the man walked to the side and received a violin from an attendant. With the skill of a practised player he ran the bow over the strings, tightened them and began to play. Sir Robert sat spellbound; *habitué* of the opera as he was, he doubted if he had ever heard anything so exquisitely performed. The piece of music represented the last moments of a dying man; no words were necessary to explain it; it was so vivid that even the least intelligent of the audience understood and appreciated it, and many were moved to tears. As the end approached, the clown first sank on his knees and then lay flat on the floor, playing the moving chords all the while. Fainter and fainter grew the sounds from the violin; then, with feelings impossible to describe adequately, Sir Robert heard the bars which he had played from the music written at the end of *that* letter.

The next minute, the clown was playing a lively air indicative of an awakening to life, and the charm of the

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music was over for the Baronet. His agitation was too great to permit him to join in the well-deserved applause; he hurried from his box and made his way to the private door where the artistes entered. He was determined to see this man and learn more about him.

"Can I see the clown?" he asked, his voice quivering with suppressed excitement.

The doorkeeper looked at the new-comer in surprise, and shook his head.

"But I *must* see him!" exclaimed the Baronet, slipping a silver coin into the man's hand.

"I'll do what I can, sir," said the man. "But there he is, along the passage. Suppose you go up to him yourself?"

Sir Robert needed no second invitation, and he was soon face to face with the mysterious Lionel.

"May I speak to you in private?" asked the Baronet, speaking courteously, and as calmly as he could.

"No!" was the abrupt response. "I don't perform in private!"

Melton hesitated a moment and then said, with an effort, and scanning the clown's face narrowly the while:

"I come from Margaret."

With a startled cry Lionel sprang towards him and grasped him by the shoulder.

"Margaret! What do you know about Margaret? Where is she?" Then, collecting himself by a great effort, he continued with a forced laugh: "Bah! What is your Margaret to me?"

The Baronet's countenance betrayed the strength of his emotion. There was something behind that letter. What was the mystery between the two? He must know the truth at all costs! Taking out his card, he handed it to the clown.

"I must speak to you alone and at once!" he said peremptorily. "Put on your things and come with me now!"

At that moment a child came running up to the clown.

"Dad, if you don't make haste and dress you won't have any time for yourself before the evening performance."

The clown stooped and kissed her tenderly. She was about ten years old; a pretty child, with curly, golden hair and a sweet, lovable face. In appearance she resembled her father.

"If you like to come to my rooms," said Lionel, "I will talk to you. They may not be so comfortable as Melton Abbey, but they are close by, and I have but little time."

"Anywhere you please," returned the Baronet.

Half-an-hour later the two men were seated in a small, poorly-furnished room in a lodging-house near the circus. The child, Angela, had been sent down to the landlady while her father had a talk with "the gentleman." The Baronet had had some difficulty in persuading the man to speak, but a final appeal "for Margaret's sake" opened his lips.

"I was not always a clown," he began, with a tinge of bitterness in his voice; "I was one of the foremost musicians of the time. I was received in Society, and might have risen to the highest position in the world of music if—well! I was always careless and good-for-nothing!" He sighed, and continued: "About thirteen years ago I met Margaret. You know what her position was; you know the kind of man she had for a father—grasping, selfish, ready to make use of his daughter's good looks and personal charms for his own advancement. I became infatuated with her, and I thought she loved me. She thought so apparently, for she was prepared to marry me." Sir Robert started. "It was arranged that we should be married clandestinely, for Margaret did not know my exact position—she was captivated by my skill as a musician and, presumably, by my manner—and she feared that her father would stop it if he knew."

"Why did you not tell her?" asked the Baronet.

Lionel shook his head mournfully. "The truth is that it was simply an infatuation on both sides. But with this difference: that after marriage my infatuation deepened into maddening love—all sacrificing love—whereas hers cooled into indifference. Her father learnt of our union and was furious. A child was born to us, the one you saw with me, Angela."

"Go on!" cried the other hoarsely.

"Seeing the way in which Margaret was being treated by her father, and that she was growing more and more indifferent towards me, although she idolised our child, I formed a plan for her release and punishment. I do not intend to excuse my conduct," he added as Sir Robert uttered an exclamation.

"I took the child and went away, to Margaret's grief and the father's delight. I wrote to her occasionally. Then I pretended that the child had caught diphtheria. The next letter announced the child's death; that was the letter you found. She must have written the music. Shortly after that, I got someone to write to her, telling her that I was dead. I gave no address in those three letters. I actually got a man to go to her and say that he had been to my funeral. Margaret believed she was free, I suppose, and married you. I never let her know my whereabouts, and she had never heard my true name. It is only since I have descended to the clown business that I have again taken the name of Lionel."

The story was finished. The Baronet understood it all now. Poor Margaret! Her only fault was that she did not tell him.

Dazed and overwhelmed, Sir Robert Melton left the clown and made his way homewards. He had a vague notion that he had promised to go again and see Angela, but he could recollect no more.

On the following afternoon a man came to the Abbey with a verbal message for the Baronet. The clown, Lionel, had met with a serious accident, and was in a dying state; he had asked for Sir Robert Melton. The Baronet, whose horse was saddled ready for a ride, dashed off towards the town, but with all his haste he was only just in time.

The clown's eyes lit up feebly as the Baronet entered; he tried to speak, but no sound came. With a last effort, he lifted his hand and pointed to the child. Sir Robert understood.

"I will be a father to her; she shall be my daughter as well as Margaret's!" he said.

A faint smile spread over Lionel's features; and with a deep sigh he expired.

Sir Robert Melton was as good as his word. As soon as her father was buried, he took the child to the Abbey. One of the first things he did was to take her to Margaret's room and lead her up to the portrait of his wife.

"Angela, my child," he said, "that is a picture of your mother!"

And it seemed to him that a look of mingled love and gratitude appeared on the features of the portrait.

G. D.

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The Man of Gold.

There was great grief in Burgos when it was known that the beautiful Incarnacion, the idol of the city, was dead. She would grace their streets no more with her pink cheeks like the oleanders which grew in the Moorish palace at Granada.

She had been seen the day before entering the house of the Jew Ishmael, the usurer who refused to help his old parents in their poverty. And when she came out of the abode of this unclean Jew, she tottered along in the darkening night, her clear, honest eyes fixed on the ground. In the morning the monks of the monastery of Miraflores found her body on the banks of the Arlanzon.

And from every street, and every house of the city, arose a cry of hatred towards the murderer.

The young girls wept, remembering their companion; the old women gave vent to harsh words and maledictions; while the men looked at each other darkly, swearing under their breath.

The peasants, coming from the mountains on their mules, were amazed at the uproar, and asked if the heathen had captured the standard of Castille. And when they heard the crime of the usurer they joined in the public anger, for nearly all owed him money for advances to be paid at harvest time.

"This Jew deserves to be put to death."

Some young cavaliers were playing dice. One of them cried:

"I claim the head of the Jew to hang at the door of my house." Another said: "I want his skin for my tambourine."

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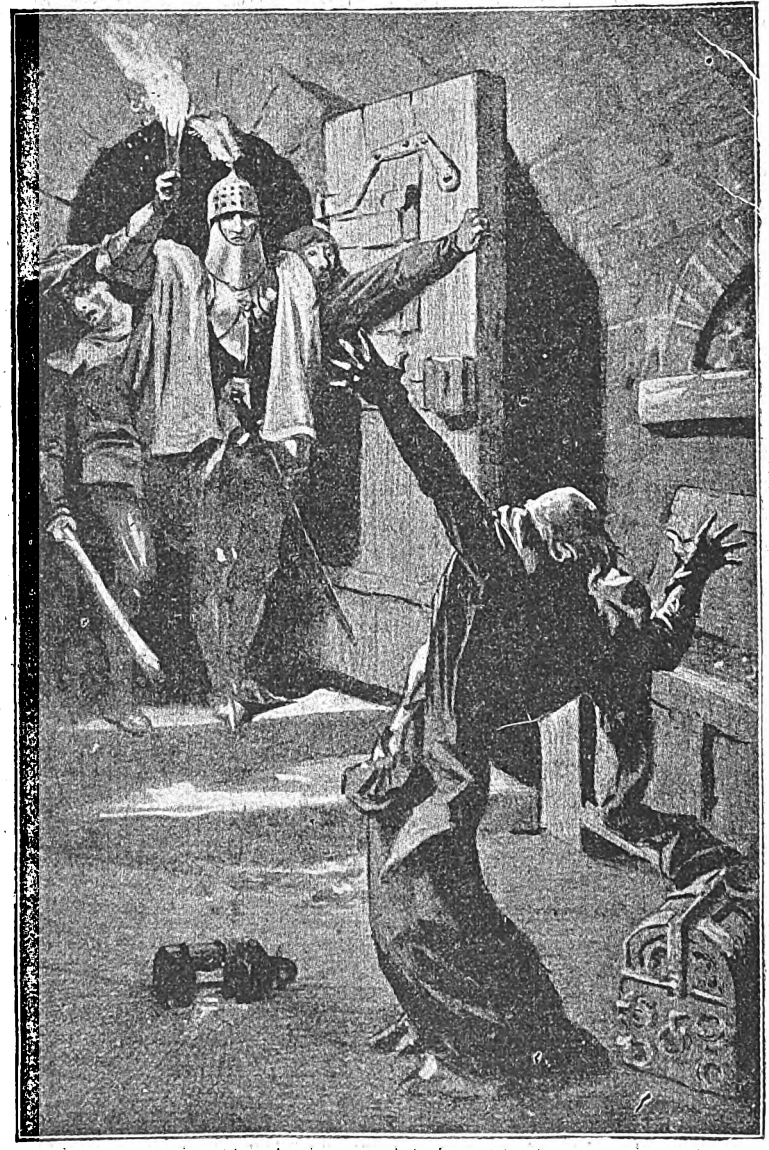
"I speak for the same," said a third, "because I wish to give to the ladies of Huelvas a crucifix covered with the skin of a heathen."

"The skin of a murderer—it would be sacrilege. I will take it myself, I will make an image of a Judas to expose in a public place, behind a grating, so that all who pass may revile it."

"To please everyone then we must toss for it. The highest gets the head and skin. The others share the money."

"Silence," cried a young knight, clad in white armour, whom no one had recognised. "Silence! You would not disgrace your knighthood by soiling your hands with such a fellow. I will punish him in the name of justice, and none can dispute my privilege."



The word came from his throat with a rattle, and he fell.

A monk dressed in a black and white robe advanced.

"I claim this man. We are told in the Gospel, 'Thou shalt not kill.' It is God who disposes of the lives of men. This one cannot be condemned without the judgment of our tribunal, of us, the Inquisitors of Castille."

The knight bowed, knelt on one knee, and kissed the robe of the monk.

"'My father, your words are just. But this man betrayed me and delivered me to the heathen. Let me be the instrument of your justice."

"Who are you—you, the unknown one?"

"I am the Chevalier Pedro de Miranda."

Then all recoiled a step, as from a ghost.

They remembered that some time ago a knight of this name made all the heathen of Granada tremble by his exploits. One day he was betrayed and poisoned. His body had disappeared; they thought it had been given to the Mussulmans.

And no one had heard of him any more.

The monk blessed him and said:

"This is a miracle of Heaven, peace be with you. We will give you your wish."

* * * *

In truth the Jew Ishmael had not slept peacefully. Not that he felt remorse in any way whatever for striking the young girl when she had reproached him for allowing his parents to live in misery, whilst he was enriching himself by defrauding others. But Incarnacion, her head reeling from the savage blow, had so frightened him by her imprecations that the terrors of superstition were awakened in his soul, and disturbing visions haunted him.

He could not rest, and before the first rays of daylight he arose from his bed. With the wariness of a cat, he glided through the village towards the banks of the Arlanzon, on the road to Miraflores, to claim the payment of a debt.

But there, on the sand by the river, Ishmael saw a black form. And upon approaching nearer, he recognised the corpse of Incarnacion, who had had no strength to go further on her way to the shelter and care of the monastery. Then the Jew was afraid, and ran away as quickly as he could. And as he turned to look at the place where the body lay, he saw numerous mysterious lights surrounding it. The monks were taking away the body for burial.

But Ishmael imagined that it was a band of demons, and he felt that vengeance was near. He ran, terrified, towards his house. There he descended in great haste to the cave where his gold was hidden, and plunged his hands among the doubloons. For he knew from the Arabs that the sound of metal always put phantoms to flight.

Above, he heard cries and shouts which he realised were approaching him. And now they were at the end

of the long corridor which led to the underground refuge. In the darkness a light appeared. Ishmael jingled the pieces of gold still more. In vain. The light came nearer and nearer.

And before him a phantom rose, gigantic, clad in white armour, with a torch in his hand.

The Jew had scarcely strength to murmur: "Mercy." The word came from his throat with a rattle, and he fell, his face on the ground.

"Come, you rascally Jew, lift your head and look. Do you not recognise your victim?"

"My victim. Yes. I am a criminal, I am a sinner. Mercy."

And the Jew remained stretched on the ground, not daring to lift his eyes, and trembling like a leaf blown by the wind.

"Well, are you a whipped dog that you crawl thus on all fours?"

"By Javah! Incarnacion! mercy! look! Here is all my money. There are in these coffers doubloons and doubloons. Take what you will. Leave me only enough to give my parents to comfort them in their old age."

Behind the knight a number of people had crept in without Ishmael's knowledge.

A grave voice spoke.

"This man has confessed his crime, it is therefore unnecessary to question him. It now rests with us, the inquisitors of the State, to pronounce judgment. We will do what we think best for the good of all before the assembled people. Let the officers of justice bind this Jew. Let them bring him before our tribunal, and let him prepare himself to hear his condemnation."

And when the people saw the pale, fear-stricken face of Ishmael, their shouts redoubled, and the usurer felt himself crushed under the hatred of the whole city.

Then the Inquisitor pronounced these words:

"The Gospel says: 'He who strikes with the sword will perish by the sword.' Therefore it is just that he who has caused the death of his fellow-creature because of his gold, perishes by his gold."

This sentence was received with acclamation by the people, and a recorder read a judgment in Latin, that Ishmael could not understand.

Then he was led to the prison.

The next day the goaler introduced the executioner, followed by men carrying earth in baskets.

The Jew thought his last hour had come. He was deprived of his clothes, and stretched on the ground, trembling with terror and cold.

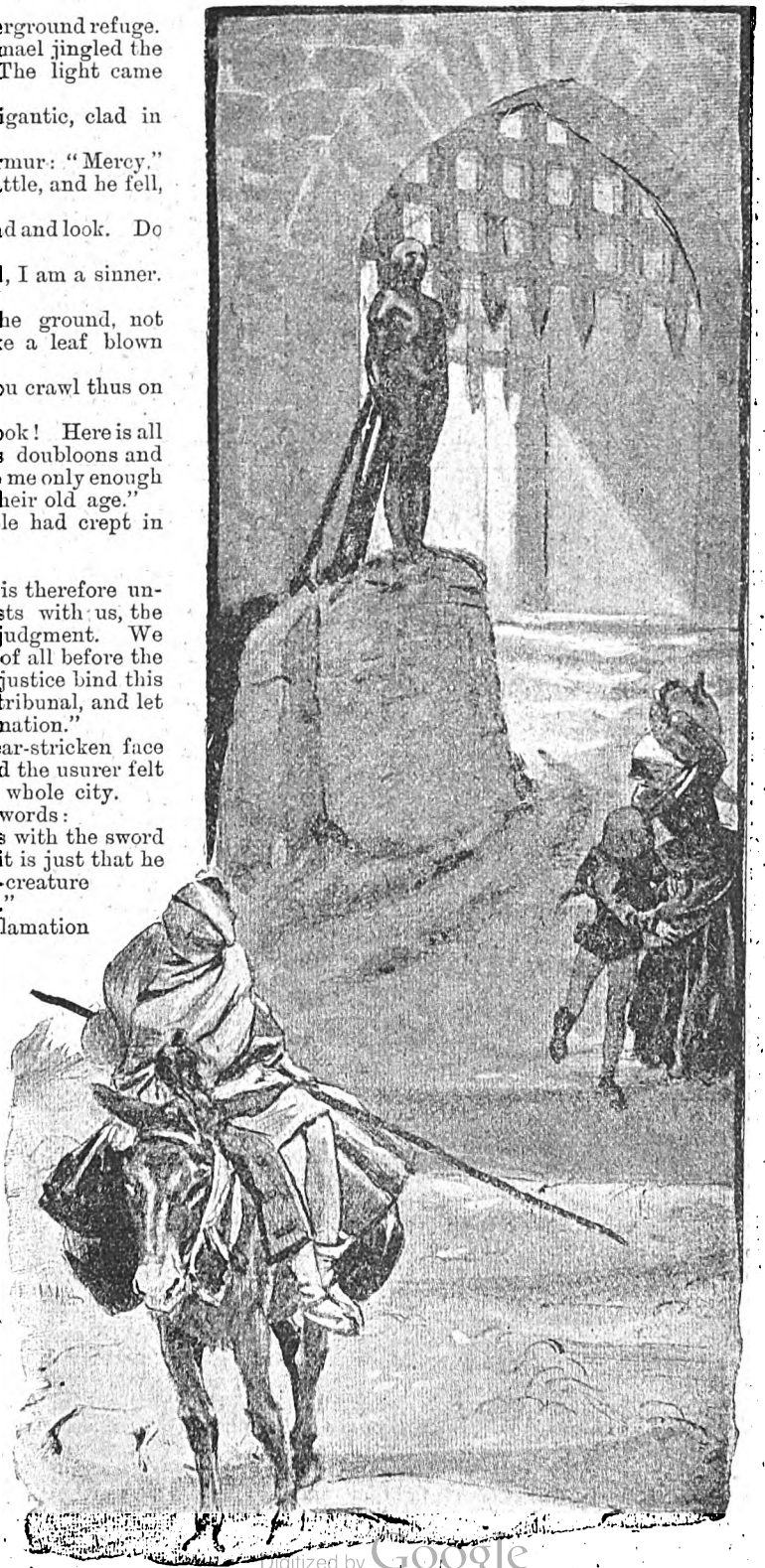
His agony was intensified by his ignorance of the punishment which awaited him. He shut his eyes and felt his body being covered with something moist, which seemed like wet paint, and in which he was buried alive. First his feet and his legs were covered, then his body was weighed down by something as heavy as lead; finally his head was inclosed in a mask of clay. And Ishmael awaited death.

But he soon lost consciousness.

When again his senses returned to him, he felt that his limbs were free.

Only the goaler was near him, and he thought he must have had a nightmare.

Many days passed.



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One morning, the door of his cell was again opened, and the officers of justice entered, stripped him, bound him with ropes, blindfolded him, and led him from the prison.

Once more Ishmael heard the curses of the city. And as he approached the scaffold, they removed the covering from his eyes.

Then he saw on a raised platform the Inquisitor of Castille with his assessors; then, below, the white knight on his horse, in the armour of a phantom; then the penitents in their monks' cowls, who awaited his corpse; then cursing and threatening, all around him, the crowd. Instead of the scaffold, a pedestal of marble was erected in the middle of the square, and on the pedestal stood, sparkling in the sunlight, a statue all of gold. Ishmael noticed that this extraordinary statue was separated down the middle in two pieces.

The executioner said to him: "Look at that statue; it is made entirely of gold from your coffers."

The Jew grew faint and weak.

The executioner added: "That statue is to be your tomb."

A minister of religion addressed the doomed man, exhorting him to repent and be converted. But the Jew heard nothing.

He saw far away the banks of the Arlanzon and the place where the body of Incarnacion lay. Then the executioner seized him. For the last time Ishmael saw the sky and the light of day. Then he was placed in the statue, the two parts were fastened together, and eternal darkness began for the sinner, while the statue shone like the sun in the eyes of man.

Thus it was that for many years a statue of gold stood at the gates of Burgos. M. E.

A ROMANCE OF CARNIVAL TIME.

CARNIVAL! Visions come to me of the maddest dances, of flowery assaults upon beauty-lined equipages of dominoes in all the rainbow colours, of masks—masks? ah, yes! and chiefly of *The* Mask!

In all that carnival time, in that brilliant Roman atmosphere, the memory of Her shines out like the sun at noon. Some six or seven times I had met her, always at balls, where the delicious mystery of the mask covered all faces. Perhaps—who knows?—I met her many a time at the Opera, the theatre, or on the promenades; but, if I did, I was unaware of it, and she, for her part, gave no sign.

She wore, invariably, a black domino, and the identical jewel decorated her breast—a golden leaf, with pearls. She wore it as a pin, and by it I knew her.

From the very first there had been something about her that fascinated me. She was not tall! The jealous cloak that hid her figure gave no more than the merest hint of grace and beauty of line. Between the edge of the black glove and the sleeve a morsel of the whitest arm peeped out, and where her neck flowed from her shoulders, the curves were of the most dainty, the skin of the fairest, the modelling the most beautiful.

It was bewitching, the way she turned her head, now and then, in just the most delicious hint of coquetry, conscious, perhaps, that the splendour of her neck was something that it would have been a crime to hide or forget. Small curls of crisp brown hair caressed that neck. Her mouth, too, I have seen—a mouth not too small, with full red lips that could laugh, laugh until they awoke the spirit of laughter in the most woe-begone heart. Those lips pout, too, sometimes, but they were none the less kissable.

Her gowns were always in the subtlest taste; she avoided excess of *chic* just as she avoided the common. And her feet were ever shod in a way that proved their owner as proud of them—as who would not have been?

Chance—dear chance!—brought us together. We talked and we laughed in the easy manner of people to whom the world of masks is familiar, and who intend to make the present hour bring all it can of jest and pleasant chatter. From the first our spirits leapt in unison, and our conversation swept on pleasantly with the buoyant flow of souls that understand each other.

We had no need of the weather, the season's music, its books or its players; we brushed aside at once all these mere topics *d'occasion*. Somehow, with her, one was never at a loss for the more intimate theme; the sense of fellowship of thought made me, at any rate, feel as if I had known her always. Then, at that first parting, I asked her if I were not to see her again.

"Oh, yes—in domino."

"And how am I to know you?"

She pointed to the golden pin. A week later we met again at the Grand Opera ball. Her fascination grew; there was no need of any of the usual aids to conversation; ourselves and life were interesting enough. And at this parting she told me, of her own accord, where I might see her again. Of course, only behind the mask.

So we would meet, first here, then there, and spend the hours together until she drove home. I could take her to the carriage but no further; she had made me promise never to follow her beyond that. I used to wonder if she came for my sake. As for me, I know well enough that it was for her sake that I haunted those ballrooms. And soon I was to realise why I went so gladly.

I was in love—with a domino! Who was she? Was she of the world of society or only of its half? A wife? Or a maid? When I would ask her, or try for the answer on all manners of byways, she would only laugh with that sweet, bell-like laugh of hers, and ripple out the words:

"*Chi lo sa?*" ("Who can tell?")

And so I came to call her Madonna Chilosa.

There was nothing reckless about her conversation, nothing that was not delightful; yet she did not mind a witticism, now and then, that was a trifle bolder than the strictness of the drawing-room permits. But once when, in an unguarded moment, I pressed my lips to her hand for the faintest instant, she neither rapped me over the face with her fan nor flamed out into rage. She merely said, quite quietly, and almost pleadingly:

"Oh, don't do that, or I shall never come again."

And so I never repeated that moment. How it was that we escaped the perils of premature fencing with the

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weapons of flirtation remains a mystery to me; often as we might mention or discuss the thing called love, we yet allowed no application to ourselves. Sometimes I touched on subjects from the finer side of life; her answers puzzled me; short, oftimes happy and apt, she never would allow her remarks in these fields to take her far; it seemed as if she had culture, rather than the lack of it, to hide.

Don't think I did not try to see her face all this while! At the end of the very first ball I had asked her to unmask, but she only laughed, and fled. The same thing happened the second time. At the third, when we felt that we were good friends, that we could trust each other, she promised me that on the last night of the Carnival she would lift her mask for me—if I were good. If I were good? Of course I would be, under such a hope; and I stilled my curiosity as best I could, though at each meeting it grew like wildfire and with it another feeling.

Was she worth it all, this Mystery? Dared I hope that she deserved the love that leapt in me every time I saw her well-known domino-covered figure. Was she beautiful? Was she young? Or faded? Good? Or bad?

I was certain she was not ugly. And how could any woman be old with such a neck, such shoulders as those? Again, no schoolgirl could talk so cleverly, so intelligently, as she. What was the answer to the riddle? What would I learn when the mask capitulated. It seems absurd that a man who has seen the world with open eyes for more years than he cares to count, who has lived and loved, should have allowed a mask—a riddle—to disturb him so. But the fact remains that I thought of nothing else, dreamt of nothing else; and then there came one night when sleep never touched my eyes, and when I made the most foolish resolve, the maddest of plans for a solution of the mystery, the bringing it wholesale into my future.

And yet—one hardly likes to choose one's wife from behind a mask! One's wife! Yes, it had come to that; and I did not even know that she was not another's. Nothing—I knew of her absolutely nothing.

Yet the minute I was with Madonna Chilosa once more all doubt, all stress and strife in me was stilled; I chatted with her, looked into her eyes, listened to the music of her voice and felt myself happy.

And, then, too, there came to me the certainty that she was young and charming, and good and clever. But, an hour or so later, as I walked home through the chill night, doubt crawled gloomily back to me, and the old refrain, the old text for hesitation, awoke and would not die. "But if—but if——"

* * * * *

To him who waits come even the dying of the Carnival. It was the last night. We were together, she and I, in a dear little nook of the ballroom, a table between us and a bottle of Ruinart. It was the first since I had known her. Known her! I misuse the word; but it serves. Before this it had been nothing but ices, lemonades, and such-like trivialities. "It is for the last time!" had been my plea, and so she had smiled and said, "Very well, then; to say good-bye."

Was it a fancy of mine or was it really a tremour in her voice? I filled her glass and she lifted the veil of her mask a trifle, while my gaze went thirstily to her mouth.

"To-night, at last, I shall see your face," I said. My voice was almost choking with emotion. She laughed a little softly.

We talked of other things. We were both of us strangely moved; our words came more spasmodically; our silences were longer. Once, when my hand touched hers, she held mine for an instant. Only an instant, but I am sure there was a faint, sweet pressure.

Our glasses rang together.

"To the next hour's happiness!"

"Here's happiness—in this hour and all others!"

"And here's to you—you dear one, fair one!"

"Dear? Fair?"

"Oh, yes. I know—I know you are!"

"*Chi lo sa!*"

Of a sudden we were quiet. There in the hurly-burly of the Carnival's last feverish fire, ours was the only silent space. Every moment the rooms grew hotter, the people were uproarious. There was intoxication in the air.

"Tell me—do you love me?" This was the foolish way in which I broke our silence. "Why don't you answer? At least—at least you could—say no."

"Neither a yes nor a no would help you."

Still mystery and always mystery. But twelve o'clock came.

Twelve. Slow, sonorous—almost gruesome—coming into this whirl of folly, came the bells of the cathedral striking the hour.

"Twelve!" I cried.

"Yes," she said. "Ash Wednesday."

I took her hand. "You will keep your promise and unmask?"

"Yes, if *you* wish it."

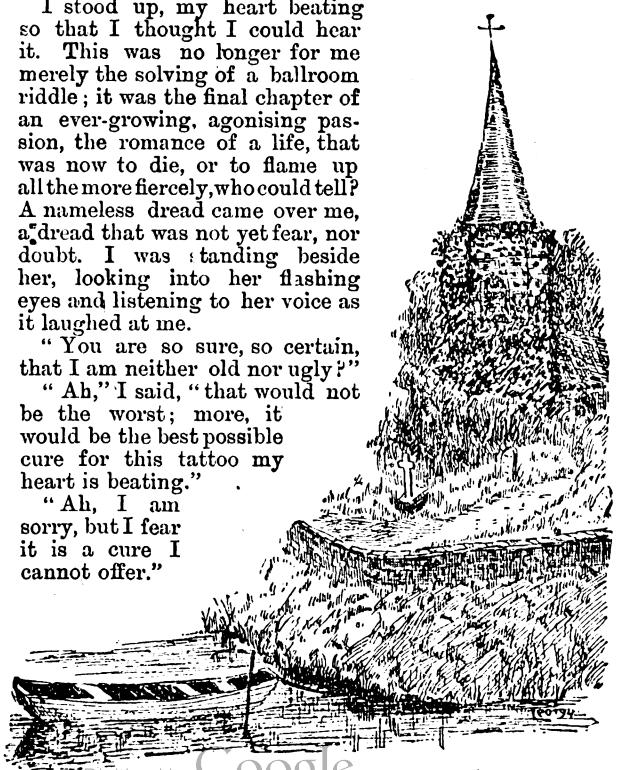
Another moment she hesitated, then she began fingering the fastenings of her mask. The knot was obstinate. "You will have to help me," she said.

I stood up, my heart beating so that I thought I could hear it. This was no longer for me merely the solving of a ballroom riddle; it was the final chapter of an ever-growing, agonising passion, the romance of a life, that was now to die, or to flame up all the more fiercely, who could tell? A nameless dread came over me, a dread that was not yet fear, nor doubt. I was standing beside her, looking into her flashing eyes and listening to her voice as it laughed at me.

"You are so sure, so certain, that I am neither old nor ugly?"

"Ah," I said, "that would not be the worst; more, it would be the best possible cure for this tattoo my heart is beating."

"Ah, I am sorry, but I fear it is a cure I cannot offer."



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"Do you know that I am tempted to leave the veil unlifted, you dear, veiled picture! Perhaps—perhaps it were the wiser way."

"Perhaps."

And suddenly there welled up in me the resolution to leave my unknown in her *incognito*, and the clearer my resolve grew the quieter the torment in my brain. To leave the dream a dream; to keep the tender memory of the mystery—that was the right, the real way! Who could tell? Perhaps all the magic charm that drew me to this fair, masked mystery might pass and perish on the instant that the veil was drawn aside. A single furrow here, a wrinkle there, might shatter all the sweet illusion. Should I, of my free will, remove this page from the thin volume of my happy moments?

I am just in time to prevent.

"No," I said, "I leave you the mask. Perhaps it is better for us both."

"In one way or another, surely," was all she said.

I had filled the glasses again, and we drank to my sentiment:

"To our meeting again, somewhere, somehow, by some good chance. May it come to pass, and happily!"

"It may be! *Chi lo sa!*" And she emptied the glass.

As she drank her eyes shimmered as with a mist. Lifting the veil of the mask, she showed the fair redness of her mouth; and as I watched there came that battle in my breast. Then, in another instant I had won the battle. I was calmness itself.

A few moments we lingered together, thinking of the weeks that were now ended, and noting the crowd of people that surged about us.

Without a word we rose to go. It was the end. With the knowing care of a husband I helped her into her cloak and accompanied her to her carriage. There was a last pressure of the hands, a last hesitation. I felt, somehow, that she was debating whether there was not yet something she would do or say at the last as a farewell; then she got in, and the wheels went swiftly over the street.

Gone! Gone!

I went home slowly, alone. The damp breeze of spring cooled my brow. The streets were crowded with masqueraders—loud, song-singing, wild-walking. What would be their portion from the Carnival? Dull heads and empty pockets, much wasted time and energy and feeling.

Whereas my portion——

* * * * *

Ah well, Ash Wednesday is come again, another carnival is come and gone. But what a different carnival from that over yonder. This time I was as happy as a lover who has no doubts, no fears of conscience, no jealousy. What I had loved so well was gone, was naught save mist—a mist, a mask. Can one have heart-ache for a phantom?

Why are we not wise enough to keep all our illusions in this wise?

And yet, and yet, deep down beneath it all, serving as seed for all this calm, this peace, this happiness, was there not the hope, the dream, the fancy, that some day, from the whirlpool of life, a pair of dear, familiar eyes might yet gaze upon me, and all this vague love for a masquerader blossom forth to a real, tangible, lifelong happiness?

Chi lo sa!

* * * * * *

Heigho! Was it months ago, or years, that I wrote that chronicle of two carnivals? I can remember the vivid glow of my hope as if it were all in the immediate yesterday. Hope! How would we live without it? And yet do the sweet longings that we surname hope give quite the complement of happiness that lies in fulfilment?

As I write, a roguish whisper brushes past my ear, a whisper that says: "*Chi lo sa!*"

And I take the whisperer and kiss away those roguish taunts, and wonder aloud how she ever found it in her heart to hide that sweetness from me for so long. No mask but kisses ever should have covered that face! Dear face! When it was masked it was a thousand torments—a text for battling hopes and fears. And now, now that it is fair before me always; now that it is mine for all time, how yet more wonderful in variety is it; what infinitely sweet shades of tenderness it shows, what——

Again a roguish person tells me I am writing foolishness. She hints that men tire easily; she shrugs her pretty shoulders, she begins to say once more: "*Chi lo sa,*" but I am just in time to prevent. For a kiss is always in time.

T. BRIDEGROOM.

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Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your lists until you are told to send them in.

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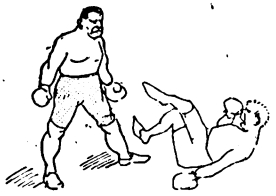

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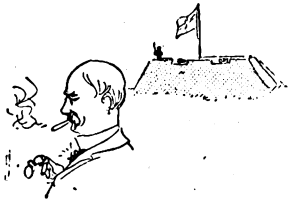

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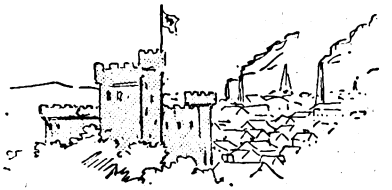

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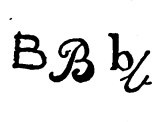

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Remember these Things.

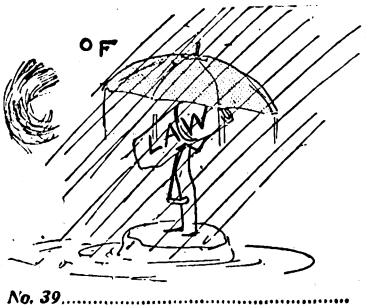
YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the titles of the people. The family names are not depicted.

Name.....

Address.....



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There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of Peers.—Whitaker's Almanack, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

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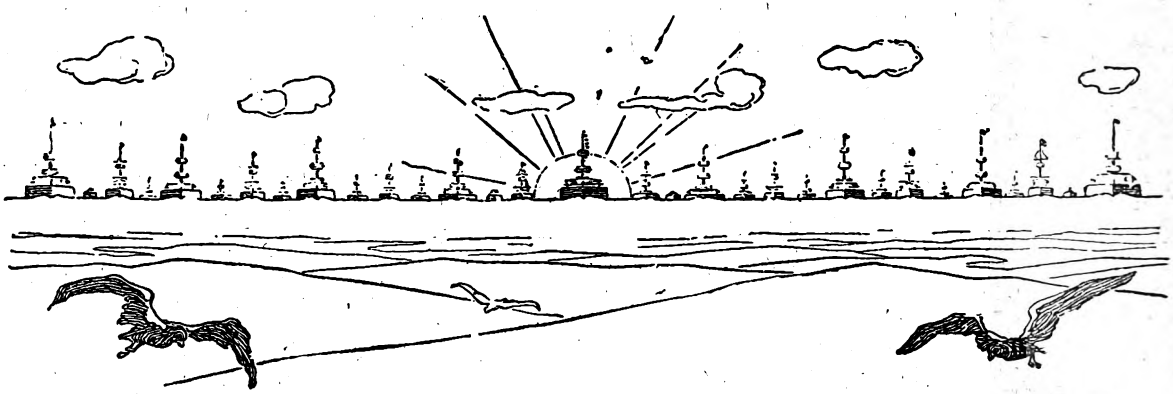

The Last Battle of the World.

By Percy Hart, in the *Illustrated American*, with Introductory and Incidental Remarks by Levin Carnac.

The Author looks into the near future and sees Uncle Sam officiating as Deputy Providence of the Planet—The Banded Nations of the Old World wait till he gives the signal for mutual annihilation—General smash—What Uncle Sam does with the pieces.

Although this really remarkable conception is put in the favourite and perhaps inevitable form of prophetic fiction, it is still something more than fiction, because it is a definite and pertinent expression of that sentiment which now appears to be the salient note of American policy. The United States, with the easy confidence and perhaps pardonably bombastic assurance of intelligent and lusty youth, seems to be fired with the gorgeous if unattainable ambition of playing the part of Deputy Providence of the Planet Terra, of arbitrator between the nations before they go to war, and of referee and final umpire of the death-grapple itself.

It is hardly to be expected that the intoxication of this enthusiasm should leave the American mind cool enough for a dispassionate study of the histories of nations which had risen to the dizzy heights of imperial glory, and plunged down to ruin through the fiery maelstrom of war, uncounted centuries before the Bird of Freedom startled the world with its first vociferation: while Atlantis was yet a dream and the Sunday newspaper a glory of the undawned.

It might, however, be reasonably expected that the American intellect should be cognisant of the history of the last couple of years. During that period the would-be Arbiter of the Nations and Deputy-Providential Peace-Preserver has thrice deliberately endangered the peace of the world, and once—to the eternal shame of those who profess to be its rulers—destroyed, perhaps for ever, the brightest prospect that human eyes have yet seen of ranging all the forces of the dominant race of earth under the banners of peace, progress, and civilisation. So much for the facts; the fiction is as follows:

It is the year nineteen hundred and something—the date, as usual, is left conveniently open—the whole world, saving the United States, has gradually ranged itself under two leaderships—that of Great Britain and that of Russia. The United States has preserved absolute neutrality and kept her counsels with such skill that the wiliest diplomatists of Europe "knew not on which side the impenetrable heart of Columbia lay." No details are given of the methods taken to gag the Press and throttle the stump-orators in and outside of the Representative Chambers, but of course this must have been accomplished somehow.

At length the United States Government modestly offers its services as general umpire and arbiter of the destinies of the world. Curiously enough the nations read but heeded not, as thus: "The roar of war-like preparations rolled through every land.... The very earth trembled with the thunder of big guns at the testing grounds.... The beasts of the fields huddled in corners and shuddered as before a coming storm.... At last the gauntlet was flung and the official declaration of war went forth...."

At this solemn juncture, the Bird of Freedom flapped up on to the fence once more and delivered its final message to the nations shuddering on the brink of mutual destruction. It was distinctly the most amazing message that even such an astonishing fowl could have crowed out. It was nothing less than a suggestion that the two hostile fleets into which the sea-forces of the Old World were divided, should mobilise themselves, one off Bordeaux and the other off Nova Scotia, each watched by a squadron of the United States Navy—one part of which, by a quite phenomenal stretch of journalistic imagination, the writer has somehow got across the Atlantic without the battleships sinking or turning turtle—to perform the office of Derby-course policeman and starter.

The signal being simultaneously given, naturally, by the firing of an American gun, the fleets were to start, steam into the middle of the Atlantic and there batter each other to pieces—of course always under the supervision of the American squadrons.

Here comes what is perhaps the most astounding part of the story. The allied nations, instead of telling the self-appointed world-policeman to mind his own business and scattering his toy squadrons in splinters over the face of the waters, actually accepted his suggestion and, in forgetfulness of all the lessons of war, and in defiance of all the principles of naval tactics, permitted themselves to be ranged up on either side of the Atlantic like a couple of football teams at either end of the field, and

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awaited the Bird of Freedom's signal to kick off. The awaited crow came in the shape of the simultaneous bangs of two eight-inch guns which the presumably blank cartridges do not seem to have burst.

But this is enough—and more than enough—of introduction. It is time that I stepped aside and allowed Mr. Percy Hart to tell the rest of the story in his own soul-shaking words. I regret to say that several *S.S.* and *P.W.* artists have succumbed to brain-fever in a gallant effort to do justice to the double-page illustration which adorns the story, "painted by Walter Russell from detailed suggestions given by leading United States naval officers."

The Nations Get Ready.

Every war-vessel—no matter how antiquated—in the possession of the nations involved was called into service, from the huge, fortress-like battleships of the present day down to the old, scarred frigates, veterans of many wars, tranquilly dozing away their last days of usefulness as receiving or training ships, in calm, sleepy harbours, and now to be rudely awakened from their slumbers, caulked, re-armoured, fitted with new engines and modern guns, and steered lumberingly out to sea to buffet once more the billows of the main.

The fastest ocean-going steamships going were confiscated to the uses of war and fitted with rapid-firing guns.

Sea-going tugboats were adapted to the torpedo and other services, and private steam-yachts of exceptional speed were subsidised as dispatch boats.

Only the most useless old hulks were sent to the foreign stations in place of the ships withdrawn, and the most antiquated commanders and worthless officers and men appointed to them.

Nevertheless, curses loud and deep arose from cabin, wardroom and forecastle of each old naval relic as her people realised that they would miss the glorious fray in mid-Atlantic.

In order to complete these tremendous preparations in the quickest possible time, the mechanicians of all the conflicting nations were pressed into service, and the dockyards of the world became huge hives of industry, in which no distinction was made between day and night; and in the glare of the great electric lights the huge trip-hammers only paused in their thunderous blows to allow their heated parts to cool.

Innumerable private shipyards were subsidised by the various governments; and factory buildings and even private dwelling houses were hastily adapted for the manufacture of materials.

Every industry known to man was brought into requisition in fitting out the fleets; coal was in such demand that few private families could afford to use it, and the prices of all other commodities rose in proportion.

The Gagged Press Adopts Yankee Methods.

For some time the world's newspapers contained scarcely anything but comparisons of the respective fleets and detailed accounts of the fighting qualities of the different vessels; but in due course such publication was officially suppressed, and the editors were obliged to satisfy their readers by sensational and purely imaginary articles on the subject.

Yet, owing to the well-organised spy system maintained, each government was informed of every important step taken by the others, and was thus enabled to meet it.

Inventors of all kinds of offensive and defensive war material came forward and offered their plans and services to their respective governments; models of every conceivable description were sent in, from indestructible warships to cork legs.

Public-spirited capitalists poured their wealth into the national coffers.

Vessels and guns were planned, made and tested in a small fraction of the time that would have been thus consumed ordinarily.

Ammunition was manufactured and stored in such enormous quantities that scientists gave warning of the terrific atmospheric results and possible danger to the world itself in case of certain accidents.

Speculators tore their hair in wild uncertainty, and stock exchanges became pandemoniums of raving Bedlamites.

In order to fully man the fleets, the bulk of the immense standing armies of the nations were put into naval uniforms and assigned in due proportions to the different vessels; marines became bluejackets and soldiers became marines, artillerymen being especially in demand.

Officers of high rank in the armies eagerly sought for positions in the navies.

The forces were still further supplemented by conscription among the civilian classes, including residents abroad, who were at once summoned home.

This gave rise to numberless complications, and the few consuls who had not been recalled were driven to the verge of lunacy, while the legal profession rubbed its hands and laughed in glee.

Sailing ships rotted at the wharves for want of crews to man them; fish became scarce and dear, because there were no fishermen—for no conscripts were so prized as the sturdy fisher-lads of England, France, and the North Countries, who left their wives and children to handle the boats and trawls while they donned the cutlass belt, and drilled at the big guns, learning the meaning of the division officer's orders: "Cast loose and provide!" or "Boarders away!"

Maimed old veterans in naval hospitals straightened their rheumatic backs, drew plans in the dust and cackled of how it should be done.

Children just able to toddle procured wooden weapons and fought instead of playing.

Mothers with babes in arms crooned war-songs half unconsciously, and wept, while they crooned, for the husband or son so soon to go.

Sisters, sweethearts and wives in every land listened, with heavy hearts, blind with tears, to the glowing words of their loved ones, bade them go and be true to the flag, and did their duty as only brave women can in times like these.

And all this for what? Ah, who could predict the sublime, awful climax that came all-unforeseen?

Bulls and Bears.

In accordance with the arrangement, one squadron of the American navy proceeded to Bordeaux, France, and another to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

At the former port what was known as the "Bear Alliance" fleet was to rendezvous, each ship flying her national flag, emblazoned with the Russian Bear; while at the latter port were to gather the vessels of the "Lion Alliance," their colours similarly adorned with the emblem of the British Lion.

The magnitude of these two fleets was almost beyond comprehension; in comparison with them the fabled aggregations of ancient war-galleys or the Spanish Armada sink into insignificance.

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The fleets had annihilated each other.

At the time it was impossible to count or even estimate approximately the number of vessels which assembled at each port. There were miles of them—hundreds—yes, thousands of them!

The noise of the sailors' steps assembling for inspection at certain hours, the continuous piping of whistles and ringing of bugles, the words of command, the rattle of marines' rifle-butts on deck, the creaking of davits as boats were lowered and raised, and, above all, the simultaneous striking of bells every half-hour, created an accumulation of sound that was simply appalling.

Mountains of coal lined each shore for miles and melted away like snow in summer. The health authorities of each port were compelled to exert every effort in their power to prevent an epidemic arising from the quantities of refuse thrown overboard. The cavalry and other troops of Canada and France which had not been transferred to the navies were summoned in haste to do police duty in controlling the crowds of sailors ashore and the hordes of adventurers and harpies who throng every naval station and make poor Jack their prey.

Within the harbours the older, less effective men-of-war and the subsidised merchant steamers were moored closely together. Outside in the open roads lay the armoured and protected cruisers at anchor.

Out beyond these, and of necessity in deep water, lay the great battleships, retaining their positions by means of their propellers, while in and out among the ships darted launches, cutters and gigs like gigantic water-bugs. Hours before the time appointed for starting, the different squadrons were manœuvring for positions; but at last the two mighty fleets lay at exactly ten nautical miles out at sea from the mouths of the respective harbours, in line of battle according to rating—the fast cruisers, gunboats, and torpedo-boats forming the advance guard and skirmish line ahead of the big battleships, while astern of these lay the mercantile auxiliaries and less serviceable warships.

Astern of each fleet hovered and raced the swift dispatch boats, armed with rapid-firing guns, under orders from their respective admirals commanding to prevent any non-combatant vessels from accompanying the war-vessels, under penalty of being fired upon should they persist in doing so—an order which called down anything but blessings upon the admirals' heads from the enraged Press representatives, and from certain enterprising individuals who had chartered steamers and sold excursion tickets at unheard of prices, which were eagerly bought by would-be spectators of the fray.

The perfectly adjusted chronometers on the flagships of the two American squadrons assigned for the duty of "seconds" in this terrible duel left no chance of uncertainty as to time; and as the appointed moment drew near a stalwart Yankee bluejacket, with chevrons on his sleeve, stood coolly on the deck of each, the lanyard of an 8-inch rifle gun in his brawny fist, awaiting the order to fire.

At last! The great guns simultaneously, though three thousand miles apart, boomed out the welcome signals, and with a roar of rushing water like that of Niagara, the sea was instantly turned into creamy foam for miles, as the stately fleets moved majestically forward, one toward the east and one toward the west.

From the hills behind them and the hosts of vessels clustered around the starting-points arose two mighty shouts like crashing thunder, which shook the very earth, as, with bands playing and colours flying, over five millions of human beings were taken out to sea; and amid the sobs of lonely women the last monster of war disappeared on the horizon.

THE COLD-DRAWN AGONY.

Then throughout every land a Sabbath-like stillness prevailed for days; there was little thought of work or play. The very savages in Africa wondered: for the whole world watched and prayed. Watched and prayed through a long, long month of wretched, miserable suspense—for no word came from the warships: the Atlantic billows rolled in to the shores, but told not what they had seen.

Men grew haggard and women pale, with an awful dread of they knew not what, and prayed aloud to the sun and the stars to tell what they knew.

Longer suspense could not be endured, and the two American squadrons were ordered to sea to reconnoitre, with orders not to interfere with or in any way impede the movements of the combatants.

The squadrons sailed, and met in mid-Atlantic; they separated, and cruised north, south, east and west over the broad expanse of ocean; but never a sign did they see to show that a battle had ever taken place.

Imagining that the tide of battle might have turned into a chase, ships were sent to cruise in every navigable ocean on the globe; from the Arctic to the Antarctic, through the Indian to the North and South Pacific, around Cape Horn and through the stormy China Sea and the calm inland Sea of Japan, they cruised and cruised.

And then, as the reports came in, one after another, from the remotest corners of the earth, always saying "Nothing found!" the world began slowly to realise, with sinking hearts and bated breath, that a thing had come to pass, the dread of which no man had dared to whisper: The fleets had annihilated each other!

Vainly the world waited, still hoping against hope, till, as the waves cast up on different shores fragments of splintered wood-work and sea-worn cabin trimmings, we were forced to comprehend that modern science had rendered warfare so mighty in its power, so accurate in its calculations and so deadly in its effects that the two enormous fleets had simply demonstrated a problem in regard to the meeting of two evenly matched, irresistible forces.

No man was left to tell how the fight was fought; there they lie, admiral, cabin-boy and all, and there they will lie, in sailors' graves, while the great waves sweep along and the storm-winds sing their requiem, till the sea gives up its dead!

None can say how the battle began; who fired the first shot and who the last, or what deeds of valour were done that day; how the great guns crashed and roared, and the rifles in the armoured tops poured down their leaden hail; how the blood dripped on the snow-white decks, and how the wounded screamed while the surgeons did their noble duty all in vain, or how the ships went down, one after another, with hideous roll and plunge.

How many went down, like the *Birkenhead*, with crews singing a death-song as they stood drawn up on deck?

How many sailors thought of home as they sank, how many cursed, and how many prayed?

What Farraguts, Perrys or Cushings were there in the fight, whose names will never go down on their country's roll of honour. Who can tell?

UNCLE SAM ASSUMES THE HALO.

But out of this a great peace has arisen. It is the peace of a world awakened by the vision of hell which it has seen.

Nerveless with horror and despair, the nations turned with one accord to the United States and besought her offices in mediating peace. Again the American Government recognised its opportunity and made its position serve for all humanity. It stipulated for the dismantling of all fortifications, and for the abolition of all great standing armies and navies. To this the world assented.

It was further agreed that the United States, as the one nation whose voice had been invariably against aggression, should be chosen as the police power of the world, and that its small but efficient navy should be authorised to prevent, by coercion, if need be, any nation from building another fleet of warships.

And thus the future prosperity, advancement and happiness of the whole world were hidden in the hands of a country that a little more than a century ago was fighting for its own independence.

Whether the end has justified the means—whether it were right that this mantle of peace and prosperity should have been woven amid the sobs of widows and orphans, desolated homes and broken hearts—it lies with our Government of the future to prove by its management of the great trust that lies in its charge.

And some day we shall know it all—when the sea gives up its dead!"

BUT NOT JUST YET.

Now that, of course, is all very pretty and poetical. The idea of Uncle Sam in a halo and white robe sitting on the fence and thrumming the harp of peace while the Bird of Freedom, perched on his shoulder, crows the hymn of universal brotherhood to the tune of the Star-Spangled Banner is a conception which few, if any, of the poets or painters of the effete Old World could have done justice to.

Unhappily, however, the practical mind of the brutal Saxon will, I fear, be prone to turn aside from its somewhat overwhelming glories to ask, not how peace came to the world, but what Uncle Sam did with the pieces after he had persuaded the other nations to obligingly sink each other's fleets in the middle of the Atlantic, and leave him in possession of the only efficient naval force in the world.

This isn't poetry, but what other kind of question could one, in all seriousness, ask with reference to a nation, which, a short time ago, did its best to plunge the Anglo-Saxon race into a fratricidal strife for the monopoly of an alleged gold-field in a little twopenny-halfpenny State run by swindlers and murderers, and which only the other day wiped its boots upon the tatters of the Anglo-American Arbitration Treaty and turned to cheer to the echo the utterances of a traitorous ex-convict when he mendaciously stated that the United States had whipped Great Britain three times, and that there would never be war between England and America because England never fought any nation that used Gatling guns.

It is not from a people which applauds or even tolerates such villainies as these that the nations can seriously hope to receive the olive-branch of universal peace.

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The Snares of the Ungodly.

THE STORY OF A FLIRTATION.

"You are a very pretty woman, my dear, but you can scarcely expect all the world at your feet."

"Are you worried about Tom in this instance?" the beauty said lazily.

"Tom is a fool," Mrs. Black retorted. "Why don't you take fair game?"

"But he is so refreshing, that brother of yours. He actually believes in things. Fancy that!"

"Of course he does, Madge. He is young enough to treasure his illusions. Oh, don't spoil the world for him yet," she said half beseechingly.

The beauty stretched herself out in a big arm-chair and waved a fan indolently, stirring the wisps of hair that strayed about her temples.

"I wonder you asked him here to meet me," she said indifferently.

"I did not ask him; he came unexpectedly. He might better have jumped into the lion's mouth!"

"Thanks, my dear. It's only a difference of beasts, as you say. My method of devouring is, possibly, more leisurely," she said, with a lazy drawl that was part of her fascination.

"Madge, you must marry; you need an establishment," Mrs. Black said abruptly.

The beauty said nothing, but sat down before the dressing-table and powdered her face and throat profusely, taking care that the puff should not brush against her wavy brown hair. She could see in the mirror that Mrs. Black was gazing at her intently, though her thoughts seemed to have gone beyond the range of her eyes.

Suddenly Mrs. Black exclaimed: "I've got him!"

"Got whom?" the beauty inquired.

"The very man for you. He's game that will require your best ammunition. Even then I'm a bit sceptical as to the result, but at least I'm giving you a chance to try."

"It sounds interesting, Grace: most difficult things are."

"He is a man of endless affairs with women, but somehow he always slips the leash at the last moment. At least he will amuse you, and his money is not the least of his attractions."

"Will he come here to stay?"

"I will ask him, for a week."

"I think I shall marry him, Grace," the beauty said complacently. "He will ask me at the end of the week, you see!"

"Your assurance is superb, my dear Madge."

"Of course. When one has not money one goes through the world on other things. Do you want to bet on your prodigy?"

"By all means, Madge. I frankly acknowledge that you hold trump cards, and I shall play into your hands, so the odds are decidedly in your favour, but I'll wager you don't land him high and dry in a week."

"Make it chocolates, and it's a go. Send for the victim while I arrange my bait; and I won't use Tom—not if I can help it," she added. "I'm going to take a nap and prepare for the fray. When shall we open the encounter, Grace?"

"At dinner. He arrived an hour ago while you were cycling with Tom, and I sent him off for a swim with Jack. You did not suppose I meant your visit to be deadly, did you?"

"I never suppose, Grace; it's such an exertion in hot weather. *Au revoir* then until dinner," and the beauty sauntered out of the room.

Mrs. Black did not call them house parties in her pretty villa by the sea, but the times were few when she had not charming women and several men staying with her. Madge was of a type she found useful, but irritating, and in this particular instance she was annoyed because, forsooth, Tom was head over heels in love with the beauty, and he was the one thing on earth Mrs. Black adored.

She thought, as her guest left the room, that she had been preparing for her a very pretty comedy. Griswold was a man no woman could marry, and she knew what she was talking about from experience. Not that anything would induce her to enter again the bonds of matrimony, but there had been a time when she had spread her net for him in vain. Madge could have her fling at him to no purpose, and Tom would be saved. The end justified the means. Mrs. Black congratulated herself upon her cleverness in bringing in so useful an element.

But two days after, fate took the game out of Mrs. Black's hands, sending Tom to Edinburgh and leaving Griswold to have things quite his own way. That he admired the beauty was a matter which brooked no conjecture. He seemed already absorbed in her in a manner that excluded his hostess, and for that she had not been prepared. All necessity of saving her brother from the snares of the ungodly having been for the moment removed, Mrs. Black was suddenly confronted by the fact that she objected to being set aside for any woman, even though she had deliberately planned the game Madge was playing so skilfully.

She took her cousin Jack into her confidence one evening while they strolled on the beach after dinner. Jack was dull, but observing, and the best of safety valves.

"You and Madge don't seem to hit it off exactly," he said.

"I hate her, Jack," the woman said fiercely. "Do you know why? She took Tom away from me—dear old Tom, who was like clay in her hands—and why? To feed her insatiable vanity. That's why I got Griswold down. I thought he would fill her to the brim and Tom would be disgusted. But the boy has gone off with the love of her in his heart and Griswold is bewitched beyond reason."

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"I'll settle her game, old girl. Just leave it to me," Jack said consolingly. "Griswold is much too good for her." And a conspiracy having been formed between them, the two finished their walk in silence.

On the balcony the beauty was tilting back in the hammock, which she kept swaying by occasionally touching one tiny foot to the floor. She wore a pink mulle that rivalled a flower for very simplicity, but the experienced eye recognised that much thought had gone into the creation of so artless an effect. Her wavy hair was drawn into a loose coil on her neck, which gleamed white and soft in the light that fell from a lantern above her head. Griswold sat in a chair pulled close up beside her and leant over her with a caressing movement which was a way he had with women.

"Have we been awake or dreaming?" he was saying. "Life seems to me only to have begun since—can you think when?"

"Time is as nothing to me ever," she said. "It is only events for which I care."

"Am I an 'event,' you pretty primrose?"

"You?" she queried, lifting her eyebrows. "I don't think I had thought of you at all."

"Then it is cruel of you to say so after all these days together."

"Oh, forgive me," she said, with a pretty show of penitence. "I am brutally frank, I know."

"I like it," said the man seriously; "it's an uncommon trait in a woman. You are beautifully honest and honestly beautiful."

"Then you are not cross any more?" she said, slipping her hand into his with beguiling innocence.

"Kiss me," he said, bending his face down to hers.

But there was a sound of steps on the balcony, and the kiss floated off in the air as Griswold slipped into his chair, and two figures came round the corner.

Madge bit her lip with vexation, and the man was conscious of having gone pretty far.

He was thinking of it later when the women had gone off to bed and he was left to the solace of his pipe in the smoking-room. So many women had played havoc with his heart before! But she was not like the rest, and he wanted her—of that he was sure. But for always, his conscience questioned? Ah, there was the rub! To kiss and caress was one thing—to marry, another—and yet——

Two soft arms were round his neck, and a woman tilted his head against her breast.

"They spoilt our paradise," she whispered, "and I've stolen away to say good-night. Are you glad, my dearest of men?"

For answer he drew her down and held her.

"I love you beyond——"

"All other women?"

"You will marry me soon, you dainty primrose?"

"Perhaps," with a show of reluctance. "Good-night just once more. I am going before I am discovered," she said.

As she vanished through the doorway, Jack came in from a stroll which Griswold had refused to take with him.

"There's a suspicious odour of violets about you, old man," he said, sniffing the air; "and your pipe's gone black out. Any visiting angels hovering near?"

"Haven't seen any, Jack. Visitors aren't in my line."

"No, you stick to cold facts. There's one satisfactory thing about you, Griswold; you haven't any imagination."

"The world is so explanatory it leaves nothing to be imagined, Jack. Sit down and smoke a bit," he said, with an excess of sociability.

"Thanks. I will," sinking into a chair and lighting a cigarette. "It's beastly damp outside," he suggested, as if the weather crowded all other thoughts from his mind.

"Is it? Well, I'm much too lazy to get up an argument."

"Is your affair with the beauty so exhausting?"

"What do you mean?" the other said stiffly.

"That a rattling old pace sometimes lands one in a ditch, though by some miracle you've leapt all the treacherous places so far."

"Then I would not bother about me now," he said soothingly. "I may wear a charm round my neck."

"Goodness knows you need it with a woman like that!"

"Oh, come now, Jack, you're too melancholy! Liver gone off again?" he asked sympathetically.

"Liver be hanged! You're making a fool of yourself for the first time in your life. The woman's playing for you on a wager."

"It's a lie!"

"Take care, old man; friendship has its limit," Jack said warningly.

"Pity that did not occur to you before," sneeringly.

"I'd no idea you were so deeply involved. She's not worth a quarrel, old man—few women are; but when a man's off his head I realize he's not responsible."

"Then keep your beastly ideas to yourself. They're an insult to decency." And Griswold stalked out of the room.

It was nearly noon the next day when he awoke with a delirious feeling that something most unusual had been happening.

Was it love and not passion that was stirring within? He dressed with an eagerness that was not habitual, and wondered if the primrose had unfolded her petals. How exquisitely sweet she was! As he started from his room a paper slipped under the door for the first time attracted his attention. He stooped and picked it up—the writing was not familiar.

"Forgive me if I deceived you," it read. "Being proof against the fascinations of all women, but yourself beguiling the unwary, you were lawful prey. I really half loved you last night, and you did ask me to marry you. What other woman can say that?

"Grace thought she had the game in her hands. It was a harmless deception and threw her off the scent, for I'm going to marry her adorable brother, Tom. He believes in me, and as Grace herself said, I need an establishment. You could afford me, I suppose, if I wanted you, but I don't. Tom is charmingly young and tractable, and you—you love so many women.

"To be honest—which is a virtue I seldom indulge in—I happened to play my game more cleverly than Grace because I had so much at stake—Tom, and a bet to win. And as I hate to pay a bet, I always make a point of not losing. Ask Grace, and tell her I stipulated for chocolates!

"So you can fancy me already *en route* for Edinburgh, where Tom is counting the hours in the most approved lover-like fashion, and I am counting many things besides. You and Grace and that horrid cousin Jack are an amusing trio——"

"And I called her a 'primrose'" he said, as he tore the note into fragments.

T. Dominio.

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A BROKEN MASK

BY JOAN BARRETT.

SUMMARY.

The story opens with an introduction to the inmates of two farm-houses in an English village named Thorneydene. Honeypots Farm has recently been taken by a young stranger, John Gillway, about whom there seems to be a mystery.

His neighbour, Farmer Strange, is a widower with twin daughters, Diana and Kitty, who have been brought up for the most part by a wealthy aunt, Mrs. Caffyn, who is about to take them on the Continent.

Gillway has already fallen in love with Kitty, who was at first pleased by his attentions. She soon wearied of them, but being half afraid of him, makes many promises of fidelity before going abroad with her sister and aunt, which she never intends to keep.

At Capri they meet with Bernard Eliot, nicknamed "the Nabob" on account of his wealth. He speedily wins the affections of all three ladies, but seems to prefer Di's society.

At the end of three months they return to London, and as the two girls have now attained their majority they are given the option of remaining with their aunt or returning to their father for good. Kitty chooses the former and Di the latter.

Henceforth Diana devotes herself to the management of her father's house and dairy. She meets Gillway, and hears for the first time of the relations which had existed between him and Kitty. Soon after, the Stranges are surprised by the arrival of Kitty and the Nabob, who explain that they were married that morning, and have come to spend their honeymoon at Greyhouse Farm!

"The Nabob" is delighted with the simple home life of the farm, and shows no inclination to depart. Kitty, however, soon begins to pine for excitement and gaiety, and in consideration of her health her husband, very much against his will, rents "The Towers," a beautiful country seat, a few miles from Thorneydene. Kitty's spirits brighten rapidly at the prospect of entertaining the *élite* of the neighbourhood in one of the finest houses in the county.

CHAPTER VIII.

What Happened during the Skating Party.

The trees were all naked, and the wind, as it hustled their dead children away, seemed to be forcing them to dance to its shrill, cruel music. The snow lay in broken patches over meadows and green hills where the hungry rooks were cawing and wheeling, and the smaller birds twittered plaintively to each other in the hedgerows about the paucity of berries and the hardships of winter. A grey sky, whose clouds foretold more snow, frowned angrily down upon the wintry world.

"The Towers is full of guests," said John Gillway, looking at Di's pure, pale profile as she hurried along by his side, with her hands tucked into her muff, and her head a little lowered. "Are you going there for Christmas?"

"Yes. I didn't want to go. Dad won't accept, and I don't like to leave him all alone. It seems unfeeling."

"I don't suppose he minds," said Gillway thoughtlessly, and the hot colour rushed into Di's cheeks as she cried:

"Mind! Of course he minds! Dad and I are all in all to each other, and I wouldn't leave him if Bernard had not seemed so hurt and sorry at our refusal."

"And Kitty—wasn't she hurt and sorry, too?"

Di glanced up quickly, catching the irony in Gillway's tones. The flush grew deeper in her face.

"Yes, she *was* sorry," she answered, her anger melting away as she looked at Gillway's shabbily clad figure and careworn, haggard features.

"I have heard that nearly all the county families have accepted invitations for the ball, and that Mrs. Caffyn is going to bring a large party of swell friends from London. Your aunt must know a great many rich people?"

Di nodded, and wondered why John Gillway was taking so keen an interest in the Towers gaieties.

"Are many of them going to stay long?" he asked.

"I don't know. Kitty told me that the house would be packed for New Year's Day."

Gillway appeared to be reflecting as he walked with his eyes fixed upon the ground.

"Shall you be there for New Year's Day?"

"No; I am only going for the ball. My wardrobe is not big enough to provide me with sufficient frocks for a fort-

"Are you going there for Christmas?"

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night's visit—not large enough for a week even. Kitty was rejoicing because she had a new gown for every day, and her jewels have come from the bankers. She had not seen them since Bernard gave them to her for wedding gifts, so it is just like being given presents all over again."

"Has she much jewellery?"

"A great deal."

"Eliot is a lucky fellow," said Gillway with bitterness. "Unlimited riches and a lovely young wife! I expect Kitty will be able to make a finer show of precious stones than old Lady Rivers"—he paused, suddenly aware that Di was looking at him in surprise. "I've heard of her famous tiara," he added. "My housekeeper, Mrs. Shales, is my authority. According to her, the emeralds in her ladyship's 'crown' are as big as 'reddishes.'"

Di laughed.

"Oh, they are large," said she. "I don't know if Kitty will dare to compete with Lady Rivers. She will have a chance, because the famous tiara will be on view. Lady Rivers has accepted for a week, I know."

"I wish," Gillway said, plunging his hands into the pockets of his rough ulster, "that I had a few of those green 'reddishes' in my possession, or the sum of money that they are worth. Everything is going wrong with me just now. I am beginning to realise that a man must be a genius to make farming pay."

Di echoed his sigh. Things were very much in the same condition at Greyhouse, and she knew that in spite of her economies, and Betty's excellent management, Farmer Strange would have a hard struggle to pay his Christmas bills.

"Well," said Gillway after a pause, "no reasonable man *can* expect to become rich by honest means. Everybody knows that thieves and rogues prosper, while honest men starve or worry themselves into early graves. To call a man an honest fellow is to call him a fool."

"I'd rather be an honest fool," said Di, in her clear, fearless tones, "than a wealthy knave. I don't believe you are right. Roguery can't always pay. It doesn't, I'm sure it can't, and it's good to feel that you can hold your head up, and meet everybody's eyes, and never feel ashamed to accept a proffered hand! A rogue must live in constant fear of being discovered."

"That doesn't trouble him," Gillway declared. "Your genuine rogue doesn't care a rap for his victim's opinion. To take all he can and to keep all he gets is his sole concern. And he's right. Might is valued before all your old-fashioned virtuous theories, and strength is more respected than good principle. A clever, wicked person will have a hundred admirers and imitators where your stupid, good fool has ninety-nine to despise him, and to take advantage of his weakness."

Di was silent. Her face had grown so grave that Gillway smiled, and asked:

"Do you think I am a very bad person to have such theories, Miss Strange?"

Di turned her head and looked steadily into the man's dark eyes. They were smiling, and his lips had parted.

"I don't believe you are bad," she answered seriously. "Only I'm sorry you think like that. I wish you didn't. It seems to me that having good thoughts makes one more contented with one's position, and helps one to buffet with troubles when they come." Her voice changed from grave to gay. "Here's daddy!" she cried joyfully. "I do hope he has sold his barley."

Farmer Strange, on his way home from market, drew in his old grey cob, and flourished his hand to Di and Gillway.

"Barley's sold!" he shouted. "I looked for you at market, Gillway, you'd have got rid of your hay if you'd took my advice and sent it in. Why didn't you?"

"Too much trouble," answered Gillway. "And not enough profit."

"Mustn't expect much profit nowadays, my lad. Come up to the house and have a cup of tea with us."

Gillway hesitated, looking at Di. She was following her father's vanishing figure with loving eyes.

"Shall I come?" Gillway asked gruffly.

"Yes, do," she answered, still watching her father's upright form.

"I don't think I will," he said. "Tell your father that I hope he'll look in upon me to-morrow. Good-afternoon."

An expression of pain crept round Di's lips, and her eyes grew darker.

"Good-bye," she said, with quiet pride; but he had seen the twitching of her beautiful, strong mouth, and felt savagely glad, and yet remorseful, because he owned the power to hurt her.

Di went to The Towers upon Christmas Eve. The Nabob drove over for her, leaving Kitty with her visitors. It had frozen hard for several days, and the skating was exceptionally good upon the ponds in the great park that stretched around The Towers. For the rich, this white, hard winter was delightful; but to the poor, shivering by scanty fires or under thin blankets, the frost and snow and the keen icy wind were cruel and dreaded elements.

"It's going to be a jolly old-fashioned Christmas, Di," said the Nabob joyously. He had tucked Di in well with the costly fur rug, and he had brought a sable-lined cloak of Kitty's for her. She was wrapped up like a helpless baby, and almost unable to stir. She nodded, smiling happily into his gay face.

"I do wish you had come in time to help with the decorations! They're a treat. Heaps of holly and ivy and mistletoe everywhere. I say, it does seem a shame that the old dad's left behind! I shan't half enjoy our festivities for thinking of him all alone, poor old chap! Have you got a pretty ball-gown in that box, Di?"

"I think it is pretty."

"What colour? White, I hope. I always admired you in white in the old days, at Capri, you know."

"It *is* white," said Di, wishing that her gown had been of any other colour.

The Nabob bent his handsome head, and a tender light shone in his eyes. But Di did not observe it.

"Thank you," said he very softly.

Di turned her face full upon him. There was keen surprise in her clear look.

"For what?" she asked. "Oh—you mustn't think that I remembered that you liked me in white! I didn't. I had quite forgotten it."

"You needn't have told me that you'd forgotten it. Serves me right! I'm a fool!" the Nabob said. He cut the horse sharply with the whip, and Di, in wide-eyed amazement, tried to think what there had been in her words to make him so suddenly angry.

"I didn't even know that you *did* like me in white," said she.

"Oh, you needn't rub it in. Confound that horse! He wants a bit of the devil taken out of him. Ugh! You beast!" There was silence for a few moments as they spun through the clear frosty air; the ground ringing beneath the horse's feet. "Seen Gillway lately?"

"He comes sometimes to see dad," answered Di a little stiffly.

"And sometimes to see you, eh? and now and then you meet him in the fields. You see I know a great deal of your behaviour, Di."

He spoke laughingly, but Di was not in the mood for swift changes. Her lips kept their grave compression.

"That's a fellow that I never can make out. Kitty and he are the greatest friends in the world, you know. He's always at the house. He made himself quite invaluable at hammering up festoons and wreaths yesterday. I wanted him to come to the ball to-night. He wouldn't, though I told him that you were going to stay until Boxing Day."

"I don't quite see why you held out my arrival as a bait to induce Mr. Gillway to come to your ball," said Di. Her nostrils were quivering, and she held her head very high

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She had not known that Gillway was a constant visitor at The Towers; had not known that he had met Kitty. Why had he kept silence about the matter? She grew troubled.

"Don't you? Fie, Di! How fierce you are looking—Christmas Eve, too—when everybody is supposed to feel so Christian-like and amiable towards his or her neighbour. I'm afraid you've a bad temper. Let me see," said the Nabob in his pleasantest voice. "What news have I to tell you? Oh, Lady Rivers has arrived, and she's brought a jolly big party with her of ten ladies—poor Kitty was in an awful state of mind when she saw them land in. Kitty has not a decided preference for the society of her sex, a bad little woman! The Joneses have come, and the Duckletts, and Mrs. Caffyn has brought six friends, so you'll meet some old faces again. She's looking wonderfully well—quite young. What a kind-hearted soul she is! She brought Kitty a set of old jewels—diamonds and moonstones, I think Kitty said. She's coming out in 'em to-night."

Di knew the jewels well. They were very valuable and had belonged to her mother's grandmother. Clearly Mrs. Caffyn had decided that Kitty's marriage had turned out well.

"I am glad Kitty has them," said Di. "What a splendid Christmas box!"

The Nabob laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

"Splendid?" he repeated in a questioning tone. "That depends very much upon one's own ideas about splendour. I don't suppose these things are very valuable, you know. It is the kind action that makes them so appreciated."

"Oh, but they are worth a lot of money!" exclaimed Di very earnestly. "Aunt told me that they would fetch two thousand pounds now—old jewellery is greatly in demand, you know."

"Indeed!" the Nabob said with a careless inflection in his tones. And Di suddenly remembered that to a man of his vast wealth two thousand pounds would not seem the large sum that it appeared to her. "I do wish the old dad had come!" he said abruptly, as the dog-cart entered the park gates. "You would have stayed longer if he'd been with you."

"He doesn't get on well with Aunt Caffyn—and with strangers."

"*I* get on capitally with him!"

"Ah, but you get on well with everybody," said Di with such sincerity in her voice that the Nabob glanced at her and smiled.

Kitty was waiting to receive her sister. She looked prettier than ever in a gown of soft trailing velvet with a lot of old yellow lace about it. She kissed Di warmly, and seemed delighted to see her again. They had not met for several weeks.

"Bernie is *so* vexed because dad wouldn't come," said she to Di, as she took her to Mrs. Caffyn's room. "He thinks it is all my fault. I don't mind admitting that I *did* hint to the dear old thing that he'd better refuse, because you know, Di, how dreadfully out of place and awkward he would feel. Why, he can't eat properly. I often pity you, darling, though, of course, you are not nearly so sensitive as I am in such matters, or you could never live with him. I think I was right not to let him come, don't you?"

"I'm sure you were. Daddy never once thought of accepting. He feels that your friends can never be his."

"I do wish Bernie would see it in the same light," said Kitty with a deep sigh. "But he can't somehow. He says that it doesn't matter a pin about people's behaviour if the people love you, and he thinks I'm an undutiful daughter. I know he does! But he's the dearest boy in the world; so good to me, you can't think, and sometimes when I feel depressed I'm enough to try the patience of a saint. Bernie never gets cross with me. I really think we love each other more than ever, Di!"

"I am so glad! Marriages ought to be like that, Kitty—all marriages—to be really happy ones."

"Oh, ours is an ideal state of things!" said Kitty. "This is auntie's room. I won't come in. I'll leave you to have a long chat together, and I'll send tea up to you. Then you needn't come down before dinner. Oh, Di!" she exclaimed, throwing her arms round Di's neck. "I could cry with joy at seeing you, dear!"

There was pain in her voice. Di thrilled with sudden apprehension, and looked steadily into her sister's face. Tears were standing upon Kitty's long eyelashes, and her lips quivered.

"Happiness ought not to sadden you," said Di very tenderly. "*Is* it joy, Kitty?"

"Yes, yes!" Kitty cried, releasing Di with an abrupt kiss. "I always was a silly little goose, wasn't I, Di? Never strong like you, dear. When I'm not laughing I'm crying. I never had any self-control—never! Auntie asked me to send you to her as soon as you came. I shall see you before long, dear."

Di's face was grave as she watched Kitty flit down the broad staircase. The shadow still rested in her eyes when she entered Mrs. Caffyn's room.

"This is quite like old times," said Mrs. Caffyn when they had kissed each other, and Di had removed her outdoor garments.

"What a splendid girl you've grown, Di! Your figure is regal, I declare! I wish Kitty looked as strong as you."

"Kitty looks very well, auntie."

"I don't think she does! She seems overwrought, hysterical—cried when she met me—and can't speak two words unless it is to praise Bernard. Are they happy together, Di? I never could trust Kitty—she is too weak to speak the truth when it is disagreeable—but you are cast in another mould. Tell me!"

"They are very happy. Bernard is devoted to her."

"I know. But Kitty, is she devoted to him?"

"I—I think so. She always speaks lovingly of him,"

"Then why is that great farming man—I don't remember

She kissed Di warmly.

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his name, but you know who I mean—why is he eternally after her? Yesterday, they were together all the afternoon. Bernard should remonstrate with Kitty. I don't like it."

"Farming man!" repeated Di feebly, and it seemed to her that a knife had entered her heart.

"Yes, a great, tall, dark man, who looks as though he could snap at everybody. He brought a heap of holly for the decorations. Anyone can see that he is in love with Kitty, and she encourages him. How pale you are, child. The room is too warm, perhaps. Open the door."

Di gulped down something that had risen in her throat.

"I don't feel hot," she said steadily. "Oh, Auntie, what a lovely bracelet!"

Her eyes had fallen upon an open jewel-case. A flashing circlet of green stones laid upon a white plush bed.

"I am glad you like it. I brought it for you, Di. It's my Christmas gift to you. Let me put it on your wrist!"

"It seems too costly for me," said Di, bending to kiss Mrs. Caffyn. Her lips felt stiff; she wondered if they would seem hard and cold to her aunt.

"Not a bit too costly! I intended to give it to you if you had stayed with me. Do you know, I was never so surprised in all my life as I was when Bernard told me that he loved Kitty. I thought he wanted you."

Di laughed, fumbling nervously with the bracelet clasp.

"The proof that I was mistaken was that he married Kitty without a farthing," said Mrs. Caffyn, "and he told me that he had settled fifty thousand pounds upon her! I suppose," she added hesitatingly, "you saw that he loved Kitty?"

"Yes," answered Di, and the falsehood fell easily from her lips.

She wore her bracelet down to dinner, and at the ball that followed. As she was dancing with the Nabob his eyes fell upon it.

"By Jove, Di!" he exclaimed. "You have got a stunning bracelet!"

"Aunt gave it to me—it is my Christmas box."

"I wish she'd given you something else!" he said in a grumbling tone. "I don't mind telling you now. I bought one for you, and its stones are emeralds, too! Let me see if my bracelet is as pretty as hers."

He drew her into the conservatory. It was quite deserted.

"I—I can't take a—a bracelet!" Di stammered as the Nabob drew out a leather case from his pocket. Her refusal sounded childish in her own ears. "It sounds ungrateful," she added desperately, "and unkind, but, indeed, I'd rather not take it."

"Oh, why not?" he asked coldly, fixing his eyes upon her face, and as she remained silent and embarrassed, he added: "Surely there can be no harm in my offering my wife's sister a trifling present. Why, when I was married I had to give brooches to every one of Kitty's bridesmaids, the confoundedest ugliest girls I've ever seen—four of 'em, too!"

"I don't see what that has to do with your offering me a present."

"I wanted to show you that there was nothing extraordinary in it, that's all. Let me see how it looks on, Di," he said, and took her pretty gloved arm. "Don't refuse it. Did I ever set up my back at one kind, sisterly action of yours when I was at the farm? You know I didn't. It will be unkind to refuse me this pleasure, Di."

"I wish——" Di began. The Nabob fastened the bracelet upon her wrist, holding it out beneath the light that fell from a hanging lamp. The great emeralds flashed and glittered like green fires. In spite of that strange shrinking from accepting the trinket, a faint cry of admiration fell from her lips.

The Nabob fastened the bracelet upon her wrist.

"It's a bigger one than Mrs. Caffyn's," said the Nabob with boyish exultation. "And I'm glad it is! I wanted to give you the best present you'd ever had, Di! I shall never forget how good you were to Kitty and me, when we were with you, you dear old girl!"

Further words of refusal died upon Di's lips. The brotherly affection in the Nabob's eyes was unmistakable. She felt ashamed of her hesitation and lack of generosity.

"It is too beautiful, Bernard," she stammered. "Just think—I shall never have an opportunity of wearing it, unless it is when I am visiting you."

He was still holding her arm. Suddenly he dropped it with a low exclamation, and Di, following the direction of his eyes, saw a face pressed against the glass. She started, and became as white as her dress.

"It's Gillway!" cried the Nabob. He hurried to the door, and, opening it, called Gillway's name several times. A rush of cold air entered the conservatory, and a few dead

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leaves, but the sole answer was the moaning complaint of a shrill wind.

Closing the door, the Nabob returned to Di, looking at her with suspicious surprise in his frank face.

"What a rum chap!" he exclaimed. "What could make him bolt like that? Anyone would think that he was anxious not to be seen."

"Perhaps it was not he," said Di.

"Oh, yes, it was. By George! if I thought he was

Neither of them spoke.

after—— No—it's impossible! Let me take you back to the ballroom, Di. I must see Kitty—I mean I am engaged to her for the next dance."

They returned to the ballroom, making the tour of the big room. Kitty was sitting with Mrs. Caffyn. She smiled lovingly at her husband as he approached her. Di glanced from Kitty's pretty smiling face to the Nabob's stern, cold features. He looked angry and jealous, Di thought.

"Bernie," said Kitty, "what have you been saying to Lady Rivers about a skating party by torch-light?"

The Nabob passed one hand over his face as though he knew that he looked disturbed and was anxious to conceal his emotion from Kitty.

"Oh, nothing," he answered lightly, and now he smiled, looking his own, gay, pleasant self again. "She thought it would be fun, so I said I'd think about it. What do you say, Kitty? Would it be a bother, or would you like it?"

"It would be lovely," cried Kitty, clasping her hands. "Delightful! We ought to have it as soon as possible, in case this delicious weather changes."

"To-morrow, if you like—Christmas Day."

"Do!" said Mrs. Caffyn. "It is a charming idea of yours, Bernard."

"You mustn't give praise where it isn't due. Lady Rivers is responsible for the suggestion."

"Why, she said *you* proposed it, Bernie!" exclaimed Kitty.

"Oh, that's her modest way of putting things," said the Nabob. "I thought from her anxiety to get up the party that she'd got a new set of furs she was anxious to show off. There she is. Excuse me, Kitty. I'll tell her that it is settled for to-morrow night—half-past nine, eh?"

The ball did not break up until long after the Christmas bells had announced to the listening white world that Christmas Day had dawned. Di could not sleep when she was alone in her room. She was tormented with thoughts of John Gillway and Kitty.

Had Gillway prowled about the grounds in the hope of meeting Kitty? And did the Nabob suspect? Di shivered, thinking of the jealous light in the Nabob's face when he had hunted in the ballroom for Kitty.

In spite of his light disposition, there was a deal of latent strength in the lower part of the young man's face. He would be a match for Gillway in physical courage if they met—and here Di's terror and anxiety and the throbbing pain at her heart increased. Dared she speak to Kitty? Had she the right? And so, tortured with fear for the consequences of Kitty's imprudence—for Di was confident that Kitty's love of admiration, and probably a coquettish desire to win Gillway back, constituted the whole of her wrong-doing—Di paced her room through the hours of the sluggish winter morning, and tried to make herself believe that she was only hurt and disappointed because Kitty still flirted.

Christmas Day appeared hard and white and rimy, and there was feasting and merry-making in the great house. The Nabob dispensed his hospitality with generous hand. In the servants' hall a large number of poor people were given meat and bread and pudding, and there was a Christmas tree for the children, laden with gifts of warm clothing, toys, and sweets.

"What a good fellow he is!" Mrs. Caffyn exclaimed to Di, when the happy, noisy troop of ruddy-faced children had been sent home laden with their treasures.

"Indeed he is!" cried Di heartily. "He has given such a lot of soup and blankets away this winter. I—I didn't know it," she added in a half-ashamed tone, "until the vicar told me of it just now. He says that he has never had so generous a parishioner!"

"Such men ought to be rich," said Mrs. Caffyn. "They do so much good!"

She glanced at the Nabob as he stood at the end of the hall by the rifled Christmas tree. He had been the gayest of the gay, and had joined in the children's games, seemingly as indefatigable as they. His fair wavy hair was disordered with his romps with the little ones, his eyes sparkled with animation and kindness. He looked vigorous and handsome with youth and strength.

"Oh, Di!" whispered Mrs. Caffyn, "I do hope that Kitty will make him happy!" and Di's heart echoed the aspiration.

The night was crisp and cuttingly cold when the skating party left the house for the fishpond in the park. All the guests had turned out, and nearly all the men servants had been utilised as torch-bearers. The flaming yellow-red lights threw warm patches of flame colour upon the snow as the procession made its way over the stiff, frozen grass to the water, and pretty eyes grew brighter and cheeks rosier in the ruddy glow.

"Let us have a spin together," said the Nabob to Di. "You only gave me three dances last night."

She smiled at him, excited by the novelty of her

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surroundings, and impressed with the ghostly appearance of the white-armed trees, and the keen-eyed, twinkling stars that looked down so searchingly upon the merry party.

The spin was a long one. Round and round the gleaming ice-bound pond they went, hand in hand, Di's long fur boa fluttering in the Nabob's face, and the perfume from the violets at her throat reaching his nostrils from time to time.

She was languidly brushing her hair.

Neither of them spoke. The stillness of the white park, with its big spreading trees and air of mystery, seemed to have fallen upon them and wrapped them in its silence. On and on they glided, the Nabob's eyes fixed upon the girl's profile, and hers dreamily looking at the glittering sky. Bursts of laughter fell from other skaters as they sped past them; little cries of real or affected alarm, shrill giggles and screams; but Di and her companion appeared deaf to all sounds. It was as though they were floating alone in the ghostly-looking world, enveloped and caressed by its weird quietude.

"Di," whispered the Nabob softly.

She turned her face. He smiled, and in her contentment and happiness she returned the smile.

"I wish we could go on like this for ever and ever," said he. "Do you?"

She nodded, looking away at the stars with a strange sensation of unreality creeping over her. Kitty passed them, laid her hand upon Di's arm, and stopped her.

"Auntie's getting tired of it," she grumbled, "and she's got a hot water-bottle, too. She shouldn't have come if she can't skate. She wants to go home."

"What a prosaic young woman you are, Kitty," said her husband. "We can't let Mrs. Caffyn go home yet. I'll find a chair and take her on the ice."

As Di stood near the edge of the pond watching the animated crowd, a passing torch-bearer threw a red light upon the face of a man who stood at a little distance from the skaters.

It was John Gillway. Di's first impulse was to join him. Why was he watching the Nabob's guests? Was he anxious to see Kitty? Had his passion for her revived? When Di looked in the same direction, the man had vanished, and though she kept a watchful eye upon the assembled people, she failed to see him again.

The skating-party did not return to the house until morning had dawned, and then half-an-hour was spent over hot coffee and brandy. A little clock in Di's room struck three as she began to undress. She felt weary and depressed.

The thought of returning to her father that day was strangely pleasant.

She was languidly brushing her hair when a hurried knock came at the door. Mrs. Caffyn's voice, shrill with alarm, cried: "Di! Di! Let me in!"

Her face was haggard; her hair in disorder when Di admitted her. She still wore the long fur cloak that she had enveloped herself in for the excursion. It hung by one string around her neck.

"I've been robbed!" she gasped, stretching out an empty jewel case.

"*Robbed!* Oh, Auntie!"

"Look," cried Mrs. Caffyn. "I found the case like this when I went to put away my diamond brooch. Everything has been taken from the safe!" and while Di was staring at the case she added excitedly: "The bracelet I gave you, child; have you got it?"

Di opened the drawer in which she had placed both bracelets, with the few trinkets that she had brought with her. An exclamation fell from Mrs. Caffyn's lips as she bent eagerly forward and watched Di open the boxes. Like her own, they were all empty.

And as the two women stood staring into each other's pallid features a shrill cry rang from the room occupied by Lady Rivers, and the next moment the sound of a bell being frantically pulled followed the scream.

"She has lost her emeralds!" cried Mrs. Caffyn. Di followed her from the room, carrying the rifled bracelet cases.

(To be continued.)

A Pump in a Church.

THE most extraordinary tomb to be seen in Great Britain is in the chancel of Newbiggin Parish Church, Cumberland. It commemorates a former squire, and is in the form of a pump. Originally this quaint tomb was simply erected as a monument, but water has been laid on, and in case of fire in the church the pump would serve a most useful purpose. You will find further interesting particulars about this remarkable tomb, together with an illustration, in this week's *Sunday Reader*.

Among other contents of *The Sunday Reader* may be mentioned, "Advertising on a Pulpit," "A Distress Signal at a Bazaar," "Preaching to a Cannibal King," "Children with Royal God-parents," "A Postponed Wedding," "Sleeping in a Church," two complete stories, and a serial.

Five thousand rewards are being offered by the editor, and any reader can secure one of these. Go right away and get a copy of the *The Sunday Reader* at once.

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A DIVERSION OF FATE.

AT the upper end of the village, near where the road stretched away in an endless white spiral to the far line of the great mountains, the village folk were crowding together before a little open space.

Apart from them, on the broad verandah near by, Dinsmore Sahib and his two guests lounged easily in their chairs. A swarthy, six-foot Indian servant moved softly about with a tray of cooling drinks.

Before them, naked, save for the loin-cloth, and looking like a shining bronze statue, was one of those travelling conjurers whose art is the despair of Occidentals. He was about to conclude a remarkable performance with the time-honoured basket-trick, which may be as old as India itself.

"Yes; it's an old trick, but a good one," Dinsmore was saying. "I can never help the chill in my bones while the thing's going on, though it always turns out all right."

"Why, where's the danger? It's done with a false bottom to the basket, isn't it?"

"It is often done in that way," Dinsmore admitted, "but in this case the woman is trained to throw herself quickly from side to side to avoid the sword-thrusts which are made in regular order."

"Whew! hot work, isn't it?" said the first guest, while the other asked curiously: "How can you tell?"

"Oh, I got it from my servant, and he from the woman there," returned Dinsmore with a significant look.

A woman now came forward from beneath a clump of fig-trees. She was scarcely more clothed than the man, and her plump brown body, the arms and ankles heavy with bangles, her red lips and the scarlet flowers in her hair, with the bit of soft blue drapery about her, made a picture good to look on. As she moved quietly to the man's side her eyes caught those of the native on the verandah, and for a moment warmth and light flashed into her impassive face, but at the conjurer's words she turned away.

"Sahib," he said, addressing Dinsmore as he drew the light basket into position, "you shall see how one punishes the woman who gives him cause for anger." He bent a fierce gaze on his assistant, and her violent trembling scarcely seemed assumed.

This was the conventional patter of the trick, but one of the Englishmen stirred uneasily in his chair. "Good Heavens, how completely the woman is at his mercy! Just by a slip of the memory he might slice her into ribbons before he could stop himself."

At a gesture from the conjurer, who stood leaning on his long keen sword, the woman removed her many bangles, and stood with downcast eyes before him.

"Now, thou unhappy one," he said slowly. The woman winced, but stepped submissively into the basket, the lid of which closed on her a moment later.

The conjurer drew a few paces away, then, panting with fierce cries to enhance the effect of his harmless assault, made a mad rush towards the basket, thrusting his sword through the sides, up and down, with great rapidity. Each thrust was greeted with piteous cries from within, and the sword appeared to drip with blood.

It was truly a nerve-shaking performance. The audience hardly breathed, despite the full faith in the swordsman's dexterity; even the servant of Dinsmore Sahib turned a queer ash colour as he stood in the doorway with the forgotten drinks.

At last the conjurer stopped for breath, the perspiration streaming down his shining sides. He caught the eye of Dinsmore Sahib's servant as he stood there, and in an instant the fire which had smouldered at his heart all day broke into sudden flame. Since they had come into the hill-country the woman had been like one possessed; since she had seen, four days ago, the sahib's green-turbaned, monkey-faced Mohammedan yonder, she had spared but a look to her rightful lord. One careless thrust with this keen-edged weapon would end the jealous tortures he had endured since they left the plains.

Her discarded bracelets mocked him, and he swore no man should feel those soft brown arms around the neck but he.

She must be lying on the left side; instead of moving to the right, he would pierce the basket on the left from cover to bottom. It would be but an accident, they would all agree—all except the Mohammedan. He balanced the sword carefully in his hands and blood danced before his eyes as he took a step forward.

In a sudden he fell to trembling so that he dared not trust his hand to strike. He thought again of the warm brown arms that slid about his neck, of the soft red lips that were laid against his, of the eyes that had followed him even before he bought her. This hill-country bewitched one—he would take her back to the plains again. An accident could happen there as well as here, if necessary.

But to finish the trick.

Ah! was she on the left side, after all? What had been his last thrust? His heated brain could only turn the moves over confusedly; he could arrive at no decision. It was surely the left—or the right?

He prayed for a miracle to clear his muddled brain. He swore by all his gods he had not meant to hurt a hair of the woman's head. In thought he already felt the sword slipping hideously through her flesh.

The spectators moved impatiently, forcing the conjurer to action. Left—right? It should rest with Fate.

"Sahibs, this shall end it!" he said in husky tones, and made a terrible lunge. A series of heart-rending shrieks, dying away in groans, was the immediate response.

This was the usual conclusion of the performance, but the sequence was unexpected. The cover of the basket was thrown violently back, and the woman crept out, to throw herself at the conjurer's feet.

"Oh, my lord; it was in thy heart to slay thy miserable servant, yet thou didst stay thy hand. My life is thine once more."

"It was Fate," said the conjurer slowly, but he did not explain to the woman.

GRACE MARGUERITE HURD.

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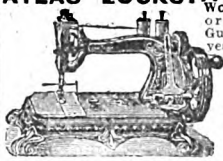

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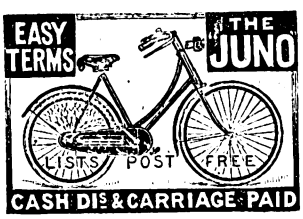

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Answers to Correspondents.

Short Stories dated June 5th will contain an inset of a particularly interesting nature. It will consist of a clear and brief description of the aims and objects of the FRESH AIR FUND, and will also form in itself a collecting sheet for those who may care to either collect for themselves or get other people to collect for them. Make it a point to see first of all that you get this inset when you buy your next copy of *S.S.*, for if you don't, it will be your loss. In the event of it having by some manner or means slipped out before the number reaches your hands, I shall be pleased to send along a duplicate on receipt of a post-card.

S. K.—You should certainly remove your pipe, cigar, or cigarette from your mouth when you meet a lady of your acquaintance in the street. It is not the correct thing for a gentleman to invariably raise his hat with his right hand, but with whichever hand is farthest from the lady passing him.

CYCLIST.—The best way to prevent your lamp from smoking is to soak the wick in vinegar for several hours and then allow it to dry.

MRS. A.—Most of the eggs you see offered for sale at very low prices come from the North of Italy.

G. P. P.—No; a medical man has never been raised to the ranks of the peerage. Thursday is the publishing day for our new paper, *Girls*.

B. S.—Duelling was most prevalent in this country during the reign of George III. If you wish for a reply to your letter by post you should inclose a stamped and addressed envelope.

G. J.—The custom of eating apple sauce with roast pork is not a mere matter of taste, but the acid of the apple assists materially in the digestion of the pork.

R. S.—Why not look in the library of the British Museum for the book you are in search of? It is almost certain to be there. No fewer than 31,000 books are added to this wonderful collection every year.

D. T. E.—The Bank of England was started in 1694, and the system of penny postage in 1840.

H. L. W.—The custom of shaking hands is a sign of friendship and trust. I do not agree with you in the opinion that it is a ridiculous practice. Every nation must have its form of greeting, and surely it is preferable to offer one's hand to a friend than to rub noses with them as some races do—the Maoris of New Zealand, for instance.

MUSICIAN.—The pipes similar to those played by Punch and Judy men is the most ancient form of musical instrument; it has been used from the very earliest days of the world's history.

W. L. is very much in love, but being of a bashful nature, cannot summon up sufficient courage to propose to the object of his affection. A brilliant idea occurred to him, namely, to use the language of flowers as a medium, and he writes to ask me what would be the most suitable flower to send to the lady?——A moss rosebud with a piece of myrtle is generally considered to be equivalent to a confession of love, but if you take my advice, you will go yourself and make a bold declaration of your passion. Believe me, the lady will be much more likely to look with favour upon your suit than if approached in a timid and faint-hearted fashion.

A. M. H.—I am surprised to hear how much your dog appreciates music, most of the dogs of my acquaintance have a decided aversion to it, which they exhibit audibly.

W. N.—There are eighteen flags used at sea, by which it is possible to make 78,642 signals.

D. Y.—It is quite true that the smoke from the wick of a candle after the flame has been extinguished is poisonous, and if breathed in great quantities it would cause death.

M. B. L.—No; the negro is not black when first born, but a yellowish white. It gradually becomes darker, however, until by the time it is ten days old it is quite black.

G. C. M.—Foolscap is so called because paper of that size was originally marked with a jester's cap and bells.

V. V. V.—Divan is a Persian word. Your friend is quite right. It means a collection, a council, an audience chamber, and so came to mean a couch or sofa, from the kind of cushioned seats which in an Eastern reception room are ranged against the wall.

G. F. B.—It would take about a pound of cork to float a man of eleven stone.

ANNOYED writes: "Every year on a certain day in July I cannot venture into the streets of our town without being confronted on every hand by a group of dirty little street children presiding over a collection of oyster-shells, and thrusting one of them in my face they request me to 'remember the grotto.' Is this a peculiarity of Otley, or are you pestered in the same way in London?"————It is quite a universal practice, and arises from a former custom amongst pilgrims of visiting a shrine of the Apostles at Compostilla on St. James' Day, to "remember the grotto" being to help the poor and needy. There was also a supervision that whoever ate oysters on that day would never want for money.

ELLA.—It is correct for the bridesmaids to follow the bride after the wedding ceremony from the church in the same order as they entered it, the custom for each of them to have a gentleman attendant having long been abandoned.

H. R.—William the Conqueror is credited with the invention of surnames; each man took his name from his particular trade or calling.

ETHEL.—Three feet six inches is indeed a remarkable length for a woman's hair. Yes, I have heard of a few instances of a still greater length, one, for example, being over six feet, and another over seven. Thirty inches is the mean length.

C. R.—The total weight of all the excavated diamonds in the world does not exceed five tons.

H. H.—If a person says, "I beg your pardon," it is much better to say "Don't mention it" than "Granted." The latter expression infers a wrong has been done and is forgiven.

D. L. M.—Yes; there is one—and only one—animal that does not swim instinctively, and that is the camel; immediately it enters the water it turns over on its back and dies.

A. G. S.—"Facetious" and "Abstemious" are the only words in the English language that contain the five vowels in their numerical order.

T. W. M. asks: "How long would it take a train to reach the moon?"————Supposing such a thing was in the bounds of possibility, it would take an express train, travelling at the rate of sixty miles an hour, six months to reach the moon, and a hundred and seventy years to reach the sun.

C. G. F.—It is not true that the brain of an imbecile generally weighs more than that of a sane person; indeed, it is more often considerably less in weight.

H. J. D.—Dogs were formerly used for drawing small carts, etc., in England, but the practice was prohibited by an Act of Parliament, some fifty years ago.

Notice to Competitors.

IN all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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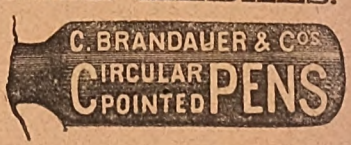

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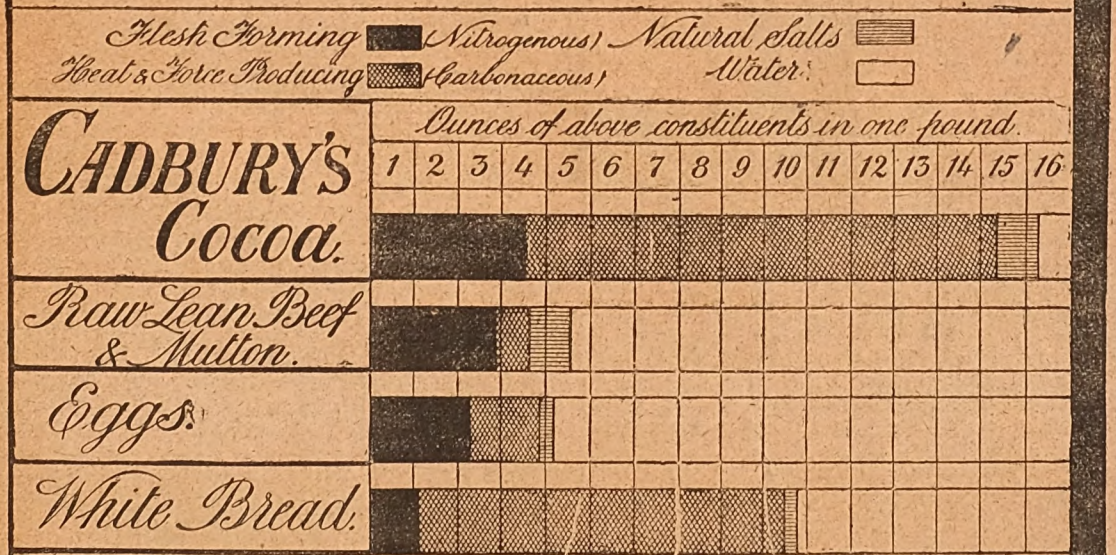
SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 440. FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 5TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

ANALYSIS OF FOODS



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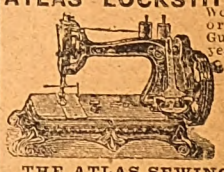

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SHORT STORIES

No. 440.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending June 5th, 1897.

THE ADVANCEMENT OF P.C. GITTUS.

POLICE-CONSTABLE GITTUS, 555D, Metropolitan Police, was not gifted with a vivid imagination. But a dirty fog sat sullenly upon the dirty streets, and a cold, penetrating drizzle filtered down through the haze, so that even the constable's stolidity could hardly help conjuring up a vision of a cosy fireside, and a comfortable chair, and a pipe and bonnie Mrs. Gittus to finish off the picture.

No, no, "a policeman's life is not a happy one," to quote Mr. Gilbert—and when the aforesaid has only been married a month, and worships his wife, it seems especially hard to have to walk up and down and round filthy streets and squares, on the look-out for burglars that rarely come, and incidents that hardly ever happen.

P.C. Gittus's beat was a quiet one. It lay in a fashionable London suburb, where for the most part lived unostentatious comfort and dreary gentility, with here and there a more pretentious red-brick mansion to break the stuccoed monotony.

The nurse-girls and housemaids knew all about Gittus. They had found out, being feminines, about the little house in Putney and the young bride, and so did not waste their time in trying to ensnare the handsome constable. For the most part, therefore, Gittus, on duty, lived in a condition of splendid isolation. On this account his office was all the more irksome.

Ugh! What a wretched night it was! The neighbouring church clock clanged out 11.30. In vain might Gittus sigh. Respite lay far away.

The streets were absolutely deserted. The fog, the drizzling rain, and the policeman had Suburbia to themselves.

Gittus tramped wearily on past the wall that flanked the garden of Sir John Judkins, the rich brewer, and so into the obscurity of Love Street, a narrow enough thoroughfare, merely the link between streets more important.

Love Street! The policeman gave an aggrieved sigh. What had Love got to do with anything outside one tiny house in Putney? What! Hullo, who was that?

Someone had coughed. Yes, a figure was standing up against the wall, tall, heavily-coated, shadowy in the fog, who, as Gittus halted, coughed again, not, be it noted, the cough of one asthmatic, but that of a person who wishes to attract attention unto himself.

Back shot the policeman's lantern slide. The strong yellow glare ate into the gloom, and the figure came out from under the wall.

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A soft felt hat, a long coat with collar turned well up to hide the face, was all that Gittus could distinguish. At once his professional instincts leapt up.

"Now then, my man," he said brusquely, "what do you want?"

"A word with you, Gittus."

So cool was the answer, and so unexpected, that the constable was staggered. "I don't know you," he murmured, though an expert would have detected the suspicion of a query in his voice.

"Have you ever heard of Sam Green?" asked the stranger.

The lantern-slide stole back over the glass, and the two figures stood motionless, face to face in the fog.

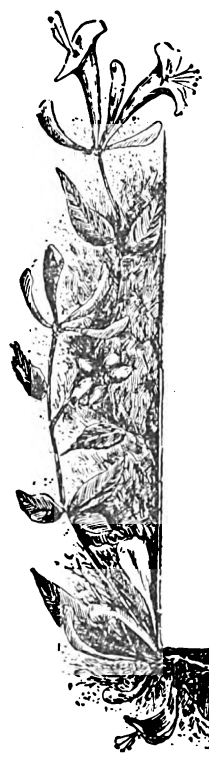
"Are you Sam Green?"

"That is my business. Perhaps I am, perhaps I'm not. We won't discuss that subject now. What I am going to tell you concerns you much nearer than the matter of my identity. I want to tell you something about Miss Mary Green—Mrs. George Gittus, I should say."

"What do you mean?" Gittus was a bad actor, and though he tried hard to put the proper amount of plain, unaffected anger into his voice, yet he could not altogether hide the lurking suspicion of apprehension that lay behind his words. He was a man of simple mould, and so much in love with his wife that he felt forced to vindicate his love, even to a stranger—which, by-the-way, he had yet to prove this man to be.

But the tall man was not to be brow-beaten. His answer was unpleasantly calm and concise. "Your wife is false to you," he said.

The policeman gasped. Then he advanced a step. The stranger could hear his teeth grind, and the quick, passionate catch of the breath that indicated rage, and he realised that Gittus meant mischief.



He drew back a pace. Then he went on, and so quietly that Gittus had to listen:

"Do you think I am just saying this for fun? I only tell you because—well, because I know what I do know, and that is that your wife is not worth the ground you tread on. Give me a chance and I'll prove it to you."

The stranger paused. The fog hid the pallor on Gittus's face, but it could not shut out the ghastly fear that trembled on his tongue, the mental terror of a doubting man.

"W—what can you prove," he stammered hoarsely; "what do you know about my wife?"

"While you are here on night duty she entertains an old lover, you know his name—Henderson."

Every word the man uttered rang out in the policeman's ears as though they had been bellowed into a speaking-trumpet. Henderson! Henderson! The handsome young butcher in Putney! The man who had been running neck-and-neck with Gittus—so disinterested onlookers had avowed—for the hand of Mary Green, and whom the constable had only beaten by a head a year or so ago.

A sweat broke out on Gittus's face.

"Prove it, prove it!" he gasped.

"There is only one way of proving it," came the answer, cold and deliberate, "and that is by the testimony of your own eyes. Your wife is too good an actress to betray herself by any action of her own."

"But how can I do that?" asked Gittus. All his manhood seemed to have left him. He was abject, piteous in his misery. Oh, to verify the truth of this hideous accusation!

"Listen; I will help you." The stranger's voice dropped to an impressive whisper. "Change clothes with me and go to Putney yourself. It will not take you long to convince yourself of my sincerity and your wife's duplici y. You can rely upon me to look after your interests while you are away. In two hours I will meet you here, and no one will have been any the wiser of your absence."

The fog hid the policeman's expression, but the stranger knew by the hoarse, tremulous gasp that escaped him, that the idea had taken root.

"Every moment is precious," the man went on softly, "every instant means much——"

"I'll do it!" The words seemed forced from between Gittus's lips. The next moment he had begun to take off his helmet, and unbutton his thick blue coat, an example that the other man was not slow to follow as regards his own clothing.

Like magic was the change effected. Who would have recognised Gittus now? The phlegmatic policeman had lost his identity beneath the long cloak of the strange destroyer of his peace. He crammed the soft felt hat down over his eyes. "Don't play me false," he muttered.

The next moment he had turned and was speeding madly off in the direction of Putney.

The stranger watched him out of sight. There was a curious smile upon his face, as, assuming the swinging gait of the man he was impersonating, he strode on out of the obscurity of Love Street.

For three or four minutes Gittus sped along as fast as his legs could carry him, unconscious almost of what it was he was doing, his one thought centred on the horrible task he had set himself to do.

Mary, his Mary faithless! The wife that he had worshipped, that he still worshipped—with a jerk he pulled himself up! Merciful Heavens, what was he doing? In a flash the enormity of his present breach of duty flooded his brain.

He had betrayed his calling for an impulse. His heart seemed to become ice within him.

Who was that man that had accosted him, that was at present patrolling the streets in *his* clothes? Suppose that the fellow was not fulfilling his part of the mad contract, suppose—a cold sweat broke out upon the policeman's face, and swinging round he suddenly dashed off again, back in the direction from which he had but just come.

In a few moments, however, he slackened his pace. His brain, usually so lethargic, was now working at high pressure. Perhaps

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he had been the victim of a hoax. Something was afoot to do him harm. Pray Heaven he might yet be able to repair his madness.

As he drew near the scene of his recent adventure, his caution increased, and keeping well in the shadow of the houses he crept stealthily forward, listening intently for any sound that might guide him on his further progress.

At the bottom of Love Street he halted. All was still, supernaturally so. The silence awed him.

Assuring himself that here at least nothing further could be gained by delay, he pulled his borrowed hat still more over his eyes, and like a cat stole on out towards the main street of his beat.

A high wall, flanking the garden of Sir John Judkins, mentioned above, ran along one side of the street, the other side consisting of a row of semi-detached houses, all of the same unpicturesque, monotonous, Early Victorian architecture.

A gentle rain was now falling, and the gas-lights shed a particularly anæmic radiance upon the glistening pavement. Still the policeman crept on, skulking fearfully against the black murkiness of the wall.

Hullo! What was that? A low whistle fell upon his ear. In a moment he came to a standstill. His heart began a most unnecessary throbbing. Again the whistle sounded. From the sound it seemed to come from above his head.

He peered cautiously upwards. A dark figure was sitting straddlewise on the top of the wall!

In a moment Gittus knew that the crisis had arrived.

"Where's the cop? Have you settled him?"

The unspoken question of a moment ago had been answered. In a flash the constable realised the whole plot that had been laid to entrap him, realised, too, the deadly peril of the situation. His every instinct leapt up to his aid. A low cry of pretended warning was his answer, raising at the same time his hand with a gesture of eager alarm. In a moment the figure on the wall seemed to comprehend, and before Gittus had had time to consider his next move, suddenly let down what turned out to be a slender, albeit strong, rope ladder.

In an instant the policeman grasped firm hold of the swaying structure. His pulses were quiet enough now. The desire to make amends for his recent minute of madness had made a new man of him.

Another moment he had clambered up the ladder. Not for one instant did he hesitate, but, panther-like, flung himself at the throat of the man beside him.

Providence was kind to Gittus. As the two men fell, firmly locked together, over into the garden on the other side of the wall, the constable was uppermost, with the result that, save for a slight shaking, he came off unscathed.

The other man was not so lucky. Gittus was a heavy man. Prone and apparently lifeless he lay, though the policeman was not allowed much time to examine the extent of his injuries.

For the next moment a low whistle from over the wall recalled him to the fact that in all probability the game had only just begun, and so, hastily pushing the inanimate body of the unknown beneath a convenient laurel bush, he answered the whistle with as near a repetition thereof as he was capable.

As a result he saw dimly outlined against the sky the figure of yet another man upon the wall. Silently he crouched down upon the wet earth. The figure swung itself off the wall and dropped with a dull thud upon its feet, only to be sent headlong as Gittus's right arm shot out to its limit.

Again that whistle! Again the answering call from Gittus. Again another form upon the summit of the wall!

And this time Gittus saw that the chance for redemption had really come. The last comer was garbed as a policeman!

Could it be the man who had tricked him, who—the fellow swung over the wall as his predecessors had done, and again the policeman's irresistible fist leapt out to stretch the new arrival prone beside the senseless bodies of his accomplices.

Yes, the "policeman" and the stranger who had been the cause of Gittus's desertion were one and the same. Dark though it was, Gittus could see that. He knew now that he was saved.

Quick as a flash he knelt down upon the wet earth and began to strip off the familiar dark blue coat from the prostrate man. He forced the limp arms through the sleeves of the ulster he had but that moment himself been wearing. Then, raising his whistle to his lips, he sent forth a shrill peal that rung out with startling distinctness through the stillness of the night.

* * * * *

All the papers were full the day after of the sensational capture, and of the wonderful courage and promptitude displayed by P.C. Gittus, of the notorious gang of burglars that had for so long evaded the clutches of the law. The *Sentinel* gave the policeman a leader to himself, while for days nobody could talk of anything else.

There was a reward of five hundred pounds out for the capture of the man who had deceived Gittus so cleverly, for he was none other than the notorious Blake—King of Burglars—while Sir John Judkins, whose house the gang had planned breaking into, added a cheque for £20, so that Gittus was well able to afford his wife the smart dress on which she had set her heart. And the little wife at Putney was the only person to whom Gittus related the true story of the heroic capture, so that if Sam Green and Blake were one and the same, the burglar never published the fact. Even at the trial he held his peace. *Requiescat in pace!*

E. le Breton-Martin.

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Men Who Have Made the Empire.

BY GEORGE GRIFFITH.

II.—EDWARD LONGLEGS.

The Man who Nearly Made the United Kingdom.

Two centuries all but nine years have passed away since William the Conqueror, unwept, if not unhonoured, lost his life in avenging a paltry joke, and left his work for others to carry on. In the two centuries not much has been done, although no little show has been made meanwhile, and a great clash of arms has resounded through the world.

William the Red has died, as he lived, in a somewhat ignoble and futile manner. Henry I. has done one good thing, wedding, as it were, in his own person and that of the Lady Matilda, the two races who were afterwards to be one.

Stephen and Matilda have settled their differences and died, after the shedding of much wasted blood. Henry II., by the hand of Strongbow and his licensed pirates, has done a piece of the good work badly, in beginning that conquest of Ireland which is not to be completed until the Battle of the Boyne is lost and won.

Richard Lionheart has won much glory to very small profit in the magnificent madness of the Third Crusade. The barons, recognising, however dimly and clumsily, that they are, in good truth, citizens of the infant State whose lusty, turbulent youth already gives promise of its future strength and greatness, have become law-lords as well as landlords, and with mailed hands have guided that unwilling pen of John's along the bottom of the parchment on which the Great Charter is written.

And, lastly, Simon of Montfort has taken a swift stride through several centuries and, arriving at the modern idea that the making of nations and the ordering of the world can be achieved by Talk, has, after not a little violence and the spilling of considerable blood that might have been better spent, got together that first Parliament or Talking-Machine, whose successors have so sorely hindered the progress of the world and balked the efforts of those appointed by God, and not by the counting of noses, to do its work.

So the two noisy and somewhat foolish centuries have rolled away into a blessed oblivion with a good deal of shouting and swaggering, of strife and bloodshed, but of little progress, saving that one Roger Bacon has lived and written a certain book and made himself a name for ever.

But all this time the work with which we are here most concerned, the making of an empire, has been waiting for the next God-sent man to come and do it. and this man was Edward Plantagenet, surnamed Longlegs, next in lineal succession, not as King, but as Empire-Maker, to him who won the fight at Senlac and got himself so well obeyed that "no man durst do anything against his will"—which was a great deal to say of anyone in such days as those.

Edward of the Longlegs came on to the stage of History with long, swift, determined, and, in short, wholly characteristic strides. The Talking-Machine of the good Earl Simon had worked noisily, as is usual with such machines, and had produced little but sound and fury.

There was war all round, and the usual anarchy in Ireland and in Wales.

Llewellyn, Lord of Snowdon, had pitted himself gallantly against the logic of circumstances, and was seeking to reconstruct the ancient and now impossibly obsolete Celtic empire.

"*Be of good courage in the slaughter, cling to thy work, destroy England and plunder its multitudes!*" his bards had sung to him, and so he had honestly set himself to do, not recognising the fact that empires are neither made nor re-made by mere methods of miscellaneous blood letting.

To the north, Scotland was divided by schisms and rent by the bitter jealousies of its nobles and clan-chieftains, savage, rude and poor, but gallant, strong, and very full of fight, as the English were to learn later on.

Over the Narrow Seas the great domains which William the Norman had kept with his sword and which the second Henry had greatly increased by inheritance and marriage, were slipping piecemeal away from the throne to which they did not of right divine belong, and with which it was therefore impossible that they should remain.

Such, in briefest outline, was the scene into which Edward Longlegs strode, and of which he was to be for thirty-five years the central and dominating figure. His first look round, as it were, showed him the nature of the task which it was his destiny to forthwith set about.

With that clearness of vision without which no man has any chance of success at the business of empire-making, he instantly pierced the dust-storms of battle that were rising all about him, and the mist-clouds of debate which Earl Simon's Talking-Machine had commenced to vomit forth, and behind and beyond these

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he saw a certain Fact, a prime necessity which had to be faced—in short a real Something of an infinitely greater importance than tribal warfare, the aspirations of bard-inspired princelings, or even parliamentary debates.

This was neither more nor less than the fact that, when the Maker of all things mapped out this part of the world, it pleased Him in His wisdom to put England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland into one little group of islands, and from this fact Edward Longlegs drew the deduction that the King of Kings had intended them to be under one lordship.

It seems a simple thing to say now, a fact so patent that the mention of it seems superfluous; so does the larger fact that the world is round; but it was a very different matter in the times and circumstances of Edward Longlegs, and, indeed, his first and greatest claim to stand next in succession to William the Norman in the royal line of empire-makers consists in this: that he was capable of that master-stroke of genius which clearly demonstrated an imperial principle, of which six hundred years of history have been the continuous and emphatic endorsement.

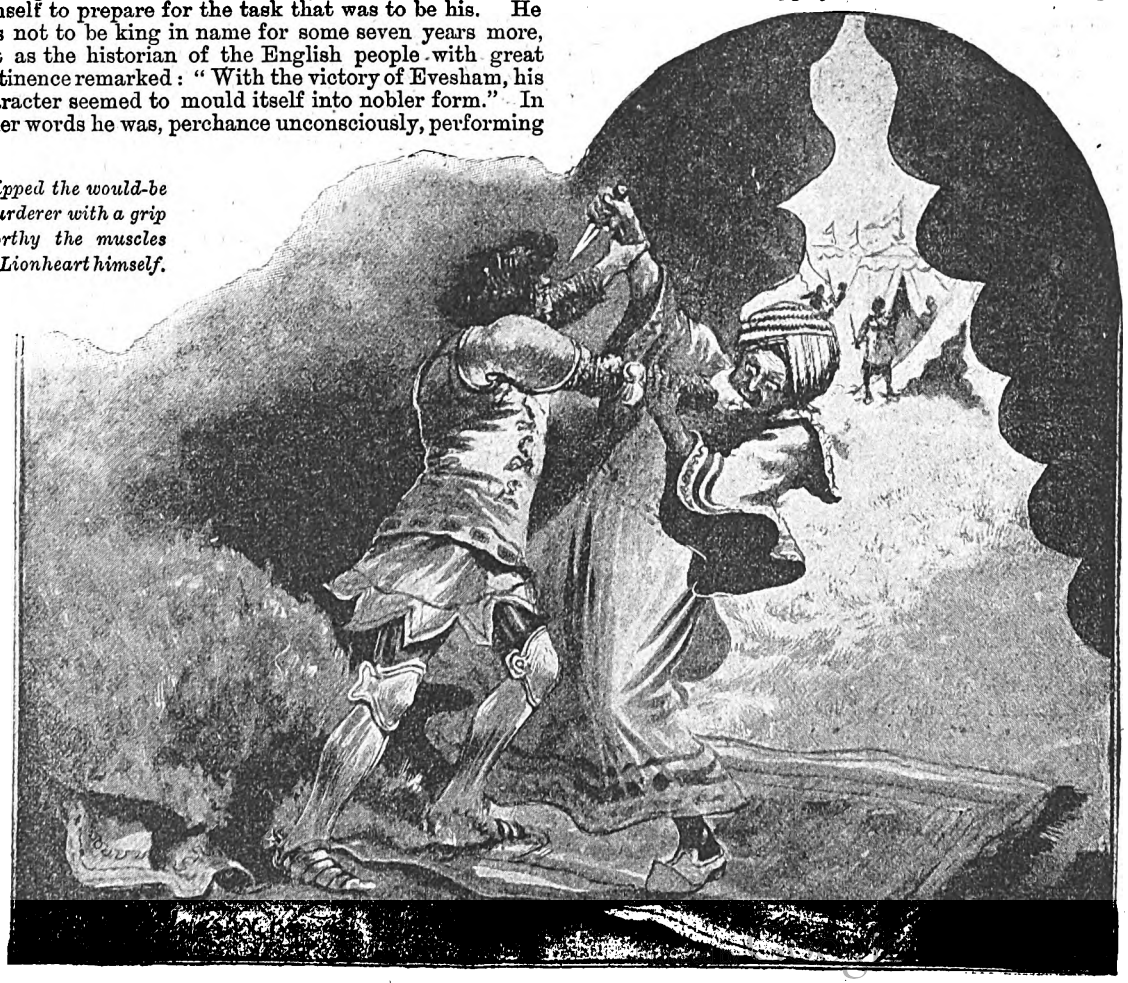
No sooner was the bloody fight of Evesham over and the good Earl Simon had breathed out his generous, if somewhat premature soul in that last cry of his: "It is God's grace!" than Edward Longlegs seems to have set himself to prepare for the task that was to be his. He was not to be king in name for some seven years more, but as the historian of the English people with great pertinence remarked: "With the victory of Evesham, his character seemed to mould itself into nobler form." In other words he was, perchance unconsciously, performing that indispensable preliminary to all really great and true public reforms, the reformation of himself.

Hitherto his life had been none of the best. He had been the leader of a retinue that had made itself something like infamous in the land. He had intrigued first with one party and then with another. He is accused of a faithlessness which, it is said, forced the good, though mistaken, Earl Simon into armed revolt against his liege lord—though this may, after all, only have been a stroke of wise and necessary policy, since he possibly saw even then that Chaos would not reform itself into Cosmos just for being talked at.

Then again, and with curious resemblance to William of Normandy, and later of Hastings and England, he had avenged an insult to his mother by the slaughter of some three thousand men in the rout of Lewes and a quite unjustifiable indulgence in pillage and slaughter when the Barons War was finally over.

"It was from Earl Simon," says John Richard Green in one of those limpid sentences of his, "as the Earl owned with a proud bitterness ere his death, that Edward had learnt the skill in warfare which distinguished him among the princes of his time. But he had learnt from the Earl the far nobler lesson of a self-government which lifted him high above them as ruler among men."

It seemed, indeed, as though, by this reformation of himself, he was to typify that reformation of England



Gripped the would-be murderer with a grip worthy the muscles of Lionheart himself.

which it was his life-work to begin. The new Edward was to be the maker of the new England.

His first action after the war was characteristic of the man and the work that he was to do. The cessation of the fighting, as was usual in those days, had left an undesirable number of truculent warriors of various ranks wandering at large about the kingdom with their legitimate occupation gone. Edward, with that instinct of order characteristic of all true empire-makers, saw in these the possibilities of disorder, and with a happy combination of wisdom and adventure turned their swords and lances away from the bodies of their fellow-citizens by taking them to fight the Paynim in the Holy Land.

An incident of this excursion has been adorned by one of those pleasant fictions which, if the paradox may be pardoned, are none the less true for the fact that they are false. Edward, having sent certain hundreds of Moslems to Paradise with a perhaps unnecessarily ruthless dispatch, was considered by the sect of the Assassins to be a person who would be better dead than alive in Palestine, and so one of them, after several attempts, succeeded, as one may put it, in interviewing him privately with a poisoned dagger. The fiction has it that his consort Eleanor of Castille sucked the poison from the wound with her own sweet lips and so saved his life.

It is a pretty story, but, unfortunately for its authenticity, no one seems to have heard of it or thought it worth the telling until Ptolemy of Lucca told it a good half-century afterwards. But the truth underlying it remains, and this truth is that Edward Longlegs was blessed with that greatest of all earthly blessings, a loving and devoted wife.

The facts of the matter are few but eloquent. Edward saw the dagger before it struck him, and gripped the would-be murderer with a grip worthy the muscles of Lionheart himself. There was a struggle, during which the dagger-point scratched his arm. A moment after it was buried in the assassin's own heart. Then some of Edward's retainers, hearing the scuffling, burst into the tent and satisfied themselves that the wretch had attempted his last murder by the somewhat unnecessary method of knocking out his brains with a foot-stool.

Soon after the symptoms of poisoning showed themselves, and Edward, in his usual business-like way, made his will and his peace with God and prepared to "salute the world" with becoming dignity. In the end not Eleanor's lips but the surgeon's knife removed the danger, and so once again a dagger-thrust which had come near to changing the history of Britain missed its mark.

It was during his return from this Crusade, as he was journeying through Calabria, that he met the messengers who told him that his father was dead and that he was King of England. Charles of Anjou, who was riding with him at the moment, wondered at the great grief he showed, and, being himself a man almost incapable of feeling, asked him why he should show more grief at his father's death than he had done for the loss of his baby son who had died a short time before. The answer was to the point and worthy of the man.

"By the goodness of God," he said, "the loss of my boy may be made good to me, but not even God's own mercy can give me a father again."

It was on the same journey that there occurred that curious incident which is called the "Little Battle of Chalons," and which is also instructive in giving us another view of the man who could use such wise and pious words as these. While he was travelling through Guienne, the Count of Chalons, one of the best and starkest knights of his age, sent a friendly message to request the favour of being allowed to break a lance with him. Edward, though he had been repeatedly warned of plots against his life by those who had designs on his French dominions, and though as a king he had a perfect right to decline the challenge of a vassal, was, as we should say nowadays, too good a sportsman to say no; but he took the precaution of going to the knightly trysting-place with an escort of a thousand men—in doing which he was well justified by the fact that the Count of Chalons was there waiting for him with about two thousand.

During the trouble which inevitably followed, the Count of Chalons did break a lance with Edward, but it was his own lance, and this failing, he gripped him round the neck in the most unknightly fashion and tried to drag him from the saddle. The Count was a strong man, but Edward was a little stronger, so he just sat still, and swinging his horse round, pulled him out of the saddle instead, after which, to put it into plain English, he gave him a sound thrashing, and when he at length cried for quarter, Edward, ever generous in the moment of victory, gave him the life that he had forfeited by his treachery, but, as a punishment, which the coroneted scoundrel justly deserved, he compelled him to take his sword back from the hands of a common soldier, and so disgraced him for ever in the eyes of his peers.

It may be added that the Little Battle of Chalons, in spite of the difference of numbers, ended in something like a picnic for the English, after which the King betook himself in leisurely fashion to the throne, and the work that was waiting for him.

No sooner was the crown upon his head, than he got to his task. The Prince of Snowdon, now calling himself Prince of Wales, had not only made himself master of his own country, but had pushed the war into England and reduced several English towns, the chief of which was Shrewsbury. Edward called upon him to restore the peace which he had broken and to come and do homage for his lands. Llewelyn, in the plenitude of his pride, told him to come and fetch him.

Edward took a note of this, but waited two years while he replenished the royal treasury by more or less justifiable means. During this time, as it happened, the Prince's promised bride, Eleanor, daughter of Earl Simon, fell into his hands. Again and again he summoned the Prince to perform the act of allegiance, holding his sweetheart meanwhile as a hostage in honourable captivity.

At length a fresh defiance from the Welshman roused him to action, and Longlegs strode swiftly across England and struck out hard and heavy. A single blow dissipated the dream of Celtic empire for ever. Llewelyn fled to his mountains and at length sued for peace. By rights his life was forfeit for rebellion, yet Edward not only forgave him but remitted the fine of £50,000 which he had imposed on the Welsh chieftains, and then invited Llewelyn to his court and married him with all due pomp and circumstance to the daughter of his old enemy—from which it will be seen that Edward Longlegs, like William the Norman, and indeed all good and capable empire-makers, was a gentleman.

Unhappily, Llewelyn repaid the kindness and courtesy by new rebellion, which ended, as it deserved, in disaster. Merlin had prophesied that when money was made round a Welsh prince should be crowned in London. During this last revolt Edward had caused round half-

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pence and farthings to be coined. When it was over the head of Llewelyn was sent to London and crowned with a garland of Ivy on Tower Hill.

What Longlegs had thus done with Wales he sought by more devious and less effective means to do with Scotland. The dispute between Balliol and Bruce gave him the opportunity of intervention, and of this the dismal results are too well known to need detailed description from me.

Here, again, we have nothing to do with personal right or wrong, or with the ethics of national independence. The business of empire-making is too urgent to wait for matters of this kind. It would perhaps have been better if Edward, after the sack and slaughter of Berwick, had hurled the whole weight of the English power against the object of his attack, as William the Norman would have done, and once and for all crushed the opposition into impotence.

It would have been bitter and bloody work, as the work of empire-making is apt to be, but the end might have justified the means. Certainly some centuries of bloodshed and bitterness would have been saved. The high ideal of a United Kingdom would have been realised nearly five hundred years earlier, and the progress of both realms in civilisation, wealth, and power might have been quickened immeasurably.

And after all, neither side in the long struggle would have lost anything to balance against the greatness of the gain to both. There would have been no Stirling Bridge, but then there would have been no Falkirk; no Bannockburn, but also no Flodden Field. All this, as it happens, however, was not written in the Book of Destiny, and so it does not concern us here, since we have to consider how much of the work of empire-making Edward did, not what he failed to do or left undone.

The surrender of Stirling in 1305 apparently completed the conquest of Scotland, and Edward was for the time being the actual and undisputed sovereign of the whole country from the Pentland Firth to the English Channel, and it is probable that the conquest would have been a permanent one but for the entrance of another power into the field, and this was nothing less than the English Baronage itself. It was as though the chiefs of his own army had turned against him, and, in the fatal dispute which followed, Robert the Bruce saw his opportunity, and in the end re-won for Scotland that independence which has cost her so much and which, however precious as a matter of sentiment, was destined to prove of so little value to her.

All that is past and done with now, but still no one who holds that an empire is greater than a nation, even as the whole is greater than its part, can help looking back with regretful thoughts upon those pages of our history which would have been so much brighter and more glorious if those gallant Scots who fought so splendidly through those long and bitter wars could have stood, as they have done since, side by side with their brothers of the South, and so made possible centuries ago the beginning of that great work in which they have borne so splendid a part.

Had that been so Edward Longlegs might have been the founder instead of only one of the makers of the British Empire, and that last piteous scene by the sandy shores of the Solway Firth would never have been enacted.

But though in the end he neither conquered Scotland nor founded the United Kingdom, he did something else which, as the centuries went by, proved but little less important, for he began to make the British Constitution.

Gallant soldier and great general as he was, he was perhaps even a greater statesman. He saw far ahead of his times, too far indeed, for to his enlightened conviction that in the matter of taxation "what touched all should be allowed of all" we have the real reason for that revolt of the Baronage, which made a United Kingdom of the Fourteenth Century an impossibility.

Yet as law-maker he did work which lasted longer than that which he did on the battle-field. Like William the Norman, he was a stark man who knew how to get himself obeyed, and order, no matter how dearly bought, was the first thing to be got, and he got it. He could "make a wilderness and call it peace," as he did over and over again with Wales and Scotland—and, indeed, to him a wilderness was better than a place where disorder dwelt—but he also made another peace within his own realms which was the first fore-runner of that which we enjoy to-day. The laws which he made were for rich and poor, great and small, alike. The hand that was pitiless in destruction was also ready and strong to protect.

The manner of his death is as characteristic as any of the acts, good or bad, of his life. Old and weak and sick he made the long journey from Westminster to the Solway to fulfil the oath which he had sworn at the knighting of his unworthy son to avenge Bruce's murder of Comyns and to punish his rebellion.

Too feeble to keep the saddle, he was carried in a litter at the head of the hundred thousand men who were to be the instruments of his vengeance, but at length the news of victory after victory won by the Bruce stung him to a fury which for the time was stronger than his weakness, and at Carlisle the old warrior left his litter and once more mounted his charger. It is a pathetic sight even when looked at through the mists of the intervening centuries. We can picture the gallant struggle that he must have made to sit his horse upright and to bear without fainting the weight of the armour that was oppressing his disease-worn and weary limbs. The mailed hand which had struck the great Count of Chalons down could not now even draw the sword that hung useless at his side.

Only one thing remained strong in the man who had once been the very incarnation of strength. His inflexible will was still unbroken and unswerving in its devotion to the great ideal and master project of his life. Had that will had its way, the flood of English strength and valour that was rolling slowly behind him would have burst in a torrent of death and desolation over the war-wasted fields of southern Scotland, and there can be but little doubt as to what the end would have been.

But it was not to be. The Spectre Horseman was already riding by his side and, like the wine from a cracked goblet, the dregs of his once splendid strength ebbed away. At last the skeleton hand was outstretched, and he who had never been unhorsed by mortal foe was stricken from the saddle. Yet even then the proud spirit refused to yield. He took his place in the litter again, and, with almost dying lips, ordered the army forward; and, though the end was very near, he did not submit without a struggle, pathetic in its hopeless heroism, to conquer even Death itself and carry out his purpose in spite of the King of Terrors. Die he must, and that soon, but his spirit should live after him and he would still lead his army.

"Bury me not till you have conquered Scotland!" were almost the last words he spoke. Though they were disobeyed and Scotland was never conquered, yet they were well worthy of the iron-hearted man who said them.

FOUND IN DEATH.

On the long cane lounge at the side of the room a man lay asleep, one velvet-clad arm thrown across his eyes to shut out the hard glare from the skylight above him. Through a coloured window at the end of the studio a bar of sunlight struck redly and fell upon his dense bronze curls and the short, powerful fingers of his upturned hand. A half-smoked cigarette had fallen upon the dark red rug beside him. A yellow-backed French novel lay at the man's feet. His lips, red and full, were half unclosed in a faint smile.

The shutting of the door he had left ajar did not rouse him. A woman came in, swishing her long skirts over the bare floor. She wore a loose house-gown of peacock-blue silk, somewhat faded and worn about the hem. Her dark, rusty-brown hair was twisted up not too tidily in an unbecoming knot. Her bright blue eyes blinked in the strong light, and she put up one long nervous hand to shield them.

She stood still for a moment in the middle of the floor looking at the sleeping man. Then she went to his side, picked up the novel and the cigarette, tossed the latter into the fire in the grate, and looked at the book as though she would have liked to dispose of that in the same manner. However, she laid it down on a table, pushing it under a pile of other books.

The light at its strongest fell upon some large object standing in the centre of the floor on a wooden pedestal and shrouded in a white cloth. The woman's eyes rested on this with a bitter curiosity. She hesitated for some time, glancing at the man on the lounge. At last she went up to the pedestal and carefully lifted off the cloth, which had rested on splinters of wood stuck into the wet clay.

There was revealed the figure of a woman, somewhat more than life-size, lying at full length in an attitude of rigid calm, the arms straight at the sides, the hands laid palms upward, with relaxed fingers. The loose hair swept sideways from her face over a sheaf of flowers as yet only roughly indicated, and curled in a deep wave over her arm.

The thin drapery, drawn in long oblique folds from right to left, revealed outlines full and firmly moulded, composed now to an unnatural quiet. The face, too, with heavy, downcast lids, and lightly-closed, full-hewed mouth, seen in profile, wore an expression of life held in some strange trance. It was not sleep; a latent mockery hid beneath those brows and lurked in the corners of those unsmiling lips.

The clay model seemed nearly finished, with the exception of the detail of the feet.

"Well, what are you doing?" demanded a voice suddenly and sharply. The man sat up, yawning and frowning slightly.

"I wanted to see how you get on," said the woman, her fingers twitching nervously at the corner of the white cloth which trailed upon the floor. She tried to speak lightly and to smile, but her lips were dry and hard.

"You might have asked. You know I hate you prying about before the thing's finished."

The artist's thick brows knitted over his grey-blue eyes. He got up and took the sheet from the woman's grasp.

His eyes, resting, too, on the clay figure, darkened moodily. And the woman, watching, smiled—a swift, involuntary, yet bitter smile.

"Has Masterson seen the design?" she asked. "And does he like it?"

"Like it"—the sculptor began and stopped abruptly, casting a hard look at his wife. A latent irritation edged this look, which seemed to comprehend every detail of her untidy person, and expressed a distaste approaching active dislike. He shook his broad shoulders as though to dismiss her question, and turned his back on her. Instant resentment appeared in the woman's eager eyes and compressed lips.

"I think it is unworthy of you," she said impetuously. "It is not up to the level of your work."

The artist moved towards his statue as though to veil it from this unwelcome criticism.

"Fortunately, your opinion, my dear, is not of prime importance," he said indifferently.

"You used to value it," she flashed at him. "And you trusted to it, once!"

His suppressed smile stung her almost beyond control.

"At least you *seemed*—it may have been only pretence, like the rest."

"My dear Martha, are we going to quarrel—and, pray, over what?"

"Quarrel!" She stopped and bit her thin under-lip. "It seems that we cannot speak to one another without quarrelling."

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"Let me suggest, my dear, that we keep in future to our different sides of the line, and meet, when we do meet, on common ground. You have your own occupations—I, my work. Let us not interfere."

"You want to shut me out. Oh, I have known it for some time. You don't like me to come to the studio! And once—once you weren't happy unless I was sitting by, reading or sewing, while you worked."

"It was some time ago," he murmured to himself, and shrugged his shoulders, half ashamed. A kindlier glance showed him that her hands were trembling and that her eyes had the hard brightness of pent-up tears.

Perhaps he comprehended something of the nervous strain under which she was suffering, though he would have been puzzled to define its cause. He went closer to her and laid his hand on her arm. The colour sprang to her averted face.

"When I have done anything good you are the first to see it," he said, more gently. "But no artist likes to exhibit his beginnings or his failures——"

"You admit, then, that it is a failure?" she cried suddenly.

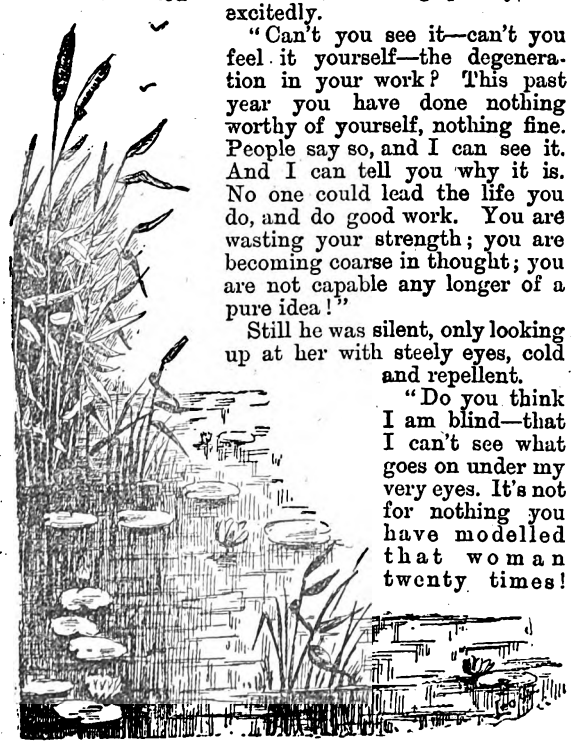
"The statue—a failure? What—what are you talking about?"

He moved away from her abruptly.

"I tell you it is, Herman! You have failed. That statue—is it the expression of an idea, a noble conception? No, it is a portrait of your model! There is no imagination in it. That woman there—what does she mean? *Oblivion?* She's a coquette dreaming! shameful!"

The sculptor silently threw the sheet over the clay statue. He walked away to the fireplace, lit a cigarette, and stood looking down into the blaze on the hearth, a scowl on his handsome face.

His wife turned to face him, breathing quickly and excitedly.



"Can't you see it—can't you feel it yourself—the degeneration in your work? This past year you have done nothing worthy of yourself, nothing fine. People say so, and I can see it. And I can tell you why it is. No one could lead the life you do, and do good work. You are wasting your strength; you are becoming coarse in thought; you are not capable any longer of a pure idea!"

Still he was silent, only looking up at her with steely eyes, cold and repellent.

"Do you think I am blind—that I can't see what goes on under my very eyes. It's not for nothing you have modelled that woman twenty times! And she is not even a professional model! Perhaps you didn't think I knew."

"What stuff you are talking!" he interrupted roughly. "You are behaving like a child—an idiot!"

"Oh, I know! I know her as well as you do. I could point you out a dozen likenesses of her in this room. That is a cast of her arm. I know her, I tell you. She's Corinne, the dancer."

"What of that?"

"You shall not—you shall not have her here, within a stone's throw of my house!"

"*Your* house, my good Martha? I don't propose to talk to you in this mood. I'll wait till you have recovered your senses. But I may as well tell you now that I shall employ just what models I find most useful, and if I can get what I want by going outside the profession, I don't know anything that will prevent me from doing so. That hardly need be said."

"Not that woman, Herman!"

"That woman, or any other. What has come over you, Martha? Upon my word, I believe you're insane. You used to be sensible enough. Nowadays you clog me, hold me back, worry me to death with these perpetual disputes. Do you think I can stand this sort of thing? Can I work in an atmosphere like this? Good Heavens! and you are the woman that vowed she would die to give me success!"

"I said it, and I would die, even now, to help you! But I will not stand to be killed by inches—to see you growing worse day by day, and die of shame to see it! I will not bear it!"

He smoked his cigarette out and flung the tip into the fire, still in sullen silence. And then, without looking at his wife, he changed his velvet coat for a more conventional garment, put on his hat and light overcoat, and left the studio.

"Herman!" she called to him sharply.

"I shall not come back here for a week," he said, between the opening and the closing of the door. And some half-childish, half-savage impulse moved him to add: "I hate you."

A moment later his shadow passed the window, against which the wind flung a gust of yellow leaves. The woman stood listening, a stunned look on her face. Her eyes travelled slowly round the studio, resting a long time on the shrouded clay model. She took a step forward towards it and raised a clenched hand as though for a blow. Then she stood still again, and shivered.

The fire burnt steadily—a red core of heat, with little, fitful, bluish flames playing over it. She dragged a heavy straight-backed chair closer to the hearth and dropped into it, clasping her arms over her bosom, her face contorted with a sudden keen physical pain.

She felt in her pocket and found a small bottle. Without waiting to measure or dilute the dose, she put the bottle to her lips and swallowed part of its contents. For some time she lay huddled in the chair, gasping for breath. Then growing quieter, she reached out and dragged from a chest near by its covering—a dark blanket—and drew it round her head and body, and so sat, staring into the fading fire with eyes dull from exhaustion and pain.

The sculptor fought his way along the street, swept bare by a biting east wind, towards the quarter of hotels and cafés. He felt himself in need of something to soothe the pin-pricks inflicted by a nagging tongue, and to counteract the depression, mental and physical, which was too often his lot after a long day's work, like the present, of dubious results.

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He ate his dinner and drank a bottle of good Burgundy and felt his blood running warmer. The subtle influence of the absinthe insensibly lightened his mood. He straightened up and lifted his head defiantly.

He stretched out his arm, opening and closing the powerful fingers of his right hand; it had not lost its cunning yet—he would show them.

Dinner over, he lit a cigar and turned about to face the room. He was rather glad to perceive at one of the tables near him, sipping his coffee and Cognac, a painter whom he knew. He joined this acquaintance and went off with him to a theatre, and later to a studio merry-making, at which Corrine, the dancer, happened to be the guest of honour.

It was in the small hours that the sculptor finally reached his home, sobered considerably by the walk in the chill night air. He had indeed found in it opportunity and some incentive to reflection. He thought over a remark or two which had fallen from one or another of the men during the evening.

There was a change in the attitude of his *confrères* towards himself; it was something subtle, slight, intangible, but it was there. They had ceased to look to him. He knew that the change must have been gradual, slow, but now his eyes were opened, and he perceived what he had long been blind to. This to a man who felt himself still in the prime of strength was inexpressibly galling.

He resolved that the tide should be reversed; that he would make them look again! He would put folly behind him and give himself once more to his art.

Filled with his new resolution he turned his steps towards the home he had recently left.

The house was dark, except for the light in the hall. With a sullen memory of the quarrel of the afternoon he went to the studio, a separate building in the rear, intending to sleep there, as he did often.

He unlocked the door, which had a spring lock, and closed with a catch. The room was in perfect darkness, the fire was long out, and a deadly chill numbed the air.

The sculptor struck a match and lit two gas jets, shivering at the prospect before him, but resolved not to enter the house. He did not at first perceive a figure heavily shrouded in some dark drapery, seated with its back towards him before the ashes on the hearth. When he did perceive it, his first thought was that his nerves had played him an uncanny trick; his second, that his wife had waited here for the opportunity of baiting him on his return.

His impulse was to turn on his heel and leave the studio in her undisputed possession; he hated scenes and nagging, and he was not far at that moment from hating the woman who had become identified with these things in his mind.

He turned towards the door, and then paused, withheld by the strange stillness of the room, and the motionlessness of the dark figure. He thought she must be asleep, and felt no desire to waken her; but he knew that he could not rest, leaving her as she was. He approached her, therefore, reluctantly, dragging himself slowly over the floor. The moment he looked upon her face he knew she was dead. The cold white face in the shadow of the blanket showed only as a pale glimmer; but the man felt death.

He recoiled, and dropped upon the chest at the side of the fireplace, staring. It did not occur to him to call out, nor to see if the woman's heart still beat. Half consciously he stared at the face whose sharply-cut features, shadowed and softened by the simple strong line of the drapery, took on a nobility so piercingly impressive. This—this! This was what he sought—this majesty, this austerity. Did one seek oblivion—forgetfulness of things earthly? This woman had found it. This was the secret of her locked lips, her half-closed, inscrutable eyes. Here, then, at last—at last.

A brain excited, spurred to action, and now stung suddenly into fullest life, possessed the man. He found paper and crayon, and, sitting before the body of his wife he drew like one driven by a demon. Eye and hand held tense till he had mastered what lay before him. He made three sketches, and the livid dawn filtered in as he finished the last. He locked them in a drawer and put the key in his pocket with a throb of exultation.

The reaction came instantly, and for the first time the full consciousness of what sat there came upon him. A thrill of natural pity tempered his repulsion. He had known that she suffered from a disease of the heart.

"Poor Martha! Who knows—who knows if you have not died for me, after all?" was his murmur, egotistical, even in that moment of recognition.

He wished to kiss her, but he could not. He backed out of the door, shut it softly, and hurried towards the house to call the servants.

T. Romano.

ON JUBILEE DAY

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A STARTLING NEW COMPETITION.

In *Pearson's Weekly* dated June 5th appear particulars of a new sort of competition. It is a letter dedicated by the editor to his readers, but instead of being written in the ordinary manner it consists entirely of pictures representing the various words.

£100 is offered in prizes, the first prize being £50, and fifty more prizes of a sovereign each.

The opening words are shown in the accompanying sketches.

What are they?

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WHEN Peter S. Cockle was appointed road-agent at Rasselstoke depôt, his daughter refused with some heat to sanction the arrangement.

"You go West if you want to," she said with a scornful nod of her pretty head, "and the days will come along to you after I've done with them. Catch me lettin' Sal Banks and the rest of them here get to Sunday before I'm through with Saturday."

Her father winced perceptibly.

"It's beautiful country thar," he said, fingering his promotion in a nervous manner, "real beautiful. Besides, you'd be somebody thar; in Winnipeg you're jest a stem in a barley stack. I'm not depraising you," he added, with a hurried glance of admiration, "because thar ain't anyone handsomer 'n you around these parts, but at Rasselstoke——"

There was a depth of compliment in the unfinished sentence, and Peter S. Cockle awaited the effect with some pride.

"It's people that makes a woman's life—not places," said Dolly, puckering her brows.

Peter S. dreaded these "book-learning" attacks from his daughter; but he summoned his wits and carried the day with a brilliant epigram.

"It's places make people," he said.

Dolly hesitated. There was civilisation and insignificance for her on one side; on the other the desolate Selkirk mountains and supremacy. A girl who could play the piano and sing and knew how to dress well, and could speak proper English, would flash like a meteor across the benighted minds of the inhabitants of Rasselstoke, and the meteor *rôle* rather appealed to Dolly.

"Anyway, it's on the C.P.R. just the same," she reflected.

Those three letters were mixed indissolubly with her life. Their whole home seemed shaped to the pattern of that monogram. A "C" and a "P" and an "R" were on everything; on the knives and the spoons and the forks, on the cups, on the saucers, on the thick white plates. They ornamented the butter, and were woven into the fabric of the household linen, they decorated the stiff antimacassars that hung on the parlour chairs, they made the central ornamentation of the little patch of carpet in the waiting-room, just as they were the controlling design of the upholstery in the railway cars, which were the most familiar things she knew of.

A railway which stretches 3,053 miles across a continent which links the Atlantic with the Pacific, joins level prairies with prodigious mountain peaks 10,000 feet in height, which makes the West East, and the East West, is an almighty big home for anyone to have; but wherever the C.P.R. came and went, Dolly believed she could never be unhappy.

Yet when the novelty of the move wore off she began to hate Rasselstoke. They had arrived in the winter, and the winter appeared interminable. The sky seemed always grey, the sickly silence of the huge snow-clad mountains tainted everything with a feeling of drear depression. Their sky-kissed peaks no doubt were beautiful; their jagged sides spangled with countless hemlock trees (chiefly bare poles in the wake of the forest fires), and streaked with the broad paths of glaciers and snow-slides, were grandly majestic, but Dolly would have exchanged them again and again for the wooden side-walks of Winnipeg without a pang.

The town whose society she had come to dazzle was a ragged row of deal board houses, filled with people who had drifted so far, and seemed to have caught there between the mountains like leaves against a wall and, not having the energy to go further, stopped where they found themselves and mouldered.

The 'bus from the Rest Hotel—a box mounted on runners which met the east-bound and the west-bound train in an inextinguishable hope of one day finding a

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She would strain her eyes along the dreary stretch of track.

passenger—had worn a trail through the deep snow from the depôt to the town, and beyond that there was nowhere to come or go.

At first Dolly had taken this walk daily, enjoying the fresh air, but after the first week she never went beyond the little platform under the shelter of the lake-coloured buildings which formed the ticket bureau, the baggage room, their own house, and the little restaurant where passengers might snatch a meal if they felt inclined.

Around the station the snow was all grimy with smoke; three or four dreary-looking cars stood on a siding opposite, and the occasional shunting and shifting of these was the only event which ever took place, save the arrival of the train from Vancouver in the morning and of the train from Montreal in the afternoon.

Twice a day Dolly shook off the stupor which had settled on her, and came to life again. For two minutes the platform would be crowded. There would be fur-coated millionaires and rough miners, none the less fur-coated, but wearing their sables outside; Englishmen, Americans, Indians, Chinese, all pacing up and down together, and Dolly would mix in the throng, and study the latest fashions among the ladies, and talk with the train conductors whom she knew, and be perfectly happy until she heard the nigger porters calling their ever-lasting warning: "All aboard," and saw the crowd clambering back into their cars and heard the stoker's bell begin to toll as the engine moved slowly off, and then the settled misery would come back more horribly, and she would strain her eyes along the dreary stretch of track, a lonely, depressing link in the world's big girdle.

Peter S. Cockle's pretty daughter had become quite a landmark to the commercials who spent their life travelling along the line. Laurence Wyndham overheard two of them discussing her as his train rocked over the Manitoba prairie and the vast plains of the North-west, scarred and pitted with the trails and wallows of the vanished baffalo, and peopled only with lonely coyotes and inquisitive prairie-dogs, squatting on their mounds.

He looked out for her when the train reached Rasselstoke, and coming from big cities where pretty women were almost a weariness, was duly disappointed.

Dolly's big eyes had met his curious stare with coquettish defiance. She had picked out his fine athletic figure and his handsome face the moment he descended from his car, and long after the train had disappeared again into the engulfing fissures of the mountains she thought about him, and, womanlike, felt glad that she had kept to her custom of putting on her best dress after dinner, which, for very tiredness, she had nearly given up with many another touch of civilised life relinquished one by one, knowing that in the end she must be brought to the dismal level of everyone else in Rasselstoke.

It was about a year later (when the passengers on the morning train had taken their seats again, and the last porter had dragged his little stool after him into the car) that Dolly noticed a solitary figure standing beside a small bag at the extreme rear of the platform. The moment he turned toward her she recognised him, and the slightest flush coloured her cheeks.

He came to where she was standing and raised his hat.

"Could you be so good as to tell me where I could get a bed for to-night?" he asked.

A year in the West had made a difference to Wyndham. He remembered what the commercials had said about Dolly, and wondered why he had not seen how pretty she was before. Her bright face and trim figure were like a flash of colour from that European life out of which poverty had forced him into exile.

Dolly's long lashes dropped slowly over her eyes.

"There is the Rest Hotel," she said, "but I'm afraid it's not what you would call an hotel." She hesitated a moment.

"A roof is all I want, and more than I can afford," said Wyndham with a smile, and he stooped to pick up his bag.

Dolly looked at him curiously. He was merely a shadow of the big athlete she had seen a year before; his voice was thin and weak, and she noticed his hand trembling.

"We have a spare room over the restaurant if you would like it," she said rather suddenly.

Wyndham met her eyes gratefully.

"You're very kind," he said "but——" He took a step towards the doorway, where a red-haired boy stood expectantly in charge of the little 'bus. But starvation and sleeplessness had done their work; he reeled suddenly, stretched out his hands with a helpless groping, and the next moment lay across the platform, his white face upturned, the vacancy of death in his eyes.

Peter S. Cockle, who came up at this moment, examined the fallen boy without taking his hands from his pockets.

"Better send him along in the sleigh to Parson Cloud's," he said. "I don't know what else they've sent a minister here for. The gal thar can nurse him."

Dolly's eyes blazed.

"Pick him up and carry him up-stairs," she said. "It's I who am going to nurse him, not Grace Cloud. Father, I don't believe you've got a bit of feelin'."

The railroad agent blinked stoically.

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Thar's too many of 'em," he said. But he obeyed his daughter's behest, and when it came to carrying the poor fellow he was as tender as a mother with her child. "Whenever a mining boom comes along," he said, "thar's a hundred victims to one man who comes out on top."

It was spoken at random; but the whole story of Laurence Wyndham was summed up in the sentence.

A fortnight of Dolly's nursing, however, made the Englishman look more like his old self. When he was able to get downstairs again he found Peter S. smoking over the stove, and then and there put the whole matter to him in a nutshell.

"I'm broke,' he said.

The railroad agent allowed he had surmised that already.

"How are you goin' home?" he queried, shifting his pipe from one corner of his mouth to the other.

"I've got an uncle placer mining up in the Cariboo district," said Wyndham, "and I've written to him to help me."

"Rich, mebbe?" queried the agent. "Raise your arm a trifle, young man." He spat skilfully through the aperture thus made on to the track, and resumed his inspection of the stove.

"They tell me he's worth a million," said Wyndham.

Peter S. shook his head.

"Like enough he won't help you any then," he said philosophically.

Wyndham was still musing on the wisdom of this when Dolly came in to fetch him, with pretty imperiousness, for a walk. The sun had come out and was drawing silvery clouds up the jagged sides of the mountains. The sharp air brought the colour to his cheeks. They walked down to the town and back again without saying much. Dolly was unusually quiet, though her eyes were sparkling, and Wyndham fell naturally into her mood. Near the depôt they overtook Parson Cloud and his daughter—a tall, slim girl with a pale face and pretty grey eyes, that contrasted vividly with Dolly's black ones and the high colouring of her cheeks.

Dolly was for passing on, but Parson Cloud insisted on an introduction.

"An Englishman is a *rara avis* indeed in these parts," he said, with a courteous smile of welcome. "I heard for the first time to-day of your arrival and of your illness, and am glad to see you so far recovered. Yet with such a charming nurse, illness itself must have its pleasures."

Wyndham's reply brought a flush to his companion's cheeks; but when she raised her eyes to his he was looking towards Miss Cloud, and there was something in that glance, quick and fleeting as it was, which turned Dolly's heart to lead.

For a moment her head seemed to swim.

Then she heard Grace saying in her low, refined voice:

"Father, you must invite Mr. Wyndham in to dinner."

"My patient must not go out at nights," Dolly said quickly, and for a moment the black eyes and the grey eyes met and their glances clashed.

Wyndham accepted Parson Cloud's invitation almost greedily.

"I never listen to my doctor," he said lightly. "No patient would ever recover if he did."

They all laughed; but Dolly only because her eyes were filled with tears.

* * * * *

Peter S. Cockle's prophecy appeared to be correct. Wyndham's appeal to his millionaire uncle received no response. He became desperate. He could neither stay where he was nor afford to go away. Finally he decided to set out on foot.

Ever since their chance meeting he had spent the larger portion of his day at Parson Cloud's house.

"He is a capital good fellow," he used to say to Dolly.

If he had said: "His daughter is so charming," it would have made no difference. To Dolly's mind it was perfectly clear he meant this. In reality she suffered terribly; but Wyndham had not the least idea of what was in her mind. She had been good to him, and he was grateful, and that was the beginning and the end of it with him.

His sojourn in the West had not deleted one national characteristic. If anyone had mentioned Dolly to him he would have answered:

"Oh, yes; the railroad agent's daughter."

Grace Cloud, on the other hand, was socially and

The railroad agent allowed he had surmised that already.

intellectually his equal. "If only I was a little better off," he used to say to himself.

Dolly did not appreciate the distinction, but she realised that there was a difference, and she hated Grace Cloud for it. In the meantime, her little head was busy concocting a hundred plans.

One night when Wyndham had just finished supper, she came up to him and touched him on the arm.

"I want to speak to you," she said.

He got up, wondering, and followed her into the sharp night air. It was very clear, and the stars were shining brightly against the deep blue of the sky; a crescent moon was rising slowly over the towering peak of Mount MacKenzie. For some distance they walked along the railroad track in silence. Then Dolly turned and faced him.

"You are going?" she said.

Wyndham nodded.

For some time there was silence. Dolly stooped down and gathered a ball of snow in her hands.

"Suppose," she said slowly, "suppose I could tell you

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how to get rich?" Her eyes sought those of Wyndham, and he could feel her hot breath on his cheeks.

He felt inclined to laugh, but there was that in her manner which checked him.

He took her hand in his, emptied the snow out, and began drying the small, white palm with his handkerchief.

"Well?" he said.

"It would require pluck," said she, loosening his fingers, but still keeping her eyes on him.

A lean wolf slouched past them not a hundred feet away. Wyndham pointed after it.

"Despair and pluck go together," he said.

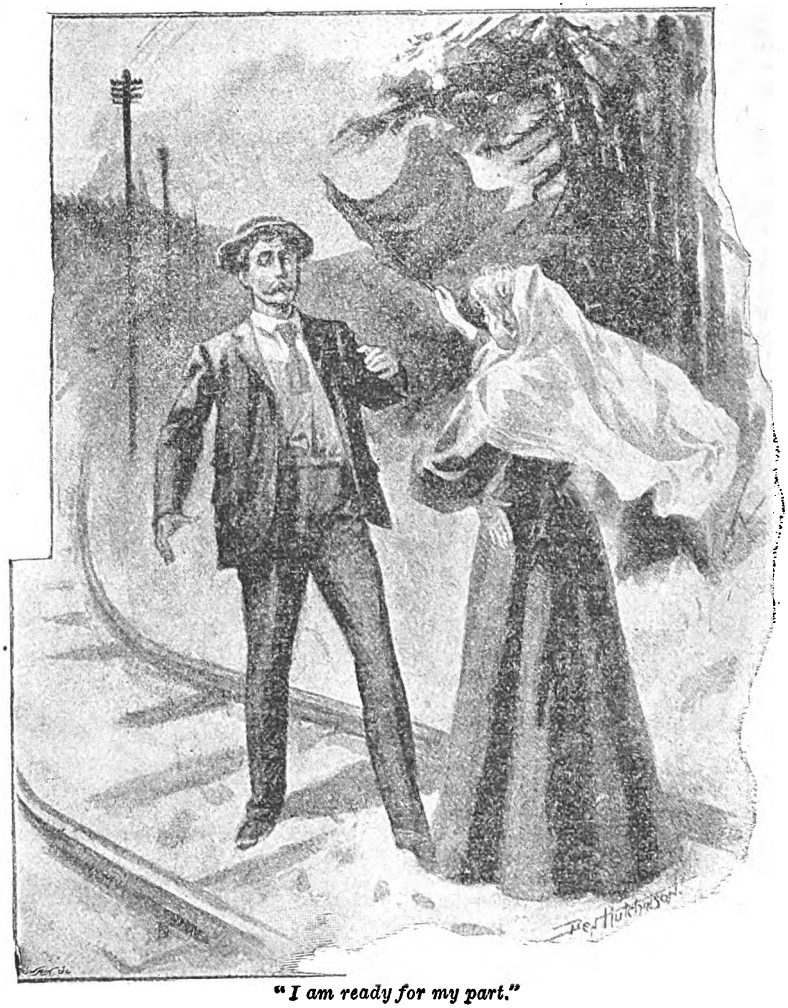
Dolly leant her slim figure slightly towards him.

"Listen," she said softly, so that her voice was hardly above a whisper. "In the express car of the east-bound train to-morrow they are carrying 5,000 dollars in gold and notes."

She stepped back a little to better watch the effect of this communication in Wyndham's face. But he merely laughed.

"How do you know?" he said. "And how does it better me if they are?"

"The express agent tells me a great many things that he ought not to over the wires," she answered. "If I were a man I would count it a grand adventure to hold up a train in a wild place like this."



"I am ready for my part."

Her companion stared at her in amazement.

"One to hold up a whole train?" he said laughing.

"Four are needed," she answered, "one to flag the engine; three to overcome the officials. See," she added, "I am ready for my part," and unrolling a scarlet flag, she waved it backwards and forwards tauntingly before his face.

Wyndham sprang forward and seized her wrist.

"Look here, what do you mean?" he asked. His face was quite white.

"Hush," she cried, "even the hills have ears. Bend down and I will tell you exactly what put the idea into my head. Yesterday two men got off the train here, and came into the bar for two cigars. They told father that they intended to rest here a day and then start over the mountains southwards, prospecting for copper. When they went out he pointed them out to me." Dolly folded her arms and began to mimic her father's voice. "'I reckon thar's mischief in the air,' he said, 'I don't take much stock in that prospecting yarn. Those two men is Jim and Fred Owen of Kansas City. There's some devilry back of 'em gener'lly. When I was in Loss Anjelus, afore I married your mother, gal, I reckon they two were the worst feared men this side of New York State. Six times they held up the Sante Fé express, and thar wasn't a deputy sheriff in the country dare raise a finger against 'em.' That's what he said," finished Dolly a little breathlessly.

The moon had sailed up high into the heavens, and the broad glaciers on the mountain sides shone like burnished silver. When Dolly's whispering ceased the stillness was so great that Wyndham could hear his heart beating horribly against his side. He made a motion as if on the point of saying something, but no sound came from his lips.

The girl's hands slipped up his coat and met round his neck. He could feel her heart beating wildly as his own. She raised her lips to his, drawing his head down to her upturned face.

"Kiss me," she whispered. "Now go and fix up those men."

Wyndham found himself standing alone in the middle of the tract. Perhaps it was the cold night air which made him shiver.

* * * * *

All day long Rasselstoke depôt had been the scene of the wildest excitement. Peter S. Cockle was still busy at five o'clock in the telegraph office. Wyndham was sitting alone over the stove, holding his hands towards it, and every now and then his teeth chattered, as if the cold were eating into his marrow. Suddenly the door opened, and he started to his feet. It was Dolly. She had a

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newspaper in her hand, and she passed it over to Wyndham with a laugh. "Read that," she said.

The paragraph was headed in black type: "Train Robbery," and, underneath, "C.P.R. train held up within ten miles of Rasselstoke."

Wyndham scanned it eagerly.

"A passenger and express train on the C.P.R. was held up and robbed by three masked men this morning in the pass known as the Devil's Canyon. The scene of the robbery was less than ten miles from the nearest depôt. The train was flagged at the entrance of the cut, according to the story the engineer tells, by a woman. While one of the robbers stood guard over the passenger coaches, the other two covered the conductor, engineer, and fireman with their pistols, and compelled them to go to the express car. There the robbers commanded the messenger to open the door of the car, threatening to use violence if he refused.

"After some delay the robbers were admitted. They compelled the messenger to open the safe, and extracted from it several packages. How much booty they secured cannot at this hour be ascertained, but the conductor of the train declares that the bandits secured nothing save several packages of jewellery, and a considerable sum of money addressed to a private individual.

"The express messenger had surmised what the trouble was, and while the bandits had been demanding admission he had concealed the greater part of the wealth he carried in a chickencoop, where it remained untouched.

"Taking up their booty, the robbers uncoupled the express car from the coach following it, and then marched their prisoners forward to the locomotive, where they compelled them to sit down on the bank alongside the track. The leader climbed into the cab, tried the air and steam, and then called to the man who was guarding the passenger coach to come forward. At this juncture the engineer cautioned the bandit to be careful with the locomotive, warning him that they were on a hill, and if he left the engine improperly guarded at the top, it would crash back into the train. The outlaw said he would take care of the locomotive. With this the men pulled out, having held up the train without firing a shot. They ran the locomotive several miles to Eagle Cutting, where they abandoned it. Passengers on the train did not know what had caused the delay until two hours afterwards. A deputy sheriff and a large posse have gone out in search, but it is thought the bandits have got well away. The stolen money was addressed to Laurence Wyndham at Rasselstoke. The consignor was Mr. Frank Wyndham, a well-known mine proprietor in the Cariboo district."

"I hate you!" she cried vehemently.

Wyndham looked up and found Dolly staring at him.

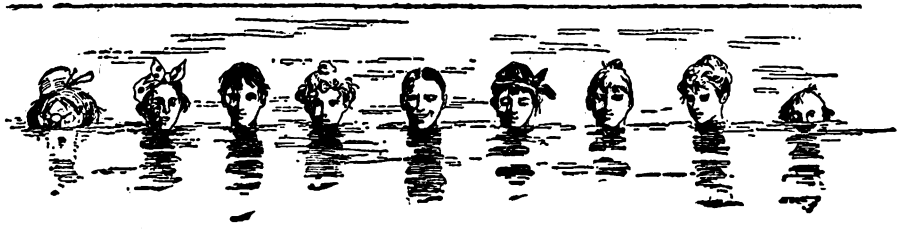
"You knew this?" he said quietly. "You knew that the money was consigned to me?"

"I did," said the girl defiantly. "When you tell Grace Cloud that you have reformed being a train robber you can tell her why it was. You can say you paid two accomplices 2,000 dollars to rob an express messenger of 5,000 dollars which happened to be your own. And you can say the other accomplice was a woman—a girl whom you despised, anyway, so it didn't matter, though she risked ten years in gaol to get even with you. There!"

And then in the midst of her defiance a great sob welled up and choked her.

"I hate you!" she cried vehemently, "I hate you!"

The truth was that she loved him.



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Spanning a Chasm.

The liner *Nicaragua* was steaming up the Gulf Stream to Tampa. The weather was unexceptionable. There was little wind; the indigo sea was smooth and enlivened with the gambols of the flying fish; even Cape Hatteris had been in a good temper. Consequently, most of the saloon passengers were scattered about the after-decks, smoking, reading, chatting, or promenading beneath the awnings. There were some fifty men and women booked as first-class voyagers, and, with one exception, these were all aft or amidships.

The steerage passengers were forward, and were amusing themselves after the manner of their kind. There were but eight—on the South American lines steerage accommodation is limited—and these were evidently gentlemen who preferred a life on the "Long Trail, the trail that is always new," as Rudyard Kipling calls it, to any superfluity of worldly goods whatsoever.

Their raiment was not immaculate; their hats were disreputable; to a man they either chewed tobacco or smoked an atrocious brand of the same weed, and garnished their conversation with grisly oaths and objurations.

Two of them were reclining in the sunshine so lazily as almost to forget to puff their tobacco smoke, and the remaining six were engaged in a game of poker, of which the circulating medium consisted of matches, representing what cash basis I am unable to say. Cards are awkward things to handle on the open deck. It is necessary to keep them strictly under guard, lest a sudden breeze scatter them all abroad. This happened once or twice, causing profuse swearing and a hasty scramble to prevent them from going overboard, while the reclining pair opened their eyes and jeered at the players. Then the game proceeded anew.

The Rev. Samuel Oliver leant against the rail and watched them from a discreet distance. The Rev. Samuel was a student of character and characteristics, and especially of the characteristics of the classes which he was accustomed to consider "lower." The study was not precisely to his taste, though he strove to interest himself in it, for he believed that every clergyman should have some knowledge of how that Other Half lives which it is the object of his religion to benefit.

He engaged in the pursuit of this knowledge in a strictly scientific spirit, and was at first surprised to find that the masses possessed individualities, and were merry or sad in a personal, rather than an automatic fashion. In fact, he had always had a vague impression that they existed at all chiefly as material for philanthropic experiment.

It was on account of this habit that the Rev. Samuel had deserted the more refined companionship of the cabin passengers to watch from a distance the crude diversions of the denizens of the steerage. He did not like to approach them more closely or to address them, lest they might be impolite, and the minister hated to have people impolite to him. Even to speak to them would be of little advantage, for, as he pathetically reflected, he was at a great disadvantage.

He could not make himself sociable, as the heathen might, by the proffer of whisky or cigars, and of course there could be no subjects of common interest on which they might converse. He was, in fact, completely cut off from the men he wished to investigate.

One of these poker players in particular attracted his attention, as much by the easy grace with which he squatted on the deck and dealt the cards, as by an indefinable air of *savoir vivre*, of supremacy, with which he comported himself. When the game exploded in a perfectly amicable altercation, composed chiefly of profanity, this man swore more than all the rest together, and with a freedom and ingenuity that vexed the minister's soul.

Then a pocket flask was circulated in which peace seemed to be restored again. The man whom the Rev. Samuel had noticed glanced up as he was about to drink and saw the minister looking at him. Perhaps he misunderstood the look; perhaps not.

"Have a drink, partner?" he said, proffering the bottle.

The Rev. Samuel declined, and turned away with irritation in his heart—irritation against the man who could offer him liquor, and irritation against himself, for in the deepest depths of his own heart he was conscious of an embryonic sympathy with all this lawlessness—oaths and whisky and gambling, rank tobacco smoke and reckless irresponsibility.

Yet he was half conscious of what was going on behind him, and became aware that the man had followed the bottle with a tale. The Rev. Samuel heard it with half a mind. Big names rattled through it; London, Chicago, Paris, and Port Said were the stages where the drama transacted itself. There were strange and unlawful adventures, and the man was the hero of them all. The listener did not consider whether the man were lying; the story filled him with a sharp hostility. It was repugnant to him. It reminded him of Kipling's "Lost Legion," and the Rev. Samuel did not like Kipling. He inspired him with the same sort of holy terror—as of a billowy sea of lawlessness, wherein all the standards of morality and ethics were swallowed up.

Now the article which he was accustomed to consider his conscience began to reprove him for so far encouraging forbidden acts as to listen to their history. He went

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aft again, into the clear atmosphere of education and refinement, white collars and civilisation, and felt better for the change. He told himself that a minister of the Gospel had no right in such company as that forward. Poverty, perhaps, and involuntary degradation, but never defiant vice. That was quite beyond the pale.

Yet this much-enduring man, this Ulysses of the steerage, had taken a strong hold on his mind. He sat on the little blue-velveted seat in his state-room and tried to imagine what such a life could be like. He could form only a vague idea of the shifts of fortune, of the kaleidoscopic changes, from saloon to steerage, and then to the stoke-hole; of aristocratic hotels and dock-side boarding-houses; of the tossings of every sea, and the armed march through life which the adventurer must support; of the bluffs and bullets, the cards and liquor, the Rev. Samuel supposed, and every kind of injury and peril that coloured such a career red, rather than black.

Down in the little narrow steerage cabin the man was singing, amid a company of his friends and spare deck-hands:

> We don't know nothing about the channel,
> What the lay of the course may be;
> But were out from the level, and away like the devil,
> On the criss-cross curly sea!

There was a shout on deck, an agonised screech from the whistle, and a rending crash that seemed to send a thrill through the very entrails of the big steamer. The screw gave a flutter and stopped, there was a roar of escaping steam, and the ship lay motionless, save for a nervous tremour that ran from bow to stern.

The Rev. Samuel Oliver was pitched to the floor in the midst of his meditations when the crash occurred. He picked himself up and opened the door into the saloon.

The great hall was full of people, swarming out of their rooms in every stage of undress, and crowding up the broad stairs to the deck. Nobody asked what was the matter; it seemed to be the general aim to get out into the open and see as quickly as possible.

The minister went up, or was carried up, with the current. Everybody stopped and stared about when they reached the deck, for there was nothing amiss, so far as could be seen. The electric lights burnt clear; the steamer lay quietly on the water; there was neither land nor ship in sight, and the steam was blowing off from the escape-pipe so violently as to drown most other sounds. When they looked forward, however, it was to behold an excited group of sailors gazing over the side, while the officer glared down from the bridge, and the captain issued orders to men who ran hither and thither about the decks.

There was a simultaneous rush to this point, which appeared the scene of action, but the gates of the fore-castle-head were closed, and the captain sternly ordered the passengers back from the cross-railing. Then they clustered amidships, and wondered and waited. Somebody had talk with some of the crew, and declared that the ship had struck upon a coral reef and torn three or four plates out of her bottom, and this explanation was accepted. Then came a rumour of the water-tight compartments having been closed, and having failed to prove water-tight; of insufficient boat space; of lack of life-buoys; of shoals of sharks that swarmed alongside. The raw material of a panic was rapidly developing itself.

Presently the steam stopped blowing off, and in the silence they could hear a rushing sound from the bows, as of running water. Then the screws began to throb again, and the ship moved forward with a grating noise over some obstacle, and then lurched heavily down into deep water. She steamed ahead for a hundred yards with apparent difficulty, and then came to a full stop again. This seemed to the passengers to be a confession of helplessness, and they were ready to rise up in mutiny. Then the captain came back, and his burly, laced presence restored some confidence. But his words were not reassuring.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "kindly go aft and form in two lines on the after-deck."

This was done, and it gave the frightened people something to think about.

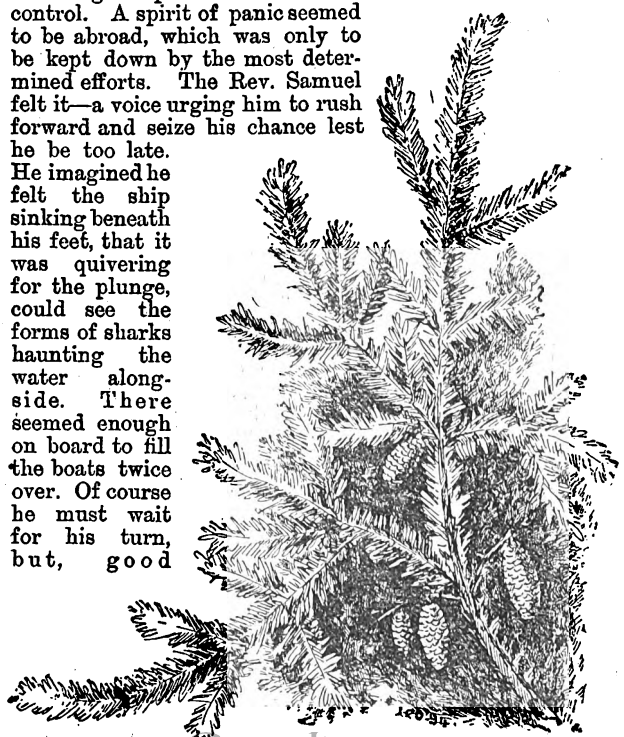
Next the captain said:

"I am sorry that it has become necessary to leave the ship. But do not alarm yourselves, for there is no danger whatever. The shore is not many miles distant, the boats are quite sufficient to carry passengers and crew, and the weather is fine. The boats are being lowered, and the ladies will go first with the children. I trust that there will be no disturbance."

Now ensued a frenzied rush below to secure valuables and goods which it was clearly impossible to leave behind. In a few minutes they reappeared, most bearing huge bundles, which were promptly stopped by the officers. Nothing but the smallest of hand-baggage was allowed to go.

The gangway was lowered, and the boats secured at the bottom. Then the women and children came to the side and descended, one by one, very pale and frightened, but mostly silent. One by one they went down, the electric light shining on their white faces, till one boat had received its load and had pushed off.

Meanwhile the men were drawn up at a distance, watching the process of embarkation with severe self-control. A spirit of panic seemed to be abroad, which was only to be kept down by the most determined efforts. The Rev. Samuel felt it—a voice urging him to rush forward and seize his chance lest he be too late. He imagined he felt the ship sinking beneath his feet, that it was quivering for the plunge, could see the forms of sharks haunting the water alongside. There seemed enough on board to fill the boats twice over. Of course he must wait for his turn, but, good



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Heavens! why did they not make haste? He looked about and saw the same thought staring from the faces of the men about him. The sight vaguely alarmed him, and he turned aside and looked out over the rail. Even so he became aware of a man leaning over the side, close to him. It was the Man—the adventurer from forward.

He was looking down at the water as indifferently as if passing events were of no personal consequence whatever. He was chewing an unlighted cigar, and his hat was pulled over his eyes. The Rev. Samuel wondered if shipwrecks were of such frequent occurrence in his life as not to disturb him.

One boat had been filled and pushed off, as I said, and another was being brought round, when there was a sudden crash from below. It was only the upsetting of a barrel or crate, but it came upon the strained nerves of the passengers like thunder. A moment later the ship sagged forward and settled a little, with an obvious lurch.

That finished the business. There is always some one to rouse up the insanity dormant in every crowd, and this person raised a cry that she was going down. Two or three men started from the ranks. The action was instantaneous. Before the Rev. Samuel knew it, he was running headlong for the boat steps in the midst of a group of other men.

The captain dashed into their path, but he was trodden down. The crowd, mad with mere animal terror, rushed into the band of women gathered about the gateway, beat and hurled them to right and left, and struggled one with another, striking and cursing, to get first down the narrow steps. Two men were pushed out, lost their balance, and rolled down the stairs and into the water, where they were rescued by the boats.

The Rev. Samuel Oliver's congregation of Bethnal Green would scarcely have recognised their pastor in the hatless, dishevelled, flushed and panic-stricken man, fighting in a mob of other panic-stricken and dishevelled men to save his own valuable life, and the devil take care of the rest. He was conscious that he had knocked a woman down and had kicked another out of his way, but he felt no sort of shame at the fact. All his mind was concentrated in a wild endeavour to get in first, somewhere, to rescue himself from the ship that was sinking under his very feet. He screamed aloud, without being aware of it, and swore furiously with the same unconsciousness at those who blocked his way.

Suddenly there was a pause in the fighting, and the Rev. Samuel was aware of a man pushing his way into the press by main force. He carried an unlighted cigar in his mouth. He picked up a huge rioter with apparent ease and dropped him over the side, where he was rescued by the boats. Bang! and another was shot to the deck by a straight left-hander. He knocked a third over the prostrate one, and the others, as they were pushed forward by the pressure behind, fell over the pair, till a kicking, writhing heap was erected on the deck.

The rest of the crowd stopped, but the Rev. Samuel Oliver ran in blindly on the man who thus barred the way to life. He struck out wildly, but what could he do against practised hands? Like a flash the Rev. Samuel was lying on the heap of fallen, feeling as if a thunderbolt had struck him.

And now, the rebellion having been quelled, the man stepped forward and said:

"This way, ladies, if you please."

The embarking was continued, while the ship sank even lower, and the men at last got aboard in sullen silence. They were ashamed of themselves and of their conduct, and not one dared to look his neighbour in the face. Worst of all was the case of the minister. His eye was rapidly closing, his head ached furiously, and he had the consciousness that he, a minister of the Gospel, had played the part of a coward and a bully, while this outlaw and man of sin had acted the hero.

The reflection was intensely humiliating and yet contained a world of revelations. The minister had studied ethics and systems of morals, and had cultivated all the niceties of conscience; what was it, therefore, to chance upon a moment when all these things were swept away by the rush of raw human nature, and only the strong barbaric virtues could endure the shock? And to find himself wanting in these virtues, which had grown up in the breast of a man whom he had but lately called a heathen man and a publican, was a revelation, and if an unscriptural one, none the less wholesome for that. It was new to discern that there were big morals as well as little ones, and that the tougher kind did not always derive their strength from books of divinity.

The black mass of the steamer lay huge and low in the water behind them. The electric lights had gone out. The four boats were rowing steadily landwards. Each was filled to its utmost capacity, but not a soul was left behind.

The Man sat at the stern, talking carelessly with the second officer, who was in command. As the Rev. Samuel looked at him, he felt a wild desire to humiliate himself before this man, to apologise for his former contempt, to show that he admired his heroism and could almost condone his vices.

An idea came into his dazed brain, still humming from the effect of the blow. He leant over.

"I say, can you give me a drink?" he said, in as convivial a tone as he could manage.

The man looked at him curiously and handed his flask.

"Here's luck to you, partner!" said the Rev. Samuel Oliver, tipping it up.

The passengers stared at the aristocratic clergyman in amazement. They thought he had gone mad.

But the Rev. Samuel knew what he meant.

Arthur Reall.

On account of the Whitsuntide Holidays the next number of "S.S." will be published on Saturday, June 5th.

WHAT GIRLS SHOULD READ.

The question of what to give our girls to read has long been a difficult and moot point, but with the first Saturday in June all doubts on the subject must vanish. Our new paper, "GIRLS," is just the thing you are looking for. It is as bright and spirited and go-ahead as you like, and yet kindly and wholesome withal.

It is definitely intended for girls—all girls from ten to thirty—and the first monthly part, containing all the weekly numbers for May, appears, as I have already remarked, on Saturday, June 5th. The monthly parts, which are bound in a charming pale green cover, cost 6d., post free 8d., while the weekly numbers are a penny.

"GIRLS," I think I may say without any undue pride of possession, is the cheapest pennyworth going. The modern school-girl will find in its pages a bright, healthy, active note that I am sure not only she, but her parents will be delighted with, and consequently I advise you, if you want a copy, to send out and get it before they are all gone.

The June "GIRLS" will contain four excellent short stories; several chapters of an exciting serial by Miss Winifred Graham—"The Great House of Castleton"—and any number of fascinating articles touching on all the subjects that really do interest growing girls.

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£50 IN 23 PRIZES.

Short Stories

PICTURE PUZZLES.

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BELOW you will find ten pictures. Each represents the name of either a Peer of the Realm or the Heir of a Peer. The title alone is indicated, not the family name.

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your lists until you are told to send them in.

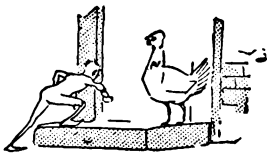
Don't be discouraged if you cannot solve them all. Others may be no more clever than yourself. Send in fifty-five, or fifty, or even fewer.

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of six must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.

☞ THE NAMES DEPICTED IN SETS NUMBERED FIVE AND SIX INCLUDE THE NAMES OF THE HEIRS OF PEERS.

No. 41.....

No. 42.....



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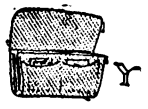

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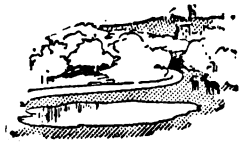

No. 49.....

No. 50.....

Remember these Things. . .

YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the titles of the people. The family names are not depicted.

Name.....

Address.....

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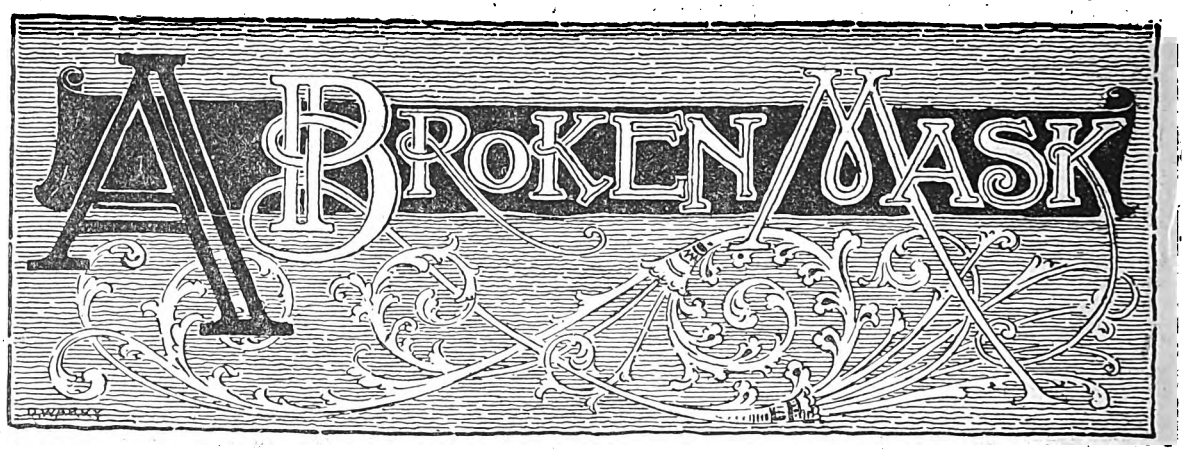

BY JOAN BARRETT.

SUMMARY.

Honeypots Farm has recently been taken by John Gillway.

Farmer Strange is a widower with twin daughters, Diana and Kitty, who have been brought up by a wealthy aunt, Mrs. Caffyn.

Gillway has already fallen in love with Kitty, who was at first pleased by his attentions. She soon wearied of them, but being half afraid of him, makes many promises of fidelity before going abroad with her sister and aunt, which she never intends to keep.

At Capri they meet with Bernard Eliot, nicknamed "the Nabob" on account of his wealth. He speedily wins the affections of all three ladies, but seems to prefer Di's society.

They return to London, and as the two girls have now attained their majority they are given the option of remaining with their aunt or returning to their father for good. Kitty chooses the former and Di the latter.

Diana meets Gillway, and hears for the first time of the relations which had existed between him and Kitty. The Nabob purchases an estate named The Towers, and lives there with his wife.

Di goes to The Towers for the Christmas festivities, and after the return of the house-party from a moonlight skate, Mrs. Caffyn discovers that her jewels have been stolen.

CHAPTER IX.

Aunt Shales Gives a Clue.

The corridor was filled with frightened people. Some of them had not discovered their losses; there was a rush into bedrooms and a wild overhauling of trinket cases and trunks when Lady Rivers had announced the theft of her jewels. In most cases the result of the search was disastrous. Almost everyone had been robbed of money and jewellery, but Kitty was the greatest sufferer. She had lost every article of personal adornment—Mrs. Caffyn's Christmas gift, her wedding presents, her husband's Christmas offering of a diamond spray, and a roll of banknotes, whose numbers were unknown to her.

The Nabob had also lost a large sum of money, together with many valuable papers and effects. In the drawing-room, the thieves had carried away a vast quantity of costly *bric-à-brac*, and a descent into the butler's pantry proved the robbery to be still more extensive.

The plate that had been used during dinner had disappeared, and a window, opening upon a path fringed with shrubs, was ajar. Below the window the shrubs had been broken and trampled upon, the gravel was displaced and scattered, and looked as though some heavy burden had been thrown down from the window.

The Nabob sent for the police and summoned the servants together in the library. All of them had been engaged with excellent characters, and the butler and housekeeper, who were man and wife, appeared to feel their position deeply. They brought the keys of their boxes and gave them to their master with entreaties that he would examine their possessions.

"It must have been done while the men and maids were watching the skating, sir," said the housekeeper tearfully. "I was in the kitchen with one of the girls, and I thought that I heard somebody moving about in the pantry; but I never dreamt that Marshall had gone with the torch-bearers, or I'd have gone and seen who it was!"

"I told you I was going," said the butler.

"I never heard you, and being so tired, sir, what with the ball and the clearing up to-day, I can't swear that I didn't fall asleep in my own room, and the green baize doors do shut out all sounds so, that unless they're propped wide open, it's for all the world like living in another house. You don't hear a sound of what goes on upstairs."

A party of searchers opened the servants' boxes, while another scoured the grounds. In some of the rooms a trinket or so were found upon the floor, but in most of the apartments the robbery had been so neatly done, that it was evident the thieves had felt themselves to be perfectly secure, and had not hurried over their nefarious task. Nothing to implicate the servants was discovered. They were dismissed, and the housekeeper left the library in tears.

The police arrived; the guests were interviewed, and a list of the lost property taken. The servants were cross-questioned by the inspector, but nothing fresh was elicited from them. It was evident from the inspector's manner that he suspected some person in the house to be in league with the thieves, and the housekeeper became more and more tearful.

"Oh, I'm sure he thinks that I know something about it, Miss Strange," she sobbed to Di, who stood near her.

"He must suspect somebody," said Di. "But that is no reason why he should suspect you more than another. Don't cry, Mrs. Marshall, you know that you are innocent, and that is everything."

"The master's sure to suspect me, too!" said Mrs. Marshall despondently, as she glanced at the Nabob's pale, stern face. And this reflection seemed to add to the poignancy of her grief.

Later in the morning as Di was in the garden, she saw a man peeping over a wall that divided the park from the grounds. He saw her, and hastily disappeared. Di fancied that it was Gillway, and she wondered more than ever why he hung about The Towers, and seemed so fearful of meeting her.

Possibly she had been mistaken in thinking that the man was Gillway. It might have been someone from the neighbouring village who had heard of the robbery, and had followed the policeman as far as the house. But a few hours afterwards, something happened that revived Di's suspicion that it was Gillway whom she had seen. In the vicinity of the wall, hidden in the shrubs, one of the gardeners discovered a flour sack partly filled with the stolen plate and small articles that had been missed from the drawing and dining rooms.

Clearly the thieves had been disturbed, and were unable to get clear away with their burden. Di

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was among the anxious crowd that collected to view the sack. She examined it closely, and grew pale. By a certain mark upon it she knew that it belonged to Honeypots Farm! Was John Gillway concerned in the theft?

No one raised any objection to her leaving The Towers that day. Kitty was too hysterical and upset to think of anything except her losses. Mrs. Caffyn was depressed and gloomy, and the Nabob seemed anxious and miserable.

"I wonder if I dared suggest to my friends—if they would let me replace the things!" he said to Mrs. Caffyn, when they were waiting in the hall with Di for the dog-cart that was to take her back to her father. "I suppose it wouldn't be quite the thing, would it?"

"Good gracious, no, Bernard! As if you can help it, you poor boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Caffyn, growing suddenly bright. "Your own losses are considerable, and you've the annoyance of hearing everybody's complaints, and the horrid feeling of helplessness to bear that we haven't. Poor Di!" she added, passing her arms lovingly around Di's waist. "I meant to send you home richer, my dear, and you are going back poorer than when you came!"

"Di, you'll let me make it up to you, won't you?" the Nabob asked eagerly.

"Catch the thieves," said Di; "that is all I want——" She stopped suddenly. What had she said? If John Gillway *was* a thief, she did not want him to be punished.

"But he can't be!" she told herself angrily as she drove home by the side of a stolid groom. "I am wicked to have such a thought."

Farmer Strange's endless exclamations and questions concerning the robbery gave Di no time to think of anything else that day.

"I'm glad I didn't go," said he complacently. "I might have lost old granddad's turnip, and none of your new-fangled timekeepers 'ud ever have made up for it."

Di called upon Aunt Shales the following afternoon. Her anxiety about Gillway seemed to grow deeper, in spite of her constant reiterations to her listening heart that Gillway could have had no hand in the robbery. She found Aunt Shales in the cosy, well-kept kitchen, talking to her niece Polly in a sweet, cooing voice that contrasted strangely with the younger woman's shrill, vixenish tones.

"Lawks, Poll, my dear, I wouldn't take it to heart—no, that I wouldn't! Everybody knows what Jane be to their sorrer. Bless us, if it ain't Miss Strange! Do 'e come in. It's a rare long whiles since you've put your ten toes inside of my kitching. That it is, an' I've got the kittle on, an' that Em'ly's a-toasting Sally Lunns in the scul'ry. Leastways, she *ought'er* be a-toastin' of 'em, but it's more likely she's a-burnin' an' a-blackin' of 'em to match the grate in colour. Talk about havin' trials!" cried Aunt Shales, fixing her small twinkling eyes upon the wrathful-looking Polly. "Some folks dun'no the real meanin' of the word, that they don't. I'd like some of 'em to live inside my shoes, that I would. Well, there, everybody's got somethink to bear—some's got one thing and some another—but as I say, *do* let's be happy while we can, seein' as the hearse an' the undertaker's a-waitin' for us—leastways, for all of us as ain't obliged to have a walkin' funeral—an' the sooner it comes for some folks the better for them as is left behind, spesh'ly when they seems to be here for no other purpose than to breed mischief and riots in fam'lies, *an'* atwixt parties what asks nothin' better than to be lef' in peace an' quiet. What, goin' already, Poll? Well, there, the best of friends must part, musn't they? I on'y hopes as Jane'll step this way! I'll give her a towslin', drabbit her. Trust me for it, Poll!"

"If I'm disturbing you," began Di, as Polly departed with a loud bang of the heavy door and an exclamation to the effect that other folks besides Aunt Jane merited "towslin'."

"Lawks, *that* you ain't. I on'y wishes as *all* my visitors was as pleasant to the eyes as you be, Miss Di, that I do!" cried Aunt Shales, beaming upon Di, and making a cheerful rattle with the best gold-and-white tea-things upon a gaily-painted tray. She paused, with a glittering tea-pot in her hand, to say feelingly: "What a dreadful thing that rob'ry is at The Towers! Miss Kitty that was—Mrs. Eliot, as I oughter call her, seein' as she's married an' done for, po'r thing—must 'a felt reg'lar upset a-losin' all her jewels like that! An' Lady Rivers, po'r soul, to go an' be robbed of them em'ralds of hers! Seems as if it was to be, don't it? An' to think as I was a-tellin' Mr. Gillway about 'em on'y the other day, 'cause I saw 'em at the hunt ball, when she was a-dancin' like any May Queen, through the cracks in the hangings, po'r lady! I did hear as she'd gone stark, starin', ravin' mad, and I dun'no who'd blame her for it, that I don't," she said, placing the tray upon her cherished oak table and turning up its shining leaf in honour of her visitor. "'Course you lost your things, too, seein' as the whole house was swep' as clean as that blessed chimney when Cranks ain't drunk, which ain't none too often, wuss luck!"

Di related her own losses and those of the other guests, to the intense delight of her listener. When she came to the recovery of the stolen plate in the flour sack, Aunt Shales became greatly excited.

"Lawks, Miss Di!" she exclaimed, "just to think of that now! As I've allays said, there's them as can keep things to their own selves, and there's them as is too open to keep quiet when they can speak the Gospel truth. An' as I says, what's the use of our bein' given a tongue if we're to sit stock still like one of them scarecrows in a cherry orchard what never opens a lip, nor can't, not if it was to be paid twenty golden sovereigns! In a flour sack! I do declare it gives me the cold shivers to sit here in my own kitching an' think of it! It's a mercy we wasn't all murdered in our blessed beds, an' so I said to Mr. Gillway when he told me not to breathe a word about them sacks bein' missin' from the granary, an' I should never have known about *that* if one of the men didn't come as bold as brass an' ask me if

Passing her arms lovingly around Di's waist.

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I'd bin a-takin' them new sacks to lay down in my scul'ry!"

"When were the sacks missed?" asked Di. Her heart was beating violently. Had John Gillway a hand in the robbery after all?

"Well, it was yesterday as that Fletcher poked his impudent face inside that very door, an' asked me what I meant by takin' them new sacks as was all marked in red with a H and a F for Honeypots Farm. I sent him out of this room a sight quicker than he came in, that I did, and Mr. Gillway came in soon after, and sez he: 'Mrs. Shales, don't go a-talkin' to anybody about them sacks bein' took, or we shall never catch the thief,' sez he. But, 'pend upon it, he'd his own reasons for a-wantin' me to keep a still tongue, Miss Di. Mr. Gillway must have heard as that sack had been found, an' to think as he could shet his lips to *me*, an' never let out a blessed word about it!" said Aunt Shales, with a shake of her grey head.

"Was it early yesterday morning that—that Mr. Gillway spoke to you?"

"It was just after breakfast, 'bout eight by that very clock a-hangin' by your side, Miss Di. Lawks, you ain't a-eatin' nothin'! Let me put a drop o' somethink in your tea to keep the cold out, do now."

"No, no, thank you," stammered Di. "I never eat much at tea."

She felt sick and choking with fear. The sack of stolen plate had not been discovered until ten or eleven o'clock. As she rose to pull on her gloves, despite Aunt Shale's protestations, Gillway came abruptly into the room. Di thought that he cast a quick, suspicious glance from her pale face to his housekeeper's rosy, smiling visage. His own face looked dark with care.

"I was going to Greyhouse to-night," said he when he and Di had shaken hands. "I wanted to see Mr. Strange; I'll return with you now."

As they crossed the frozen fields he said sharply:

"How pale you are! Have the festivities been too much for you, or has the robbery frightened you, Miss Strange?"

Di looked at him very steadily. She saw the red colour burn in his face as his eyes met hers.

"I," not so easily frightened," she answered, "nor so

"When were the sacks missed?"

"Oh, I know I'm wicked!"

weak—as you think. Have you heard of the discovery of one of your missing sacks, filled with plate, in the garden at The Towers?"

"Yes. I knew of the discovery yesterday. Did you lose many things?"

"I had so little to lose. The thieves took two bracelets that had been given me for Christmas presents. Aunt Caffyn gave me one and Bernard the other."

"Valuable ones?"

"I think so."

"You must have deeply regretted your loss—especially the loss of 'Bernard's' bracelet," said Gillway in a bitter voice.

"I would rather be the loser than the thief, Mr. Gillway."

"So I should imagine, from what I have seen of you," he retorted; and then he added, in the same morose tones: "You appeared to enjoy the skating very much on Christmas night."

"I did—very much. I saw you by the edge of the pond."

"And I saw you—with Mr. Eliot. You passed me several times."

"Why didn't you speak? And why did you run away on Christmas Eve, when I—when we were in the conservatory?" she demanded.

"I ran because I had no wish to be seen."

"It is not very honourable to—to *prowl* about people's grounds, and to stare in at their windows, and—and—to do things that are not quite open," cried Di, growing incoherent in her pain and anger.

"Do you think not? I might retaliate—if I had the right. Not having the right to criticise *your* conduct I am dumb."

"I don't understand you! And I have no desire to," said Di. "I know that I have no right either to criticise what you do, but I think that for Kitty's sake you—you ought not to be seen hanging about The Towers. She is thoughtless, and means no harm."

"And I am not thoughtless, and I *do* mean harm. Is that your opinion of me, Miss Strange?" he asked very quietly.

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"I don't want to form any opinion about you. But if you run away when you are seen staring into windows, and refuse to take any notice when you are called, and must know that you have been seen, I can't help thinking that you feel ashamed of having been detected. That is all, Mr. Gillway," said Di, holding her head very high, and passing into the house before he could answer. "Oh, he is not a thief!" she said to herself when she was alone in her room. "He still loves Kitty, and it was to see her that he watched by the pond and in the grounds. But he is not a thief! I am sure he is not!"

The reflection did not seem to afford her much relief, for she cried a great deal that night, and looked so wan when the Nabob called the following morning that he was distressed to see her.

The Towers was nearly empty, he told her. Kitty was intensely miserable, and no clue to the perpetrators of the robbery had been found. Di returned with him to The Towers, yielding to his persuasions that she could comfort Kitty. But Kitty refused to be consoled.

Tired and wretched-looking, she cried over the loss of her ornaments, and grew angry and impatient with Di and the Nabob when they tried to take a cheerful view of the case. Nor did her distress lessen as time went on. She relapsed once more into the irritable woman who had found no happiness in life at Greyhouse Farm. She was peevish with her husband, rude and curt in her manner to him, and seemed to take a childish and unreasoning delight in paining him.

Sometimes when Di was taking a lonely walk over the fields or through the wintry lanes, she came upon Kitty's horse tethered to a tree, and two figures—a man and a woman — talking together. Di returned home with a sore heart. She knew that the man and woman were John Gillway and Kitty. Did the Nabob suspect the flirtation that was going on? Di told herself that he must, for only a blind man could fail to see Kitty's strange vivacity when Gillway was present, and her dull depression when he had left her. But her husband made no sign of understanding.

He seemed to grow even more patient and gentle with Kitty, taking no apparent notice of her snubs and irritability, but always treating her with the same kindness and tender consideration. He appeared determined to shut his eyes to her caprices and ill-temper and growing infatuation for the man whom she had jilted for his sake.

"Oh, Kitty!" Di said once to her sister when she had ridden over to The Towers. "How can you speak so unkindly to Bernard?"

Kitty laughed, and the laugh was not pleasant to hear.

"I don't speak more unkindly to him than I feel," she said passionately. "Oh, I wish I had never married him!"

"But you were so happy at Christmas," said Di. "You said then that your marriage was an ideal one."

"That was all pretence," said Kitty; "I wanted aunt to think we were happy, so that I might get the money she promised me. I shan't get it now; she's not going to give me anything until she dies; the loss of her jewels is to blame for *that*."

"You are most unreasonable, dear. Surely you don't hold Bernard responsible for the robbery?"

"He ought to have *made* the horrid police find my things! Just think of my beautiful diamonds, and the moonstones and emeralds and everything!"

"I forbid you to utter one word to your sister."

"How can he make the police discover them, dear? Do be more reasonable, Kitty. Have you forgotten how Bernard forgave you for practising that deception about your fortune upon him?"

Kitty burst into tears, covering her face with her thin hands.

"Oh, I know I'm wicked," she sobbed. "But I can't help it, Di. I thought I loved him, indeed, I did. And now I hate him!"

"Hush, hush, dear," Di said gently, placing her arm around Kitty's shoulders. "Kitty, don't think me prying or censorious, dear; but is it right to meet John Gillway as you do? Aren't you giving people cause for gossip?"

With a quick jerk Kitty wrenched herself away.

"Bernie has told you to speak to me about John!" she cried. "I don't care what people say. He's the only person who understands what I suffer, and if I didn't talk to him I should kill myself."

The robbery at The Towers took place at Christmas. In the early days of February a second robbery at the residence of a big country magnate was perpetrated, and this time the plunderers escaped with an enormous quantity of plate. Before the police had finished making inquiries about this second robbery, a third one was committed, and again the thieves made a most successful haul.

Di met Kitty and Gillway walking together near Honeypots Farm upon the morning that succeeded the night of the third robbery. Kitty seemed greatly excited. Her cheeks were scarlet, and her eyes unnaturally bright.

At sight of Di she broke from Gillway's side and ran to her. "Oh Di!" she exclaimed, "I must tell you! I can't keep the secret——"

Gillway took a hasty step forward and laid his hand upon Kitty's arm. He had not winced beneath the steady scorn in Di's eyes.

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"I forbid you to utter one word to your sister," he said in an authoritative manner. "There is no need to make her unhappy yet—she must learn everything before long."

"Oh, I must tell her. Do let me. She thinks——"

"You will ruin us, Kitty, if you break silence until no harm can come of speech," said Gillway, between his set teeth.

"There is but one man in the world who has the right to command Kitty. You are not that man," cried Di, as she turned imploringly to Kitty, throwing out her hands towards the shrinking little figure.

"Oh, Kitty, tell me, dear, trust in me—have faith in my love!"

John Gillway drew Kitty's trembling arm through his own, and faced Di. Once his stern mouth had twitched; it was the only sign he gave of understanding her pain.

"Kitty cannot tell you, Miss Strange," he said. "I have a claim upon her obedience in this matter. I must exact it."

Ignoring Gillway, Di uttered her sister's name in tones of passionate entreaty and tender yearning.

"No, no," murmured Kitty, clinging closer to Gillway and looking now at Di with terrified, childish eyes. "I—I have nothing to tell you, Di, nothing at all; indeed I haven't!"

As Di turned almost savagely upon Gillway, the sound of a horse's hoofs ringing upon the frosty ground fell upon her ears. Kitty and Gillway caught the echo.

"It is Bernie!" Kitty cried breathlessly. "Take me away. Oh, don't let him see me!"

Gillway drew her into an adjoining field, and the next moment Kitty passed Di upon her horse. Her little face was ghastly pale under the narrow brim of her black riding hat, and her lips were blue with the chill of fear. Di made no effort to arrest her. Silently she watched Kitty disappear in the direction of The Towers, and then she retraced her steps homewards, cold with dread and oppressed with a sick, nameless apprehension that made her heart feel like a dead weight in her breast.

(To be continued.)

HEY, RUBE!

Who was he?

Only a circus performer—a leaper who was accustomed to doing flying-trapeze acts and leaping from a spring-board, amid the plaudits of the spectators, who enjoyed it all the more that it was just possible he might miss and dash himself into fragments at their feet. How graceful he is in his silk tights and spangled waist, slight and small, yet Hurculean in strength.

The doctor at the hospital was accustomed to dying men, accustomed to sorrowful heart histories, to sad, sad scenes of parting and death. But he had nothing to do with them. He was there to learn something of interest to science; to study the laws of anatomy; to reduce a fracture successfully, or kill a fever.

He looked into dying eyes, not to read the secrets they held of a life that had passed, but to observe how coma affected them, and to interpret the value of bromide or morphine. This hospital doctor would have done the same thing in the following case, but for one of those curious links in the chain of life which demand a conversation of interests whether we will or no. He had gone one day last summer to the circus, and his two little boys with him; they had been delighted with the double treat—that of being with papa, and seeing the glory of wonderland. One little fellow had gone wild over the gymnast and leaper, the man who shot into the air, came down upon his feet, turned a somersault, kissed his finger-tips to the spectators, and sped on feet of air from the ring.

Now, there was something strange in the fact that when one of the little fellows died—as he did suddenly and unexpectedly, as children go—he in dying talked of this man. And it was strange that the doctor saw nothing of interest in his patient till his other boy, going the rounds with him, pulled at his coat and whispered:

"It's Bertie's man, papa; the one that jumped over all the horses and into the air, and went over and over. Oh, papa! won't you mend him up?"

But the poor fellow was past mending, and the doctor knew it. He had made a mis-step, and, falling, struck on his head and shoulders, and they had picked him up and carried him out, and he had lain here ever since. His comrades had left him, with many a handshake and sympathetic tear, and gone on without him, and he did not care. What was there left for him in life?

When the doctor knew who the man was he thought of his dead boy, and at once began the task of making death easy to him. That was all he could do, just smooth with kindness that sure descent we must all tread.

"Who is Lulu?" asked the doctor.

The day which would have no morrow came at last to the sick man, and all the morning he lay sleeping and dozing, and at night he was dying; his cheeks were red with fever heat; he was in a delirium, and imagined himself in the circus, listening to the plaudits of the crowds. Over and over again he repeated the name of Lulu.

"Who is Lulu?" asked the doctor, with a hope of releasing the troubled spirit from dwelling on the past.

"An angel," said the dying man, faintly and brokenly; "an angel in Heaven now. But she was my good angel on earth—mine—mine—mine! Do you hear, doctor? I defy you to part us there—you cannot! You dare not!"

The doctor gave him a soothing draught, but he grew wilder, and raved of Lulu—only Lulu!

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"Listen," he cried; "do you hear that call? It means trouble in the circus. Not among the animals, the wild savage beasts, but among men, aye, and women, too. Ah, doctor, she was all I had; just my little Lulu. We had thought it so cruel not to have known and loved each other all our lives, but she was a wife before I knew her. Good Heavens, how he abused her; and when they told her he was dead the poor child went out into the world for herself, and I found her—quick, doctor, give me water; I am strangling."

The doctor lifted his head, and the water gurgled in the throat of the dying man. He could no longer swallow, but it cooled his parched lips.

"I taught her to do the trapeze business. She was small and light and quick. She was beautiful and innocent. How I loved her! And after we had been together for about a year she married me, and we were happy—so happy! And she played so well. Her eyes shone with her new happiness. Her heart was so light that she attracted crowds, and one night in the season here—oh, doctor, it is hard for a dying man to talk—she—she just took the house by storm. There was an ovation. She was recalled again and again. The manager doubled her salary on the spot, but we didn't care for that. It was just the triumph in her art—we loved each other, and the life, too."

The leaper, who could never again hear the applause he once coveted, lifted the portrait in his hands to his lips and kissed it fervently. He looked so strong and bright that a neophyte in matters of life and death would have mistaken him for a man in good health.

"The next night Lulu was to give them a new and dangerous feat, and the house was full, crowded, and she never looked so lovely. I made my great leap and ran out of the ring, and found Lulu waiting to go on. She looked so small and sweet, so like a lovely, affectionate child; she was so innocent and altogether lovely, I just took her in my arms and kissed her. It was the last time!

"'Teddie,' she said, laying her soft cheek against mine, 'Teddie, we've been happy, haven't we?'

"'And will be as long as we live,' I said.

"Then I saw that she had been crying, and I was going to say she could not go on, when the call for her came, and she was gone. She turned and looked at me as she went in—Yes, yes, Lulu, I'm coming."

The doctor did not move; there was no irregularity in the man's breathing now, and he spoke distinctly and fast, but the medical man was not deceived. It was the beginning of the end. Even his thoughts wandered, and he held imaginary conversation with that Lulu he loved.

"I said she went on; she did her part splendidly, and won round after round of applause, and came off; but I did not see her, as I had another leap to make, and as I went into the ring the first person I saw was a cross-eyed man. We show people are superstitious, doctor, and—oh, this pain!—I knew that meant bad luck. I was just balancing for the leap when there came a cry—oh, doctor, I can hear it yet—that cry stands for 'Help' among circus people. It was Lulu, and her voice rang out over the whole crowd, 'Hey, Rube!' I heard it, and the shot that followed, but I was balanced for the leap, and could not stop, and I fell short. That was why they left me here."

"And Lulu?" suggested the doctor, as he saw the dying man's attention wander.

"Lulu is dead. Shot, they told me afterwards, by her husband, who was alive after all. But it's all right, doctor—all right. There is no marriage nor giving in marriage there. Yes—yes—my darling; I am coming—coming—coming!"

The doctor's watch lay on the table, and counted and ticked off the minutes. When the hand hour pointed to midnight, the ward was asleep, and strange, drifting shadows like intangible visitors swept up and down the long vista, and wrapt all the suffering inmates in their beneficent arms. Then, in the solemn stillness, a strange, weird cry rang out like the notes of a war trumpet or the midnight call of some brooding tropical bird:

"Hey, Rube!"

It seemed to come out of space. The white faces of disturbed sleepers peered into the shadows a moment, than all fell back to sleep, thinking it a troubled dream. The doctor looked at the face of the man he was watching—and he was asleep, too.

H. Argande.

ROYAL THANKSGIVING NUMBER

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PADRE GIOVANNI'S MIRACLE.

I.

ANTONIO and Lucia were on their wedding journey. To Antonio it was not a new experience. In earlier days, with Margherita's little brown hand tucked under his arm, he had trudged over the dusty road to Brescia, where, in the church of Marie del Carmine, the good padre married them. Margherita was just sixteen and wonderfully pretty. Antonio was young too, and very proud of the dark eyes which sought his so trustingly.

Both were happy. They had always been lovers. People said she was much too good for the handsome, lazy fellow, but she did not know it. Another young man loved her madly, but she did not know that either, or that after she married he went away and became a priest.

One day they carried the little wife out through the Porto Milano, down the long avenue of cypress to the Campo Santo. Of course Antonio was disconsolate; but it came to pass that—from very loneliness, perhaps—he soon fell prey to another pair of eyes, blacker and bolder than Margherita's. Then, naturally enough, followed the second wedding journey.

They were going to Venice. Lucia was herself Venetian, and it had needed no argument to induce Antonio to remove there, since it had long been the darling wish of his heart. Although the day was warm, Lucia was arrayed in all her bridal finery. To be sure, the high collar of her gown was far too straight for her portly throat; her fat, red arms protruded awkwardly from the tight sleeves; but that was nothing; nor was she unhappy because her white gloves refused to become amenable to buttons.

The bridegroom, however, was not so passive under the restraint of his unaccustomed impedimenta. Once established in the railway carriage, he hastened to divest himself of hat and coat, bestowing them in the network overhead, along with Lucia's bonnet on its big bandbox, and Angelo's cap and shoes. Sure enough, there was Angelo—Margherita's child, big-eyed and olive-cheeked—who should not be overlooked; though when one comes to think about it, he did seem rather out of place in a wedding party. Yet the boy amused himself as only motherless children do, and troubled nobody.

At Verona, two priests got into the carriage. To one of them Antonio was well known. Was it not he who had settled the padre's fate for him by marrying the woman whom they both loved? Antonio had been unconscious of a rival, and there had been no quarrel; so there was now no ill-feeling on the part of either man. Padre Giovanni had forgiven Antonio for loving Margherita—who could help loving her?—but he pitied himself for losing her. Under certain conditions, indeed, he was even capable of compassion for another bereft of her, but now—Lucia rested her head on her husband's willing shoulder with her hand in his, quite openly, as without doubt they had the right, even in a railway carriage; for were they not newly-married? At a glance the young priest recognised in Lucia, Margherita's successor. He watched her furtively, noting the velvety blackness of her eyes, whose too heavy eyebrows met across a wide expanse over the nose. Then he recalled the sweet face of Margherita, and it was no wonder that the new wife suffered by the comparison.

A nod of greeting passed between the two men, but wishing to discourage further advances, the padre opened his breviary and fell to reading. Meanwhile, the love-making prospered in one corner, and the child—flushed and tired—slumbered in another. Yet strive against it as he would, Padre Giovanni's mind ever wandered from the printed page. By-and-bye his regard strayed to the motherless boy, and lingered there. Margherita's coquettish smile hovered about his mouth as he dreamt. Who would caress him now?

Of course, Antonio was proud of the child's beauty; but what assurance was there that this woman would be kept from ill-treating him? She seemed capable of it, the padre thought. His heart waxed hot within him as he brooded. "Ah, if it had but pleased God to give me Margherita's love," he sighed—"and this child!"

Angelo moved uneasily in his sleep. Both parents were too much engrossed with each other to notice him, so the padre adjusted the little body to a more comfortable posture, wasting, as he did so, a withering look on the all-unconscious couple.

II.

THE distorted shadows of a Venetian evening were lying darkly on canal and street, when Padre Giovanni passed out of the church of San Marcilliano and, seeing no gondola on the Rio della Misericordia, quickly made his way to the Ria San Felice where one was always sure to be passing. In the interval which elapsed between the "Spth" with which he hailed a boatman, and the appearance of a gondola, there was a splash in the water.

It was rapidly growing dark, and the padre was in a hurry, but something made him hesitate. Now, the padre's heart was tender towards all helpless things, and he could just discern a small, dark object, struggling in the canal. Without stopping to consider further than that some poor creature was in trouble, in cassock and shoes he plunged in, soon to reappear with the limp form of a child in his arms.

A ready application of the simple remedies at his command was at last rewarded by a faint sigh. Lighting a taper, the padre stooped low and peered into the face of—Angelo! There had been no outcry. The waiting gondola, until then unobserved, was impressed, and the good padre had slipped with his precious charge into the darkness.

During the next few days he was but dimly conscious that something had happened. Weak and inert, he accepted his new condition unquestioned. The unwearying devotion of the padre was such a new phase in Angelo's experience that natural home-sickness was turned to languid satisfaction.

Padre Giovanni was in no haste to spare his small guest. Long before he would admit—even to himself—the boy's convalescence, they were fast friends. At last there came a time when the padre could no longer temporise.

Then into his heart dropped an evil thought which took root and grew apace, for it had fallen in fertile soil. "What more fitting," he asked himself, "than that the Church adopt this child of the sea? Is not Her seal set upon him in baptism? Has he not been miraculously restored from death by a humble servant of the Church? Moreover," as the most binding clause of a will is its codicil, so the padre kept his stoutest argument in reserve—"moreover, surely Margherita would have it so, and should not he undertake that her son be trained for the priesthood?"

"For Margherita's sake," had been his dominating motive since he first beheld her face. Many a battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil, had he fought—and won, too—in the name of that sweet saint.

So, that which at first seemed but an episode in Padre Giovanni's quiet life, came by degrees to absorb it. One so methodical as he must of necessity resume his old habits after a time, but it was with a difference. The lad could not be suffered to renew his acquaintance with the neighbourhood of San Marcilliano; at least, not until it should have been effaced from his memory.

This was not difficult to accomplish, since Angelo was lodged with the priest's sister; but it involved the daily separation under which the padre fretted! Sometimes as he approached the house at night, a sickening dread possessed him lest harm had befallen the child. From the parting till the happy meeting a sweet refrain was ever singing in his heart. The church bells rang: "Angelo!" The great organ pealed: "Angelo!" The very splash of the gondolier's oars kept time to the name.

In the main, Padre Giovanni's conscience was docile, if one eliminated a menacing prick when he chanced to meet Angelo, gloomy and dark, as he paddled his boat—not for very joy of sky and sea—only for hire.

Were there no sunshine, there would be no shadows, and it is not strange that across these two happy lives a little cloud flitted. One day the padre awoke to the discovery that the lad hummed a lilting gondolier-song far oftener than the solemn music of the Church. That was but natural for one so young, the man admitted, comforting himself so; nevertheless he pondered over it a long time. Troubles, like snowballs, grow bigger every time they are turned over, and, truth to tell, the passing years did not mend matters.

"I wish I might have been a gondolier, *amico mio*," sighed Angelo, tossing away his book and stretching himself to his full height one day when an especially hard lesson confronted him.

"A handsome head to be so empty," thought the padre, but he said severely: "Boy, did God deliver thee from the danger of death to turn thy back upon Him?"

"Ah, no!" answered the boy humbly, "but I should have been happier so."

And the padre, perceiving the truth, took counsel within himself and resolved to give the graceful, restless youth a little longer tether.

III.

IT was Christmas Eve. The midnight mass was over. Prince and pauper jostled each other as they crowded out of the church. Stiff with cold, Padre Giovanni was gathering up his precious parcels of mustard and mandorlato, which he had secured *a buon mercato*, for Angelo's treat, when a woman in sore distress entered his confessional box.

"Oh, *padre mio*," she sobbed, "my heart is breaking. I am a second wife. I love my husband and I have been faithful to him. Ten years ago, our boy—his boy. I have never been a mother—was lost, or stolen, or drowned. My husband accuses me of the crime because I was jealous of the child. I was jealous, he looked so like his pretty mother. But God knows I never did him harm. Indeed, I tried to be kind to him for the father's sake. All these years we have lived a miserable existence. My husband is old, yet he is still a young man. I am all to blame for taking the dead woman's place. I can bear it no longer. To-night I am going to end it. Oh, *padre mio*, absolve me, absolve me, I pray!"

The church was oppressive with palpitating silence. The last priest had deserted his stall. The altar candles had been extinguished. The air was biting in its chill. Again the penitent pleaded for pardon.

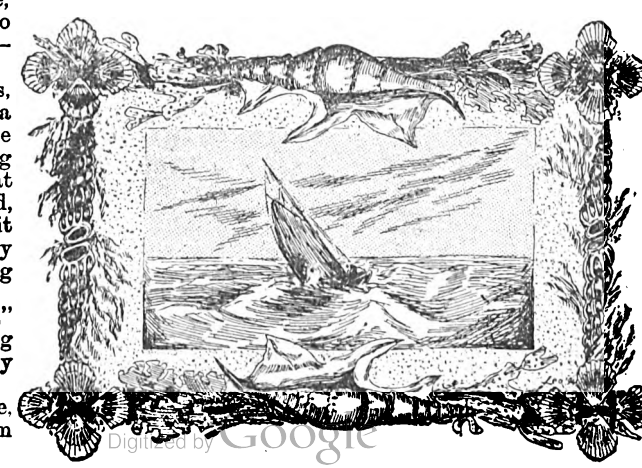
"Pity me, padre! Oh, pity and forgive my sins." The voice that answered was hoarse and strange.

"I will pray God for thee, my daughter. I cannot give thee absolution for the evil purpose which is hidden in thy heart. Pray Him to cast it out."

"Alas, alas!" moaned the woman. "To die is happiness, but oh, to live, I cannot!" Her voice was choked with weeping. The rising wind wailed drearily. The padre shivered, but was silent. Another piteous cry was poured into the unseen, listening ear.

"In the name of the Church I forbid thee to do thyself harm!" sternly answered the priest. "Pray, pray, my daughter, against temptation," he went on more gently. "God is able to comfort thee, if it please Him. Thy son may be restored to thee. Go in peace, my child."

The first streak of dawn found Padre Giovanni where



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the woman had left him. It had cost a mortal struggle to give her his ghostly consolation. By the hint of possible restitution to averta crime, had he not compromised with his own conscience? Would God hold him responsible for the letter of his unspoken promise?

What was this stranger that he should be called upon to pay such a penalty for her life? Was not Angelo already her ward? And, after all, what right had he to settle the lad's fate? A blank wall seemed to shut him in. A sense of suffocation overpowered him, and he stepped out into the church. Perhaps the morning light comforted him, for with it came the thought: "Would Angelo leave me, were the opportunity given him?" He clutched at the gleam of hope which the question suggested. As he reasoned within himself he took heart. "Angelo shall choose between us," he said, and with a sigh he left the church and made his way towards home. Confident of Angelo's love, he tried to shake off his fears.

The sun was now fully up, and the streets were astir. The padre stopped at a stall and asked the price of a fine cluster of grapes, then passed on, without waiting to hear the reply. He turned his face up to the sun. It refused to warm him. Every step grew heavier. A revulsion of feeling took possession of him. He scorned himself as if he were regarding the moral obliquity of a fellow-man. He now no longer tried to put any other construction upon his evil doing. And he an annointed priest! Goaded by such reflections, he was almost ready to give himself up to justice, when the radiant face of Angelo shone out upon him from a balcony at a turn of the street. In that glance every consideration was put to flight, except the wild longing to keep the lad forever.

"Padre Giovanni!" cried Angelo, springing down to meet him. "Art thou ill, *amico mio?* How pale thou art, and how cold!" seizing, as he spoke, one of the padre's trembling hands.

"Angelo, there be they that would claim thee," gasped the man breathlessly, lest his courage fail him. "Wouldst thou change thy lot? Wilt thou leave me for strangers—strangers, dear child?"

"To go whither?"

"To thy father's house, boy, where are none but himself and thy—thy stepmother."

"And who is my father, *padre mio?* A glass-maker, or a merchant?"

The priest could scarcely suppress a groan, as he calmly answered:

"Thy father is a gondolier, my son."

"Truly! a gondolier. Say'st thou so, *padre mio?*" Angelo's eyes shone. "But thou—wouldst thou have me go?" He kissed the priest's hand, clinging to it as he turned upon him a look of fond affection.

"Yes, Angelo, if thy heart incline thee, go. It shall be as thou wilt, dear child."

It was bravely spoken, and with infinite tenderness, but the padre's whole being was shaken. Great drops of sweat stood like beads on his white forehead. He must have fallen but for the strong supporting arm of Angelo, who, pitying, comprehended not.

Not many hours later, hand in hand, the two friends threaded the narrow streets of a quarter of the city hitherto unknown to Angelo. As they went, Padre Giovanni told the lad the story of his life—as much, at least, as sufficed to satisfy his curiosity about himself—and happiness is not over exacting. If Angelo evinced more gratitude for the mere act of saving his life than for the love which had followed him so faithfully, who shall cast the first stone? If sorrow at parting with his foster-father was tempered by the thought of that unknown parent whom he was soon to meet, who shall marvel? Were there no self to overcome, where would be the need of an evangel? Angelo was about to realise the full fruition of his dream. The prospect filled him with joy, yet who shall say that he did not love the padre sincerely?

At last they stopped before a tall house, dingy and weather-beaten. In the moment before entering, they stood together in the damp loggia regarding one another tenderly. Then the padre embraced Angelo, and with faltering voice fervently blessed him:

"Be a good son, my child. Thy mother mourns thee as one dead. See to it that she repent not the day thou art found. God keep thee, Angelo!" whispered the priest, and was gone.

The miracle which was wrought that day in the name of the Church was greater by far than ever before was done by priest, or nun, or sacred relic. It had indeed pleased God to hear Lucia's prayer and restore her boy.

Aged with sorrow, Padre Giovanni had set forth to bestow all that he had upon strangers. When he returned it was with a face illumined, and the heart of a child.

C. Emma Cheney.

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A PUPIL OF VOLTAIRE.

"I HAVE a favour to ask of you on behalf of the Pichons. These Pichons are a family of domestic servants who have been transplanted in Paris for the benefit of my niece. One of the Pichons has just died, leaving several little Pichons behind him. I have requested that one of them be sent to me to bring up.

"I now learn that this particular little Pichon is, at the present moment, in the basket of the diligence; have the goodness to find out for me. Send him to us from basket to basket, and you will have performed a good action; I would rather bring a Pichon to manhood, than serve a king, were he King of the Vandals."

The Pichon whom Voltaire recommended so warmly to M. Tronchin in this letter, which has since become classic, did not arrive so promptly as his illustrious protector—who was promising himself great future gratification—in his impatience, could have wished.

"I prophesy well of this little Pichon," he would say, snuffing a delicate pinch of Spanish tobacco. "These children of the people are sometimes singularly gifted. I will form him myself; he will not be the first adept recruited to philosophy from the lower walks of life. He will be my little Jean Jacques!"

And with this shaft aimed at his rival and particular aversion, the malicious old man rubbed his hands in glee.

At last, one fine morning, the human package was delivered at Ferney. He proved to be a shaggy urchin of about ten years, timid and something heavy witted.

Brought into the presence of the master of the house, who examined him from the depths of his easy chair, he stood awkward and ill at ease, pulling at a string of straw-coloured hair that fell over his forehead and smearing the carpet with mud from his shoes, in a clumsy scrape that passed for a reverence. Then, embarrassed and mute, he hid his eyes behind his elbow and shifted uneasily from one foot to the other.

The philosopher tried him with a few questions. Unfortunately, in spite of the flattering predictions that had been made, the youthful Pichon (Jean Baptiste) possessed none of the brilliant dispositions of the little Arouet who had dazzled Ninon de l'Enclos' circle with his precocious intelligence and lively wit.

He was no prodigy, he was simply an ordinary child of very limited capacity, quite indifferent to the majesty of him who was already called "King Voltaire."

The basket from which he descended (a sort of wicker case suspended at the front of the coach) had communicated to him, thanks to the close neighbourhood of the horses, a very perceptible odour, which disagreeably affected the olfactories of M. de Voltaire, who, in spite of his democratic tirades, had passably aristocratic tastes and the dainty ways of a dandy. So with a grimace and a hand to his nostrils he began by consigning his future disciple to the kitchen.

But the next day, returning to those educational projects which had inspired him to write so pretty a letter, the patriarch of Ferney deigned to give the well-scrubbed, brushed, and tidied Jean Baptiste his first lesson.

The apprenticeship was hard to both.

The country boy, brought up by an aged grandmother to tend her geese and turkeys, and scarcely able to spell a few words out of his old prayer-book, did not understand the first word of the long explanations his improvised schoolmaster entered into—and patience was the least of his master's virtues, although it is supposed to be the dominating one of the sage.

Stormy sessions ensued in which the pitiless railler whose tongue had found such bitterness with which to lash the "King of the Vandals," by no means spared humble Pichon.

And thus it came about that while everyone was going into ecstasies over his good fortune; while the philosopher's heirs were becoming uneasy, and the servants jealous, the poor little fellow was often so miserable that he would run away off into the fields by himself and cry.

How much he would have preferred a rustic cottage with black bread, eaten in mirth and washed down with clear water, to the sumptuous chambers and the savoury food of the château; or the dilapidated costume of the little shepherds running barefoot through the mountains, to these severe black garments which transformed him into a miniature Genevan minister, stiff and solemn.

Never would he have had the courage to endure this life had it not been for the profound gratitude he bore towards his protector (heavily as this protection weighed upon him) and his friendship for Marie.

Marie was the Ferney milkmaid; a little Swiss girl, as pretty as a peach in her red fustian and velvet corselet. Her ease of manner and saucy grace contrasted with Jean Baptiste's awkward timidity, and her affection for him took on a shade of motherliness. M. de Voltaire could never have caused her a tremour with all his wig and his gold eyeglasses. Just from the pretty assurance of her salute when she happened to cross his path it was easy to see that he did not intimidate her in the least; ah! no indeed!

"What a goose you are!" she would say to her little friend. "Leave all those tiresome books that bother you so, tell the master you are not going to study any more, and come and work on the farm with my cousin Jacques."

He shook his head. He would have liked to follow her advice but he had not the courage. Then in pity at his weakness: "Let us study together," said the girl.

And, seated beside each other on the grass, while the cows grazed around them, she leant over his shoulder and set to work to solve the problems that were perplexing him.

Her bright, receptive mind made her much quicker of comprehension than her companion, and it seemed as though only for passing through her rosy lips the most difficult lesson became clear and easy. Jean Baptiste soon contracted the agreeable habit of carrying on his studies in this way.

"You are the one M. de Voltaire should take for a pupil," he would often exclaim in his admiration.

"I would far rather keep to my milking stool," she would make laughing reply.

At the setting of the sun, Jacques, coming down from the mountain whistling the "Ranz des Vaches," would collect, on his way home, dairymaid and cows; and Jean Baptiste's heart would sink as he watched them joyously return to the farm.

Thanks to this system of study, the pupil made rapid progress, the credit for which his learned professor took entirely to himself, ignorant of the fact that he had a petticoated co-labourer.

"If only God will spare my life,
Little Pichon shall be 'Great.'"

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he would repeat with conviction. Certainly, this, as an education, was fully up to the standard of Emile's.

When the eighty-year-old Voltaire was seized with a desire to see again that Paris he had left thirty years before, he took his pupil with him in the capacity of secretary.

This favour, which made him an object of envy to all, threw desolation into the soul of the poor youth, whom it separated from his kind little friend. But he docilely followed his master, sustained by the prospect of ultimate return, and intoxicated, just a little, perhaps, by that magic word, Paris.

And at Paris, for a fact, the secretary of M. de Voltaire became quite a personage; the glory of the great man irradiated him. He had his flatterers and his courtiers who encumbered the ante-rooms, waiting to cull from his lips some sally of wit or biting epigram which they could immediately spread about. Duchesses, eager to obtain a glimpse of the great man's august wig, humbled themselves so far as to beg "Monsieur Pichon" to allow them to take a peep.

And "Monsieur Pichon" swelled with pride at his own importance, said "Our tragedy" when he spoke of "Irene," which he was copying, and quite forgot his rustic friend.

The awakening was cruel.

When M. de Voltaire died, our Pichon, whom he had neglected to mention in his will, became simple Pichon again; just what he was when they took him from the basket of the diligence.

Did his heart turn to Marie then? Did he long for the little Swiss town once more? Yes, but false pride held him back. Besides, he who had once been secretary of M. de Voltaire could never take up a peasant's work again; his arms had lost in strength what his mind had gained in knowledge.

He was obliged, therefore, to nourish himself with the honey of science which had at first been fed him so against his will, and to mingle with the buzzing ranks of of those pseudo-philosophers who might fitly be termed "M. de Voltaire in small change." He was secretary successively to M. Condorcet, M. J. Chenier-Bailly, until at last he landed in the household of Collot-d'Herbois, who had played in Voltaire's tragedies before he had come to write one of his own—in blood. Pichon was an obscure, disappointed, embittered man, and he assisted an impassive, uninterested spectator of the fearful sacrifices of the Reign of Terror.

One morning he was engaged in opening a voluminous correspondence when the noise of a discussion reached his ears, and in a moment a woman burst through his door, and threw herself weeping at his feet.

"My husband, citizen; give me back my husband," she moaned.

"I am not Collot-d'Herbois, citizens," said the secretary coldly. "He sits in the Tribunal."

"The Tribunal that has just condemned my Jacques?" she cried, wringing her hands. "Oh, it cannot be. I must see him—speak to him. He knows me, I used to take him milk at the theatre in Geneva."

"What is your name?"

"Marie Cordier, wife of Jacques Bosson."

"Marie——"

He looked at her with eager eyes, searching her distorted features for some far-off memory.

"Do you not know me?" he stammered with fast-beating heart.

She gave a cry of joy.

"Jean Baptiste!" and threw her arms about his neck. It was indeed his old-time companion, the pretty dairy maid of Ferney.

With touching simplicity she told him her story. She had felt very badly when he did not come back to Ferney, had wept many tears, but, fortunately, Jacques was there, her poor Jacques whom she had so neglected and snubbed; he had shown himself so true and tender, so devoted, that he had finally consoled her grief. Insensibly she had been led to forget the forgetful one, and when Jacques had left to go to Versailles, where Mme. Elizabeth was organising a Swiss farm, she had shed almost as many tears as at the departure of Jean Baptiste.

Soon the good princess, touched by this rustic romance, reunited the lovers, married them, and made Marie mistress of the dairy at Montreuil.

"Oh, but since you are here, since you know all these blood-thirsty savages, you can tear my husband from them," went on the little woman volubly.

He protested feebly. It was impossible. Collot-d'Herbois would not listen to a word.

"Not a word?" she repeated indignantly. "I'll find a way to make him listen to me."

She spoke with all her old saucy audacity, then, in a pleading tone; "I beg of you, friend, save Jaques—your old comrade, my husband."

"It is just because he is your husband," he replied in smothered tones, in which all his hate was expressed.

She stood for a moment, hesitating to comprehend. "You refuse?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered, pitilessly.

She looked him in the face without a word, then she scornfully wiped her cheek as though to remove all traces of the kiss he had given her, and left the room.

Jean Baptiste's head sank into his hand, and he became lost in thought.

She had been the good angel of his youth, the consoling fairy who had never once repulsed him; now he had repulsed her most cruelly by his refusal. Was he then worse than the monsters that surrounded him?

Remorse pierced his heart; he felt a fierce desire to repair his inhumanity to save his rival. But how? By pleading? He knew prayers were utterly in vain. By trickery? A wild, heroic idea shot through his mind. "Why not?" he murmured. "The executioner will have his full complement of heads, and she will be obliged to weep for me."

The next day Marie was at the Barrière du Trone awaiting the approach of the funeral carts. Since her effort had not availed to save her husband, the courageous little woman was at least determined to be near him at the last.

Suddenly she felt a hand fall upon her shoulder and a voice murmur in her ear:

"Marie!"

"You, you! free!" she gasped, trembling. "How? Who did it?"

"Our friend Pichon, who brought me a permit he said you had sent me."

"He? Ah, noble heart! Where is he?—I must—"

Here a cry was strangled in her throat. A condemned man had just appeared upon the platform—it was he.

His glance wandered over the crowd, and finally rested upon the faces of his mute, terror-stricken friends.

His lips moved in a smile, then, bravely, he threw himself under the knife.

There was the flash of steel, a thud. From "basket to basket," little Pichon has at last come to roll into that of the guillotine.

Arthur Dourliac.

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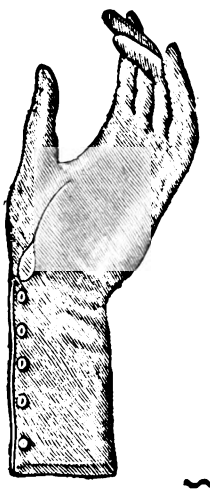

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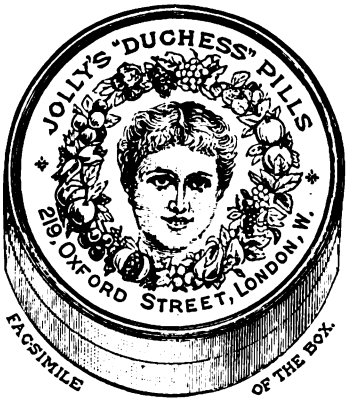

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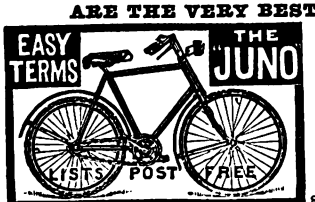

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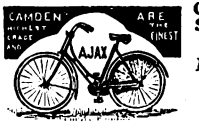

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A. P.—It does seem melancholy that so many of the Jubilee souvenirs now being sold in England are German made, but so long as the British public continue to support cheap and nasty fancy goods in preference to the more expensive but substantial British manufactured knicknacks, this state of affairs will continue to exist.

Batsman.—The Surrey Cricket Eleven was established in 1844, and consequently is the oldest of the county clubs. Lancashire dates its beginning from 1866.

Student.—Ten or twelve ounces is the weight of the heart of the average adult.

X. X.—The Lord Mayor of London receives an annual salary of £10,000 from the Corporation, although this sum is generally considered insufficient, in view of the many calls upon his purse during His Lordship's tenure of office. Thus it may be taken that London Lord Mayors are always very wealthy men.

B. C.—There are several seaside places in Great Britain which claim the title of "Queen of watering places," but Brighton is probably the most persistent in this direction.

X.—(1) *S.S.* has nothing to do with politics, so that it is impossible for us to agree or disagree with your opinions. (2) The London Water Companies make a profit of something like £1,100,000 every year.

R. G.—The first silver coin struck in England was the ancient silver penny.

A. J. inquires as to what trade has produced the largest number of wealthy individuals?——The brewery and distillery interests, we should imagine, considering that nearly all the larger distillers and brewers are, if not millionaires, extremely wealthy.

X.—You must not send money in a letter without registering the letter beforehand. If you do the other party will have to pay a double registration fee of 8d.

Rab.—The Britisher and the American are the only people who fight solely with their fists. The Frenchman mostly uses his feet to vanquish his opponent, whilst the German adopts a blend of both for the same purpose.

A. E.—Only one person out of twelve in Great Britain is a regular churchgoer.

Inquirer.—Most of the cheap imitation ostrich feathers are manufactured in the East-end of London.

Anxious.—Certainly you can marry your second cousin if you wish. The widespread belief that such marriages are illegal is quite an erroneous one.

B. S.—The human voice has nine distinct tones. Thanks for your suggestion, but it has been made before.

T. Moore.—There is not, nor is there likely to be, any change in regard to wearing the Victoria Cross. The decoration was instituted in 1856, and is awarded to military and naval officers and men for conspicuous bravery.

E. S. G.—Yes; earthquakes are sometimes felt at sea.

Bridget.—The Norwegian word for "Love" is "kjaerlighedans." I should advise you to confine yourself to the English interpretation, it is much easier to pronounce, and I dare say your *fiancé* would infinitely prefer it.

C. C. T.—There are far more women workers in Great Britain than in any other country in proportion to the population. Twelve per cent. of the industrial classes are women.

R. B.—You have been misinformed. There is no such thing as a singing fish.

Tim is a "bit of athlete," as he modestly describes his muscular powers, and consequently very naturally enjoys reading about the feats of fellow athletes. He is not content, however, with the very meagre space allotted to sports in the majority of newspapers, and suggests that there ought to be a splendid opening for a publication that caters solely for sports and gives less attention to horse-racing. Undoubtedly there is an opening for such a paper as Tim describes, and we can speak from experience, for the *Athletic Record*, although but a few weeks old, is going strong.

Frank.—An oyster takes five years to grow to maturity. All the oysters on the market are at least five years old, but some are a good deal older.

S.—Greenland, we believe, is the only inhabited country free from cats. Probably most people will think this is well, considering that the nights in that happy country are six months long.

Cockney.—Probably the most remarkable railway station in Great Britain is to be found on the branch of the Cambrian Railway near Vyrnwy. It goes by the name of Brongwyn, and possesses neither booking-office, stationmaster, or porter. When a passenger desires to start from the station, he manipulates a signal placed for the purpose, which stops the train. His fare is taken at the end of the journey.

D. C.—No, pennies were not always made of copper; originally they were made of silver.

G. T. T.—(a) Yes; fashionable men now wear their hair much longer than hitherto. (b) No; the number of marriages is declining.

T. W. C.—It is impossible for you to get an order to view the Stock Exchange during business hours; in fact, I am afraid you would find it difficult to get one at any time.

W. R.—All articles of value found in the ground belong to the Crown, and not to the person who discovers them.

Blossom.—A good way of telling if pencil marks have been erased from paper: Hold it over the steam of a kettle, and if the slightest pressure has been made by a pencil it will be distinctly shown.

Reg.—On an average some fifty-five people meet with a violent end every week in London.

S.—The largest gun-making establishment in the world is Krupp's at Essen, where some 20,000 people are employed.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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A doctor's widow knows of a simple, inexpensive remedy that permanently destroys the roots, and will forward particulars free to all those afflicted sending stamped envelope.—Address, Mrs. B. D. WOOD, 179, Westminster Bridge Road, London.

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Particulars of a self-treatment for a permanent cure, as prescribed by eminent physicians of the U.S.A., forwarded free to all sufferers on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to Dr. B. F. FIELD, 15, York Buildings, Charing Cross, London, W.

TOO THIN IN THE BUST.

Ladies desiring any improvement in this direction should send me stamp for free particulars of a simple, inexpensive, harmless self-treatment, whereby a *full natural bust* can be obtained. Address, in confidence, Mrs. B. K. NORRIS, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London, S.E.

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Stand Back and Then Look.

"Madam," said a wise old physician to a woman who had brought a feeble, anæmic, and poorly developed daughter to him for examination. "Madam, the treatment of this girl should have been begun two hundred years ago."

"Sir," she exclaimed, "I don't understand what you mean."

"Probably not, madam," replied this student of men and of medicine, "and you wouldn't even should I try to explain it."

How do you best see a picture on a wall? Why, by standing back and looking through your hollowed fist or through a tube. Well, then, let us first read Mrs. Coombe's letter, and afterwards get a little of what painters call *perspective* on it, and see if we can understand the lesson it teaches.

"In the spring of last year, 1895," she says, "I had an attack of pleurisy, which left me low and weak. Subsequently I could not get up my strength, do what I would. My appetite was poor, and after eating I had severe pains about my chest, at my side, and between my shoulders. I had muscular pains in my arms and shoulders—in fact, all over me. I got little or no sleep, and felt quite worn out in the morning.

"As time went on I got weaker and weaker and was scarcely able to get about. I came to be so low that I thought I never should be better again. I saw a doctor and took medicines, but nothing did me any good.

"In December (1895) my sister who lives at Oxford told me of the benefit she had derived from Mother Seigel's Syrup. I got a bottle from Mr. Cooper, chemist, Oldbury Road, and after taking it found great relief. I could eat well, and food agreed with me.

"I now gained strength, and after taking four bottles was well as ever and free from all pain, muscular or otherwise. I know others who have been benefited by the same medicine. You can publish this statement as you like. (Signed) Charlotte Coombes, 177, Oldbury Road, West Smethwick, Birmingham, October 8th, 1896."

That is her letter—a plain, truthful, and well-written letter. But what do we see behind the simple facts as she sets them down? Is there anything suggested by that attack of *pleurisy* she speaks of? Was *that* the beginning? No. *Pleurisy* is the name given to an inflammation of the spaces or cavities in which the lungs rest. When the inflammation attacks the lungs themselves we call it *pneumonia*; if the bronchial tubes, *bronchitis*; and so on. But they are the same thing, from the same cause—namely, impure blood. When the blood is thus polluted, the smallest provocation—a slight cold—may set up any of the above ailments. Rheumatism (which Mrs. Coombes had) belongs to the same group or family of maladies.

But how comes that impurity or corruption of the blood in which these things arise? I'll tell you in the hope that you will remember it. Indigestion, dyspepsia, fermentation of food in the stomach, torpid liver, which leaves the bile acids in the blood instead of removing them, poisonous dirt and filth from the stomach getting into the circulation—that's where the trouble comes from. So we see that in cases of pleurisy, etc., there is always what the doctors calls a "history" of dyspepsia. Although this lady had keen dyspeptic symptoms *after* the pleurisy, a previous imperfection of her digestion—whether she realised it or not—laid the foundation for the pleurisy, the rheumatism, and all that followed.

Now *that* is what we see as we stand back and look. And this is the practical use you are to make of the knowledge: Take care of the condition of your stomach, and the *first day* you feel anything wrong with it, resort to Mother Seigel's Syrup without waiting to find out whether you are going to be worse or not. When your house takes fire you don't wait to see how bad it is likely to be; you *stop it* immediately. Do so with indigestion.

The old doctor was right in what he said to the woman about her daughter. The girl couldn't help the neglect of her ancestors; but we can do something towards taking care of ourselves.

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BANK HOLIDAY NUMBER.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 441. FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 12TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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No. 441.] For the Week ending June 12th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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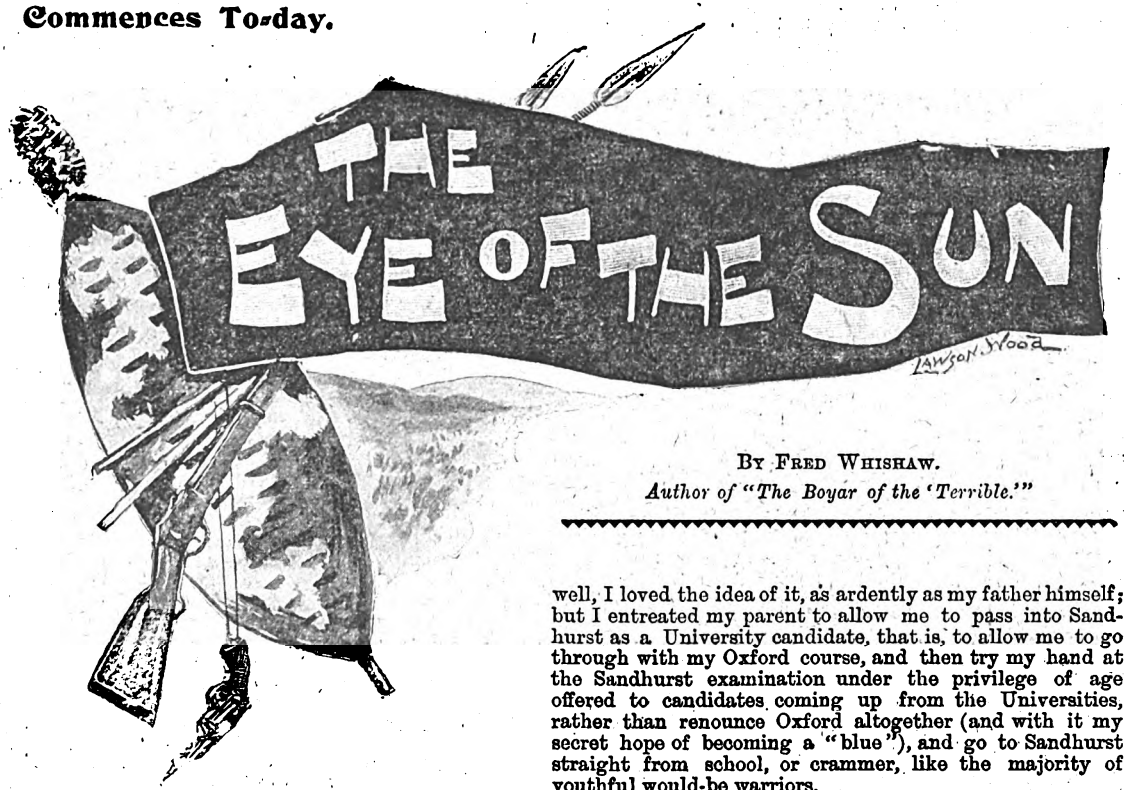

BY FRED WHISHAW.

Author of "The Boyar of the 'Terrible.'"

CHAPTER I.

A BRUSH WITH THE MATABELES.

I USED to imagine that if anyone possessed a just grievance against Destiny, it was certainly I. I began well—indeed, in the best possible way—with a public school and university education; but whether it was that Nature had provided useful talents with all too niggardly hand, or whether I had neglected the pursuit of mere learning in favour of the far more important acquirements of cricket and football and running and so on, in all of which accomplishments I was somewhat eminent both at school and college, or whatever other reason there may have been for it, it is certain that when my father informed me that it was now time that I prepared to shift for myself in life, I found, to my surprise, that it was the most difficult thing in the world to set my hand to any single thing that would bring in a silver piece towards that end.

My father had, indeed, at various times suggested many different channels by which the final object of a young man's existence—"a living"—might be attained. He hankered from the first for the Queen's Services—or shall I say for the Queen's pay, and especially for the pension, which is so soothing to the "worn-out" servant, shelved in his prime from further service?

But I would have nothing to say to the Navy, having plain tastes, such as *terra firma* to walk upon, and more scope for my natural physical activity than is afforded by the limited area of a quarter-deck, and as for the Army—well, I loved the idea of it, as ardently as my father himself; but I entreated my parent to allow me to pass into Sandhurst as a University candidate, that is, to allow me to go through with my Oxford course, and then try my hand at the Sandhurst examination under the privilege of age offered to candidates coming up from the Universities, rather than renounce Oxford altogether (and with it my secret hope of becoming a "blue"), and go to Sandhurst straight from school, or crammer, like the majority of youthful would-be warriors.

But, alas! though I achieved in a manner my "blue," or a partial blue, having been chosen to run as Oxford's second string in the hurdle race in the inter-University sports, at the Queen's Club (for though I played for my college both in cricket and football, and was more than once called upon to act as substitute for some player more fortunate than myself in the University team itself, yet I never actually achieved the highest distinction in either game), in spite, I say, of my fair success as an athlete, my hopes as a warrior and servant of Her Majesty were doomed to disappointment, for I failed miserably to pass the Sandhurst examination, and found myself accordingly stranded.

It was at this critical moment that my father pointed out to me that I had enjoyed an expensive education and must presently shift for myself, since my brothers and sisters must also be educated—there were eight of them, all younger than myself—and, therefore, it was necessary that I should remove myself "off his hands" as soon as convenient. It must not be supposed that my father was unkind or harsh in this matter; on the contrary, he was sympathetic and hearty and kindly confidential, and all I mean is that what I have said was the gist of his remarks.

"I am most ready, father," I said, "to do anything reasonable to get a living; you wouldn't ask me to sit at a desk all my life, knowing me as you do, and how I hate indoor work and all that. I'm awfully sorry about Sandhurst, but—can you suggest anything else?"

In the end—for I need not waste time over our weeks

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Threw up i s head, plunged, an i fell forward.

and months of consultations and inquiries—it was determined that I should emigrate to South Africa in order to join the Bechuanaland Police Force, or any other militant body that would enrol me and accept my services in return for a modest stipend, which father kindly undertook to supplement by an allowance of £100 per annum.

Then I had a piece of luck, for just about the time of my arrival at the Cape the Matabeles under old Lobengula had filled up the measure of their offences against the *protégés* of England, and it had been determined to march to Buluwayo, their capital, and end or mend them as the case might be.

Young fellows like myself, with no particular occupation, and with no more pronounced desire in the world than to take a rifle and go forth to have a fling at anyone willing to be shot at, were volunteering by the score, and among them I, too, offered my callow services and was accepted with the rest. And so, after a period of drilling and practising of the art of riding, in which I was less proficient than in most other forms of exercise, I found myself equipped and in the field as a trooper of Jameson's Buluwayo force, and on my way to help chastise the Matabele and make a little geographical change in the map of Southern Africa by taking over their country and making it our own.

Now I can fancy some of my readers exclaiming at this point: "Oh, my goodness, the fellow's going to tell us a story about the Matabele war, of which we are tired to death already," and will forthwith replace the paper on the shelf or throw it on the fire, or at any rate, read no more of it, which—I hasten to assure them—would be a very great mistake on their part as well as an immense pity; for the present scribe has no such intention; the Matabele war shall be left severely alone, or only most cursorily touched upon as affording a hero for my tale, which shall be presently removed out of Africa altogether, and shall treat of matters entirely different, and far more original, than a mere native war.

Therefore, read on, suspicious one, and you shall see that you have done wisely and well.

There was one of my fellow-troopers who seemed to afford considerable amusement to many of the others, though for my part I felt the greatest interest in him and became, as the campaign went on, considerably attached to him, and with some reason, as I shall presently show.

This was an elderly man of some fifty-seven years—a storm-beaten, battered, wiry, grim-looking old fellow, who had a habit of talking to himself, or mumbling, as he rode along, which habit gained for him the nickname of "Mumbling Joe," and was the cause of much amusement to his fellows. He was a restless, uncanny person, old Joe, and his behaviour when asleep was astonishing and somewhat agitating for such as are startled by the peculiar conduct of restless sleepers, for he would talk loudly, suddenly shout or shriek, start up to his feet or into a sitting posture, and always, without exception (as I, being his chum and sleeping nearest to him was in a position to observe), the first unconscious movement of his hands was towards a certain light-brown satchel, like a cartridge case, which he wore day and night on a belt round his waist.

Even in daytime, when surprised by the enemy or by any kind of alarm, old Joe's first involuntary movement was to this satchel, which his fingers would first touch before proceeding to grip rifle or revolver, as the case might be.

Others, as well as I, noticed this peculiarity, and loved to chaffingly inquire of the old fellow what the case contained, and whether it was "'Arriet's letters," and so on; but when I saw that this kind of banter and curiosity disturbed him I never shared in such inquisitions, and I think it was this merciful consideration for his feelings that in the first instance endeared me to old Joe. He proved himself one of the best and bravest troopers in the force presently, a splendid and indomitable fighter, and a man of quite marvellous endurance and physical strength and activity.

He was, moreover, undoubtedly the finest shot with rifle or revolver that I ever met. His revolver was a clumsy-looking thing of ancient make and enormous bore, firing a bullet of huge size, and having but four chambers. He had picked it up, he informed me, years ago, and it shot splendidly.

Since those days it has become my own property, and it is at this moment one of my most valued possessions. How it became mine I am now about to describe, though I ought to mention that in this very Matabele campaign and before

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—well, before the revolver changed hands, old Joe Wright twice saved my life by its means, shooting a Matabele at close quarters in each instance when in the very act of assagaiing myself, I being at the time otherwise engaged.

Late one afternoon Joe and I with ten others went out on patrol duty. We were ten miles from camp, and had just sighted a strong body of the enemy watching us from an adjacent hill, covered with kopjes. This was a portion of the impi of which we were in search, and having sighted them we ought, undoubtedly, to have been content with this and ridden straight away to headquarters with the news. But instead of this, we foolishly approached the kopjes in order to discover, if possible, the strength of the force present.

Unfortunately for us this happened to be a well-armed body, and from behind their cover of rocks the fellows peppered us presently with a volley which we could not return because we could see no one to fire at. Under the circumstances it was wisely decided to retire, for, after all, ten men, however determined, are not a match for an impi of two thousand or more, as this might easily be. So we turned and cantered homewards, pursued by many bullets. No one had been struck, up to this, for the Matabele warrior of that day had not even the vaguest idea as to the handling of firearms, and shot merrily in any and every direction that the bullet elected to take, which was very rarely the right one, and was frequently enough straight into the person of his dearest friend, or others of his acquaintance.

Suddenly, however, old Joe's horse gave a kind of snort, threw up its head, plunged, and fell forwards, pitching its rider into the long grass five yards away, where he lay a moment stunned. The rest, not observing the catastrophe, for we two had been cantering together behind them, loth—I suppose—to leave the field, rode on and were quickly concealed in the bush and cover which each man did his best to place between himself and the enemy.

Well, I really do not mean to boast about it, because any other person would naturally have done no less than I did, but I must tell the story exactly as it happened, and therefore—at the risk of being misunderstood—I have to say in as few words as possible that I waited for Joe, and dismounted, and went over to where he lay in the long grass. He was just recovering, and sat up grabbing his yellow satchel in a comical way.

"What is it—what is it—what's happened?" he muttered.

"Your horse had been shot, and it grassed you in falling; get on mine with me, quick," I said, "no time for talking; if those beggars saw you fall they'll be after us directly—can you stand?"

Old Joe's eyes glanced gratefully into mine for an instant, but he only said:

"Rather!" and sprang to his feet. We scrambled upon my beast as quickly as we could, and looked back.

Sure enough, half-a-dozen of the dusky rascals were after us already, and set up a frantic shout when they saw us mounted together upon one steed; the foremost of them were but thirty or forty yards away, and a flight of assagais whistling about our ears soon proved to us that we had better get out of range as quickly as possible.

I was actually making a remark to this effect to my comrade when I felt him start, and heard him utter an exclamation. Joe was riding behind me, and he clung round my waist with his arms.

"What's up, old man?" I said "don't tell me they've struck you?"

"They have though," he gasped; "whip up the horse and get under cover, the infernal black rascals have done for me, I think!"

CHAPTER II.

THE DEATH OF JOE WRIGHT.

I WAS all for stopping a moment in order to attend to my stricken companion, but Joe would not hear of it, and bade me ride, for Heaven's sake, for all the horse was worth. He had much on his mind to speak of, he said, before he died, and we must get out of reach of these rascals so that he might make me his confessor at leisure.

"Nonsense, man, don't talk of dying!" I said bracingly, "you'll be all right when we get to camp; doctor'll soon make you comfortable!"

I looked round at him.

"No, there's no nonsense about it," he said, "ride on, old man, I'm cooked this time; but I've broken off the shaft of the blamed thing, and the rest may stop in as a kind of cork till I'm ready to go."

I looked round at him, and saw that poor old Joe was really badly hit; the head of the spear that struck him was still sticking deeply in his side, his kharki jacket being stained deep red in a circle round it. He had broken off the shaft, as he said, and the operation must have given him a nasty twinge. I made no further remark, but quickened my old horse up—he was a wretched old screw, but he served us well that day—and presently we were out of sight of our yelling pursuers, concealed by the thick bush and by the hilly and rocky nature of the ground. Joe leant rather heavily upon me as we galloped along, and I looked round once or twice in some anxiety, fearing that he had collapsed; but each time he bade me ride on a bit further, saying that he would be all right, only that the motion of the horse was rather painful.

"Ride about three miles or so," he said, "that'll be enough for the present."

I did so, and pulled up eventually at the foot of a large kopje, by climbing which I could at any time obtain a fine

view of the surrounding country in case the enemy were still after us, which was not likely.

Then I helped old Joe to dismount. As a matter of fact, I lifted him from his seat and laid him down as gently as might be, for he was as weak as a kitten.

"Ah!" he sighed, "that's better. Now I'm good for half-an-hour or so, I fancy, but it may be less, so we'll begin business. Now you listen well, sonny, for what I have to say is worth hearing. I am dying here without a relative in the world that I care to remember or acknowledge, and without a friend—which is far worse!"

"Come, come, Joe Wright," I said, "I can answer for one, anyway!"

"Well, you're the pick of the bunch, certainly, and that's a piece of luck for you," said the wounded man, gasping as

"You villain, Jake."

he spoke and looking very white. "Lord, how painful this hole this! I'm pleased that it's you beside me now, and not one of those inquisitive young devils up at camp; you've been good to me, I allow, and not too curious about what doesn't concern you, and I'm a-going to reward you for it. You see this satchel—well, you may have noticed that I am in the habit of taking rather particular care of it—well now, this satchel contains a secret that's worth a king's ransom, for anyone who's cute enough to read it. See here—no, I can't move without getting a devilish twinge in the side—open it for me, it's only strapped and buckled—now draw out that thing inside."

I drew out a kind of roll of paper, there was nothing else in the satchel. Outside the roll were a number of figures in rows; the roll itself consisted of sheets of paper sown together, and closely written.

"Open it out," said Joe; "can you read the writing?"

I read out the words that headed the first page in proof of my ability to decipher them; they were somewhat peculiar:

"The diary of Joseph Wright's adventures, discoveries, claims, crimes, and cowardice. Cursed be he who meddles with that which is not his."

"That's it, that's it," he said approvingly; "you're all right, I see. Roll it up again and listen; don't lose the last page or damp it, for a lot depends upon it. Now, do you know what a cryptogram is?"

I said I thought I did. I had, as a matter of fact, been somewhat interested in the foolish discussions in which it had been lately asserted that Shakespeare was Bacon, or *vice versâ*, and that this was proved by a cryptographic confession buried in the plays themselves, and to be read by those who desired to be taught to do so by some ingenious American individual, whose name had escaped me.

"Well, these papers contain my confessions," continued Joe, speaking faintly; "read 'em when I'm dead, but not before, and, remember, that there's a cryptogram in them, and that the key to it is those figures on the last page. When you've read it you'll know what to do. I didn't dare, for reasons that you'll understand; but it's different for you. You can take a partner, if you'd rather. Lord, how this infernal thing hurts—what was I saying?—I'm a murderer, sonny, or next door to it, and a thief besides, as you'll see when you've read all; can you shake hands with me, knowing this, before I die? I have an idea God'll be kinder to me, like, if He sees that an honest young chap like you didn't mind giving his hand to a stained old sinner like me?"

I gave the old fellow a grip, but said nothing, for, as a matter of fact, it made me feel a little chokey to hear him talk in this way.

"Thanks, thanks, sonny," he gasped, for I suppose my hand-shake gave him a twinge. "Lord, forgive me, what devils greed makes of us! I wasn't so bad at your age, nor for many a year after, but—Lord! that stone—they called it 'The Eye of the Sun'—and some 'The Glory of Rajpore'; a man sells his soul for a gem like that, sonny, he does, indeed! And that's what I've done, and gained nothing by it in the end! Lord, what poor fools we men are!"

Not being able to understand what the old fellow was driving at, I said nothing, and presently he began to wander, and then to rave; at last he suddenly tried to stand up, and the exertion caused a rush of blood; he staggered, and fell against me; at the same moment he fixed his wild eyes on my face.

"You villain, Jake; you spying, murderous, infernal rascal!" he gasped in his madness, trying to grab his revolver; "you——"

He got no further, for blood flowed from his mouth and stopped his speech; I laid him down, raising his head, and speaking encouraging words to him, but he did not rally, and died in my arms almost immediately. It was a sad and miserable ending to a life, and the sight of it made me feel very low in spirits. Presently, when I felt quite certain that he was dead, and had not only swooned, I emptied the poor fellow's pockets—finding a sum of money which surprised me by its largeness—and buried him, repeating what I could remember of the burial service over his remains, and so left him and returned to camp to report myself.

Our commandant bade me keep the money, which amounted to over fifty pounds, saying that I was at least as well entitled to it as anyone else, but expressed some curiosity to know the contents of Wright's notorious yellow satchel.

"Only the story of the poor old fellow's life and adventures," I explained.

"Oh, come," said the captain, "he wouldn't have been so ridiculously anxious about the welfare of his diary; there must be something else."

"There is not, really!" I said—"it is simply his 'confessions,' as he called them; and he has left them to me as a special legacy, marked 'private.'"

"Well, then, I wish you joy of your inheritance," said the skipper laughing; "for the fellow was evidently as

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mad as they make them, and there'll be some entertaining reading!" and so the matter remained in so far as it concerned him and the rest of our troop, namely, that old Joe had been as mad as could be, and had left me a bundle of yarns as a particular and precious legacy, as well as a little present of fifty odd pounds and an old revolver as a kind of make-up for the trouble of reading his precious diary.

This latter document was easy enough to read, for it was written in a clear, bold hand and in a business-like style, lacking, indeed, both romantic grace and classic elegance, but generally correct from a grammatical point of view, and correctly spelt for the most part, though homely enough in its expressions.

Now, as Joe Wright's tale is my own, or a necessary prelude to my own, I shall ask my readers to allow me to transcribe his diary or narrative into this story of mine, his experiences to form, as it were, the first act, and my own the second.

I must confess that I quite shared the opinion of the rest as to Joe's sanity, and that I began the reading of his confessions without any great amount of interest; I was not sanguine, I expected neither much amusement nor any profit in the poor old adventurer's secrets. What could he have to reveal that might benefit me? Still, I would read the rigmarole for the sake of the dead and buried human failure, who had expressed a special wish that I should do so, and I may say at once that the reading of the score or two of sheets intensely interested and engrossed me, and that by the time I was through with my literary enterprise, I was anxious enough to set to work to discover the secret buried by the narrator in the form of a cryptogram; indeed, if my readers become half as interested in the matter as I was, they will thank me for providing them with so appetising a morsel. I read the sheets whenever I had an opportunity to do so unobserved by my comrades, whose remarks, when they saw me so employed, were unflattering to old Joe Wright's sanity, and to my own for wasting my time in reading his trash.

Nevertheless, I soon came to the conclusion that, whatever Joe may have been, he was as sane as any of his critics, as well as one of the smartest and most wide-awake individuals I had yet come across, though apparently not overburdened with that serious impediment to success in this naughty world—namely, a conscience.

Here is the tale, word for word as Joe Wright penned it.

CHAPTER III.

The Visit to the Temple.

I am a gentleman by birth, began Joe Wright's narrative, but one way or another I drifted down stream and was forced, in the end, to take the Queen's shilling, enlisting in a Royal Rifle regiment quartered at the Curragh. My first ten or twelve years of service were not very eventful, and I got on fairly well, and should have done far better, but for an unfortunate infirmity in my nature, which impelled me at regular or irregular intervals to embark in some wild and foolish enterprise—to "run amock," in fact, in a mild way—and, as a necessary consequence, to get into trouble. Many and many a time during the long years of my service did I sacrifice my chances of promotion and advancement to this foolish tendency to periodical wildness.

The officers—those who took an interest in me—lectured me often enough, pointing out that I might and ought to do exceedingly well if I liked; even the colonel spoke to me very seriously, more than once; but neither he nor they produced more than a skin-deep repentance in me—for though I desired to get on and often determined to do so, yet the longing to play the devil would come upon me and lose me stripes and prospects time after time, and the wonder is—not that I remained a private—but that I was permitted to remain in the regiment at all! However, I was not dismissed, and eventually we found ourselves in India, where we were quartered first at Bangalore, and, for the last year or so of our stay, at Rajpore.

Enlisting in a Royal Rifle regiment.

It was here that the talk went one evening in the mess-room about a great Hindoo idol in a temple near at hand, situated in a grove of great trees, four miles or so from our quarters.

Someone told us that this idol had a diamond in his forehead which was the sixth biggest in the world.

"Lord!" exclaimed Johnny Phelps, one of my favourite companions, as wild as anyone when a lead was given him, but otherwise a thoroughly good fellow and everybody's friend. "Lord! I'd like to have a look at that!"

"Anyone can see it," said our informant. "I saw it with these eyes, as big as a plover's egg, s'elp me it is, and no one about to look after it but a priest or two."

"Then why don't someone knock the Jossers on the head and help himself?" asked a man called Jake Daws, of whom I shall have more to say—an unpopular and disagreeable fellow, given to fierce threats and low language, who professed to hate the service and all in authority, and to be the enemy, as he would boast, of God and man, his only true friend being Jake Daws.

"Well, that idol ain't such a fool as he looks," said the first speaker—I think it was Miles, but I don't remember for certain, and it doesn't matter much. "He can protect himself, can that idol, so I'm told, and even if you was to knock the Jossers on the head you wouldn't get the diamond."

"Why not, what can the blooming thing do to you?" asked someone.

"That's what I don't rightly know myself," said Miles; "but I'm told it ain't safe to go picking about for that there diamond. You can go and try for yourself if you want to know particulars!"

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"Some blooming pistol that gives you one in the chops soon as you touch the jewel!" suggested another speaker; "no jewels for me, thank'ee, I ain't taking any to-day! I've heard of an idol as played those games!"

Everybody laughed, and the subject got itself changed and probably forgotten by most of us; but later on in the evening a few of us got together and reopened the subject, and as this is the real beginning of my tale, I give their names; there was myself, known as Joe Wright, though this is not my real name; Alfred Hitchins, a bit of a bad lot; Johnny Phelps—good old Johnny, whom I liked well enough; and lastly, Jake Daws.

I suppose the time had come round for one of my fits of wildness, for I felt reckless and desperately inclined that night for something to give one a flutter, and I started the subject of the idol and the big diamond, more—I vow and declare—in the hope of having some kind of a lark than with any ambition to possess myself of the famous jewel, which at this time I did not covet in the slightest degree, never having seen it or experienced the extraordinary fascination which the sight of it exercised upon me and others afterwards.

"Well," I said, "which of you Johnnies is on for a bit of fun to-night?"

"I am," said Phelps, who was always open to enterprise, and the first to come forward at the suggestion of anything racy.

"What kind of a spree?" asked Hitchins.

"Why, the idol," said I, "and the diamond."

"What, to-night?" exclaimed Jake.

"To-night," I echoed.

There was silence for about half a minute. Then Johnny spoke.

"All right!" he said, "I'm on, for one!"

"Oh, I'll come," added Hitchins, "but I don't believe there's anything in it!"

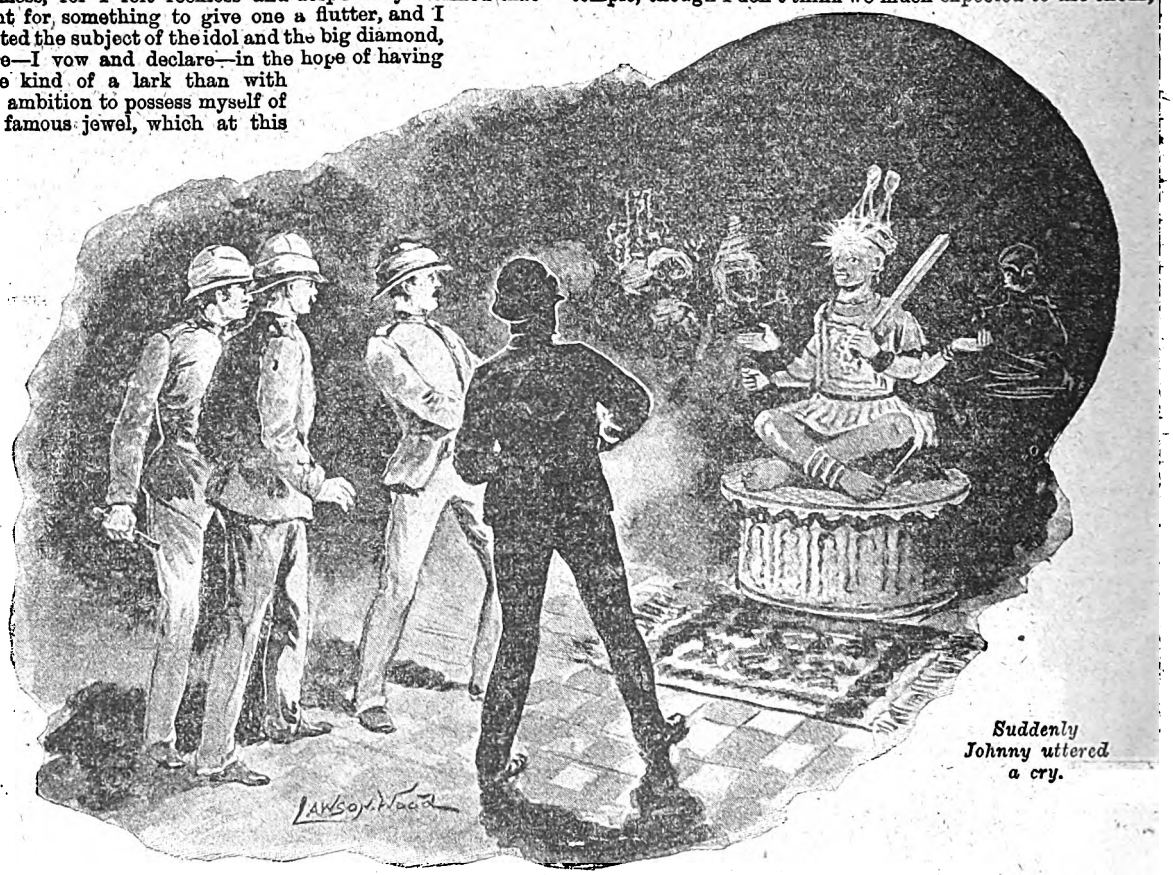
"There's a bit of a spree, anyway," I said; "it can't hurt us to go and have a look round; what say you, Jake?"

"Oh, I'm on," said Jake, laughing; "there'll be nothing in it, though, as Hitchins says. I'm not going to knock those Jossers you talked of on the head or get dabbed in the eye by the idol either. It ain't good enough; but I'll come and have a look round."

Then we all four set to and arranged matters, and I don't suppose four other men breathed who knew more about getting out of quarters at night without being asked awkward questions than we four did.

We had a couple of lanterns and a chisel or two, just in case there was anything to be done when we got to the temple, though I don't think we much expected to use them, and we mustered at a spot we all knew of not very far from barracks somewhere between midnight and one o'clock in the morning. The temple lay in a grove of trees about five miles away, and we had no difficulty in finding it, knowing its whereabouts from Miles; the place was locked, however, and we were obliged to make an entrance the best way we could, which was by forcing a window. We all dropped into the great, dark place, one after the other, and I confess I shouldn't have cared to do it all alone, for it was one of the creepiest things I ever experienced, to grope about there among a lot of heathen gods and idols that might be endowed, for all I knew, with all manner of mechanical dodges for stabbing or shooting trespassers as they impiously trod the sacred soil of this their sanctuary and dwelling place.

We stopped and listened when all were safely in, in case we should hear anyone moving, but there was not a sound to be heard, and we soon decided, to our relief, that the



Suddenly Johnny uttered a cry.

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priests had deserted their charge and gone home to bed, which was just as well for them; for, though I should have voted myself against bloodshed, and so I know would Johnny, yet I was not so sure about Hitchins and Jake Daws, and the Jossers, as they called them, would probably have been knocked on the head if they had appeared and interfered with us in any way.

Then we lit up our lanterns and looked about us.

"Lord, what an army of Josses!" exclaimed Johnny under his breath. "Which is the old boy with the big jewel, I wonder!"

There were scores of idols of every shape and size, mostly sitting with their legs crossed in impossible attitudes, and wearing upon their faces leers of more or less diabolical malignity or of complacent inanity, and we wandered among them for a while without finding the object of our search.

Suddenly Johnny uttered a cry. The light of the lantern which he carried rested at the moment upon a large idol seated upon a kind of pedestal, cross-legged, its face wore—unlike the rest—an expression of great benevolence, which was slightly marred by a kind of ironical smile which seemed to hover about the mouth.

From its forehead, which was about five feet from the ground, there flashed a something responding with dazzling splendour to the rays which Johnny's lantern shed upon it, that arrested our steps at once and caused each to utter an exclamation, like Johnny himself, of surprise and delight.

"Lord, only look at it!" cried Jake aloud, forgetting himself in his excitement. "That's a gem a man might sell his soul for." His voice sounded strange and crude in this silent place.

"Great Cæsar!" said Johnny. "We must have that out, boys, if it's only to play with a bit and put it back afterwards—just to say we've fingered it! What d'you say?"

"I say, if we get it out we'll stick to it!" said Hitchins with an oath, which somehow sounded doubly sacrilegious here.

"We should be all right!" said Jake. "Each of us has an *alibi*. We've never left the barracks, we haven't!"

As for me, I was not a thief, with all my faults—that is I had never been one up to this night, but the sight of that gem as we gazed deliberately at it under the concentrated light of the two lanterns fascinated me, and seemed to scorch all right-feeling out of my soul; my compunctions withered, and died in the dazzle of the huge diamond, and I felt that I must have a hand in any enterprise that was started with it for an object.

Hitchins and Jake Daws were whispering confidentially together.

"Look here, boys," said Jake presently, "Alf Hitchins and I have decided that we are on for this yer diamond; either or both of you fellows can go partners if you choose—if not, you've got to swear Bible oaths that you don't give anything away, and then you can get home when you like."

"All right, I'm on!" I said, and Johnny, with a laugh, said he'd have a hand in it, too, though burglary wasn't, so to speak, much in his line.

"Burglary!" repeated Jake angrily, "don't talk Tommy-rot; why, who should we be robbing? Nobody but this Joss-house mummy here, and a fat lot it'll hurt *him!* There's no burglary about it, we're saving a magnificent gem from utter waste; better some Christian dook or prince should enjoy it and pay us well for it, than keep it stuck in a blooming image's forehead which doesn't even know it's there. Come now, who's going to pick for it? Who volunteers first to go at it? Profits divided, of course!"

"We 'll draw lots, I say!" said Hitchins, and we did so, and the job fell to Johnny.

(To be continued.)

Important to Our Readers.

Mr. H. G. WELLS' story, "The War of the Worlds," at present running through the pages of "Pearson's Magazine," bids fair to become not only the greatest work he has yet produced, but the most popular piece of fiction of the year. Our readers will, therefore, be glad to know that we have secured his next story, and that the opening chapters of it will appear in the

BANK HOLIDAY NUMBER of PEARSON'S WEEKLY,

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"The Invisible Man."

Other writers have treated this theme, but they have generally given the invisible man a power which it was something more than a satisfaction for him to have. Mr. Wells, however, is original in all things, and shows us in this story what a disadvantage it is to become invisible. He describes how, if a man becomes invisible, it does not follow that his clothes become invisible also, and on this supposition has woven a story that will hold the reader with breathless interest from start to finish.

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The Flask and the Clock.

It was generally conceded that Herr Professor Max Hofmeyer was a very queer man, almost as queer, in fact, as the little clock that hung on the wall of his laboratory.

And, to tell the truth, it was with respect to his same tiny timepiece that Hofmeyer had first manifested his queerness. In as much as the clock was a gift from a Swiss watchmaker whose life he had once saved, and was in itself quite a curiosity—consisting of a silver ball about an inch in diameter, flattened on one side to make room for the diminutive dial with its golden hands, the whole to be hung up by means of a ring curiously fastened into the top of the glittering sphere—Hofmeyer persisted in using it in his laboratory, where the most accurate of chronometers would have been much more in place. When his friends ridiculed, and warned him he would be sorry some day for his obstinacy, he was wont to mutter something about "his clock," "his laboratory," and "his risk."

Of course, people did not think him any the less queer for refusing to take their advice.

But what was more intolerable to his brother professors, he had some startlingly unconventional ideas on the subject of hypnotism. He studied its phenomena deeply, but in his own way and according to his own theory, and thus, to every other scientist, who believed himself to have the one correct way and the one infallible theory, he seemed very queer indeed. He held that hypnotism ought to be studied from the subject's point of view as well as from the operator's, that an accurate record of what a man felt as he passed into and emerged from the hypnotic state, was quite as valuable as the record of what he did while in that state.

When a hypnotist desired to make an experiment, Hofmeyer was ready to offer himself for a subject, and after waking from the somnambulistic state which each recurrence of the experience rendered more easy of induction, he would jot down in a note book whatever flitting recollections he might have of his sensations during the transitional moments between sleeping and waking.

While his activities and interests were for the most part focussed upon the study of hypnotism, he had lesser hobbies whereon in moments of leisure he occasionally took a canter, chief among which might be mentioned an Edison's phonograph. This ingenious mechanism possessed for him all the charm of a plaything. To set it going from any part of the room where he might happen to be, he had deftly connected it with an electric key; and more than once a somewhat long-winded and long-staying caller had been startled by suddenly hearing behind him a metallic yet perfectly audible voice informing him that his carriage was at the door and the coachman tired of waiting.

But the talking machine performed also a more practical service. Like many a scientific genius, Hofmeyer was exceedingly absent-minded, and often loitered in his laboratory puzzling over some refractory experiment long after it was time for him to take his daily exercise, which consisted of an hour's walk along the boulevard.

To render such lapses impossible, he contrived so that whenever he began an experiment that was likely to take considerable time for its satisfactory completion, he could, by a simple clockwork attachment, "load," as it were, his phonograph, and at the desired moment it would "go off," reminding him that his recreation hour had arrived. "Ah!" Hofmeyer used to say, "these great inventions must be applied to everyday life before you can appreciate them."

It once happened that his friend and junior professor, Baumline, was in the laboratory when the phonograph rolled off its monotonous admonitary announcement.

"Fairly good imitation of the human voice that, isn't it?"

"Yes, but not to be compared with what we'll have in a half decade," Hofmeyer replied. "We've scarcely graduated from the kindergarten of invention yet."

"I don't know about that," objected Baumline. "It is useless to hope that we can ever reproduce exactly the sounds of human articulation. There is that mysterious something, that indefinable fibre to a real voice which reveals and proves the mind behind the utterance; and until we can endow a machine with the power of thought we can never expect it to reproduce with any approximate perfection, the voice of a thinking being."

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Hofmeyer, and there ensued forthwith one of those fierce and learned discussions that were not at all infrequent between him and his young friend. They argued for more than an hour, the professor claiming for the American's invention an all-successful future, Baumline maintaining, on the contrary, that in its attempts to give an exact reproduction of the human voice, if in no other respect, it was doomed to certain failure.

"But you will admit this much, at any rate, won't you?" Hofmeyer asked at length, "that if all imitations of the human voice are in some essential, but, we confess,

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indefinable way unnatural, the fact would be most surely detected in the state of exalted sensibility to external impressions that characterises the condition of the hypnotised subject?"

After a moment's thought Baumline nodded his head in the affirmative.

"You must also grant," the professor continued, "that a subject who has always received his suggestion from a human voice would not respond to any reproduction of that voice unless it were enough like the original to deceive his sense of hearing, even in its exaggerated acutenes; and if now, in the very infancy of invention a copy can be made so natural as to elicit his response, we have every reason to expect that in future years the means of imitation may be so perfected that the reproduction can be exact in every particular?"

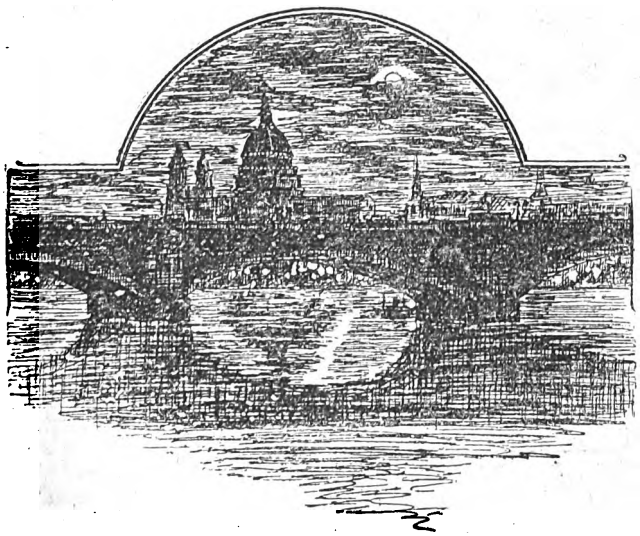
Baumline again nodded his assent.

"Well, then," Hofmeyer went on, "you come to my laboratory next Saturday at three o'clock, and in one hour's time, from these concessions of yours, I'll prove my position by scientific test to be inexpugnable."

For a moment the younger man hesitated, but finally acquiesced and declared his intention to be present "with a vengeance" at the time specified.

All the following day Professor Hofmeyer was afflicted with cold feet, or in other words, did some hard thinking. Towards the end of the afternoon he seemed to come to a satisfactory conclusion, for with a smile that might have been prophetically triumphant, he entered his laboratory, and to prevent interruption of any sort carefully locked the door behind him. He then fitted to his phonograph an unused wax cylinder and attached the large, bell-shaped receiver, after which preparations he pressed the key and began to slowly enunciate into the instrument:

"Friends and fellow professors, you have been invited here this afternoon to investigate with us whether an exact reproduction of the human voice by mechanical means is within the range of possibility. It is charged that I, a mindless, soulless thing of steel and wax, am incapable of copying with any reasonable fidelity the utterance of the mind-endowed and soul-endowed thing of flesh and bone, man. In contradiction I am to demonstrate that so essentially faithful and natural is my reproduction of the sounds of human speech, that even to the abnormally acute senses of the hypnotised subject, my words come with all the compelling power of the original utterance.



"The man whom you see Professor Hofmeyer now leading into the room is Max Nutberger, a youth that has been hypnotised within the last few moments by the ordinary method of the revolving mirror. Upon this young man I will now proceed to experiment.

"Max, you are fast, fast asleep, utterly overcome with weariness. Your muscles are all tired out. Why, Max, you can't raise your foot from the floor! No, not if you put forth all your strength, I told you you couldn't. But wait a minute—just one moment—and the result will be different. Now you have no trouble in lifting your foot, have you? Of course you haven't. I'll tell you a secret, Max; I had an immense magnet under the floor a moment ago and it attracted the nails of your boots so that you couldn't pull them away."

It is unnecessary to rehearse all the words Professor Hofmeyer intoned so deliberately into that gaping receiver; but after suggesting several of the more common hypnotic tests he continued:

"Friends, you see I have clearly proved my control over Max's muscles; I will now by a single experiment demonstrate my equal power over his sensations. Max, you see that flask upon the bench? That is filled with some of the finest wine that has ever passed through the custom house of Weinfurt. Drink it and tell me if it isn't fit to put before the Kaiser! See, friends, he smacks his lips, and I can assure you the very nectar of the gods could not have been sweeter to him than was that common water. But, Max, Max, you've slept long enough. When I count three you must wake up. One, two, remember, you must wake up—three, awake!"

The professor paused a few minutes before resuming:

"My dear friends, our experiment, you will agree, has been crowned with unusual success. My word was as law to this man, and had I ordered him to kill himself he would have obeyed as unhesitatingly as a child. Further words are unnecessary; I trust my demonstration has been convincing."

After Hofmeyer had completed his dictation, he listened carefully while the phonograph reproduced his speech. Not a word was wrong, not a pronunciation indistinct; and as he left his laboratory for his afternoon stroll his face was wreathed in a smile that betokened unmistakable satisfaction.

During the days that intervened before the decisive Saturday, Hofmeyer was subjected alternately to chills of fear and fevers of hope. Suppose Baumline were right after all, and his words when repeated by the phonograph should lack the strength and power that demanded obedience. It would be disgraceful, he thought. And with a score of invited guests to witness his humiliation! Perhaps he ought to have made the trial a little more private. But on the other hand there was no reason why he should fail.

The reproduced words were perfectly audible, and it was ideas, he assured himself, and not mere sound vibrations that were to govern the subject's action. And if he succeeded, how gloriously triumphant it would be to have every word in the whole course of the experiment spoken by the phonograph—a machine appearing in its own defence, and pleading for man's favour in the very words of men! The *Zeitung* would devote a leader to commenting on his success and everybody in the street would be talking about Hofmeyer! Ah, but any beggar he met that night would fare well.

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The Saturday came at length, and so nervous was the professor through the early morning, that he concluded about eleven o'clock that unless he occupied his mind for the next few hours with something besides the approaching experiment, the fatal time would find him in no condition to perform the duties of direction and supervision. He bethought himself of a difficult problem in chemistry that had perplexed him up to the day of his discussion with Baumline, but upon which, since that time, he had bestowed scarcely any attention.

"The very thing," he said half aloud. "It's abstruse and it's long, and perhaps it's very intricacy will serve to draw my mind away from this accursed test." And so after a light lunch, about noon, he went into his laboratory, took down his flask of prussic acid and the other chemicals involved in the problem, and began his mixing and compounding.

At first his mind wandered, and persisted in taking note of every detail under the sun that had nothing whatever to do with the experiment. His last lot of tubes didn't seem to be nearly so brittle as those of previous lots; and what a funny odour that prussic acid had, just like peach-blossom! But as the desired reactions obstinately refused to come, Hofmeyer gradually forgot Baumline and hypnotism and peach odour and everything else, save his one stubborn problem. At the very moment, though, when he seemed most absorbed, that inexplicable attraction that ever exists between extremes brought him back with a jerk to the subject which after all was deepest in his thought.

It flashed upon him that he had told Baumline he could convince him in an hour's time—what if his phonograph speech required more than sixty minutes for its delivery? Baumline might claim on this technicality that the experiment had failed. Upon glancing at his bullet-shaped clock, Hofmeyer saw that it was ten minutes to two. There was plenty of time yet to ascertain whether his experiment would come within the promised limits, and so he determined that just as the hands indicated the even hour he would start the phonograph and measure the length of its speech.

With this purpose, he seated himself before his bench with his finger lightly touching the key that was to set the talking cylinder in motion, his eyes glued upon the clock as it hung on the wall, a few feet above the level of his head. Eight minutes to two! These chemicals, he thought, and especially that flask of prussic acid, didn't look very nice on his bench, to be sure; but then, after he had started his machine talking there would be plenty of time to straighten up his laboratory before his company arrived. Five minutes to two! Just then the sun in his downward course shone in through the window and transformed the silver clock into a gleaming fire ball. How it flashed and burned! Only three minutes!

Hofmeyer was staring at the blazing timepiece as though fascinated, his pupils dilated, his body bent forward in the eagerness of his gaze. Two o'clock! Two minutes past! And yet no motion from the professor. Apparently he had forgotten the very purpose for which he was watching the clock. Three minutes past! His eyelids fluttered and drooped, an almost imperceptible shudder ran through his frame—sufficient, however, to complete the circuit in the electric key—and Professor Hofmeyer was asleep, with the prussic acid still rebukingly before him, and visitors expected in less than an hour! Hark, from across the room sounded a low humming noise, that soon took the form of distinct words:

"Friends and fellow professors, you have been invited here this afternoon to investigate with us whether an exact reproduction of the human voice by mechanical means is within the range of possibility."

* * * * *

About a quarter to three, Baumline knocked gently for admittance at the door of Professor Hofmeyer's laboratory, but received no response. Placing his ear to the keyhole to learn whether Hofmeyer was inside, he heard with great distinctness these words:

"Max, you see that flask upon the bench? That is filled with some of the finest wine that has ever passed through the custom house of Weinfurt. Drink it and tell me if it isn't fit to be put before the Kaiser."

"This is pretty evesdropping business for me to be in, isn't it?" Baumline suddenly asked himself, and began pacing the hall. But curiosity was strong. Again he stopped at the door and listened.

"When I count three you must wake up. One, two—remember you must wake up—three, awake!"

"What nonsense is this he's trying on his phonograph now, I wonder," thought Baumline, but again a reproving conscience dragged him from the key-hole and made him walk the hall. He had hardly taken a step when a piercing scream rung from the laboratory. He rushed to the door and attempted to open it. It was locked!

"It's Baumline, let me in!" he shouted, but no reply.

"Do you hear? It's I, Baumline. The door is locked."

The only answer was a groan, "Oh, my God!" Almost frenzied, Baumline hurled himself against the door. It yielded a little, but still held. Again and again he dashed against it with all the weight of his athletic frame, until finally it gave way, and he burst into the room. As he entered a faint odour of peach bloom greeted his nostrils, but blinded by the bright sunlight—for the hall had been but dimly illumined—he was unable at first to distinguish anything in the apartment. It was only an instant, however, before his eyes adapted themselves to the increased light, and there before him, sunk down into his chair, was the professor, his eyes fixed and glassy, his limbs flaccid, his utter immobility showing that death had already supervened. On the bench within easy reach was a flask labelled "Prussic Acid," and on the wall, with almost impious energy, ticked that accursed little Swiss clock. At that instant the phonograph resumed its talk:

"My dear friends, our experiment, you will agree, has been crowned with unusual success. My word was as law to this man, and had I ordered him to kill himself he would have obeyed as unhesitatingly as a child. Further words are unnecessary. I trust my demonstration has been convincing."

Herbert A. Jump.

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Short Stories

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Write down their names in the spaces provided, and then fasten the six sets together at the top left-hand corner, and send them in an envelope to reach this office by first post Saturday, June 12th.

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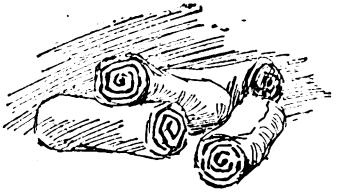
No. 52.....



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No. 55.....

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No. 58.....

Remember these Things. . .

YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the titles of the people. The family names are not depicted.

Name.....

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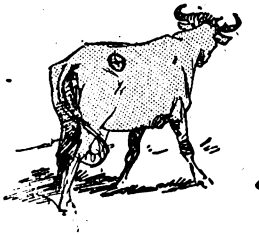

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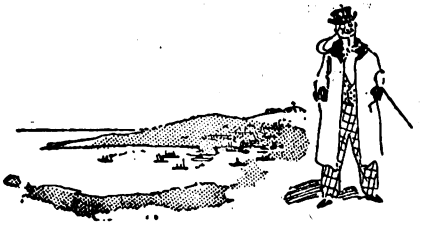

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THE CITY OF ANGELS

"IT is a pity," I said to the head waiter, "that every hotel in this country does not have a professional host. Now at the Coranado——"

"But, monsieur," he said, with the barest shrug of his shoulders, "if there is anyone that monsieur desires to know——"

He ran his eyes over the room (the rascal was a connoisseur, upon my life) and then he bent rather lower over my chair.

"Mademoiselle is living here," he said. "I will, if you prefer it, put you at the same table to-night. A pretty face, monsieur; a fine figure, too."

"Devilish fine," I thought. But I put on an air of indifference.

"You need not trouble," I said, stroking my moustache and scrutinising the wine-list. "It is nothing to me where I sit."

"Of course not, monsieur."

Long-stemmed roses, delicate, coral-coloured flowers of exquisite perfume decorated the little tables, with their spotless cloths and bright silver. A dish piled with the reddest and largest strawberries I had ever seen stood before me, and this when it wanted but four days to Christmas.

"The City of the Angels," I mused. "Truly the name is well chosen." Los Angeles certainly had its advantages over Piccadilly.

I had spoken, I suppose, aloud, for the head-waiter bent over me again.

"The City of the Queen of Angels, it used to be called, monsieur," he said, and once more looked meaningly across the room.

Over the tops of the flowers a pair of dancing black eyes met mine and instantly dropped again, slowly, irritatingly, finally. I studied the girl's face for a moment. The whiteness of the skin, the soft colouring of the cheeks, the arched eyebrows, had something deliciously old-world about them.

The brown hair was parted in the middle as one may see in the big pictures of the beauties of the eighteenth century, but most of all, it was the sweet laughing mouth which led me to do the rash act which afterwards made Los Angeles a name which goaded me each time I heard it mentioned.

The waiter was away fetching my wine, and I got up and passed close to her table, ostensibly to take a glance at the grand view of hill and mountain which made a charming background to the city. And as I passed I dropped a lady's handkerchief (how it came into my possession I cannot surmise) almost at her feet, but with some skill that I conceived prevented her from noticing the act.

I remained at the window for some time, and then turned leisurely back. The handkerchief was still lying where I had dropped it unobserved. So I picked it up, and, bowing slightly, presented it to the owner of that laughing mouth which had enraptured me.

"I think," I said, "you have dropped your handkerchief."

"Oh, thank you ever so much," said she. And then she looked at it and seemed to have some doubts, and felt in her pocket.

"It is not mine," she said. She glanced round and saw no other lady near. "Well, that's real curious, isn't it?" said she.

"It must be yours," I said emphatically.

"But it isn't. I'm sure it isn't," said she. Her eyes were flashing at mine bewilderingly. "Say, don't you think you have dropped it yourself."

I looked shockingly horrified and a little bit injured.

"It's a lady's handkerchief," I cried. "Surely you don't suppose——"

"Oh, you're English," she said delightedly, cutting my sentence short. "I guessed so, the first minute you came into the room. You can't bluff an American girl like that. I saw you drop it, you know, and if it isn't yours, whose is it?"

I felt foolish, but it was no good looking so.

"I don't know," I said truthfully. "I haven't the least idea."

I shifted the conversation.

"You live in Los Angeles?" I asked.

She nodded her pretty head, still laughing at my dilemma.

"And you?" she queried. "How do you like the Wild West?"

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"To me it has only seemed wild as the primrose is wild," said I.

There was no excuse to stay longer. I bowed amiably, and went back to my wine and dessert. But after dinner that night we found ourselves together in the hall, and for several nights following that. Once when the conversation was reaching rather a critical point, "Georgie" (we had reached that stage some time) was called up on the telephone. The peremptoriness of telephones has always been a source of annoyance to me.

"It's Elalaine Murray," she said (I hadn't the least idea who Elalaine Murray might be), "and she wants me to go up to her place to-night. I told her I was going to bring you with me, and she was delighted. I'll go right now and get ready."

Much would I have preferred to do nothing of the kind. But apparently I had been taken in tow, and the prospect of the drive together was not so bad.

"Elalaine is the prettiest woman in the city," Georgie informed me, her eyes fixed straight in front of her.

"I don't doubt it if our hotel's in the suburbs," said I.

"You spoil yourself by being so ridiculous," said she.

It certainly was ridiculous—but I hadn't seen Elalaine Murray then. Directly that piece of good luck came to me, I shifted the association in my mind with the City of the Queen of Angels from Georgie to Elalaine. It is often like this when you are travelling about and constantly meeting new people. Georgie, however, did not like it.

The three of us played poker that evening at two cents the dozen. I sat opposite to my hostess, and more than once I thought I had four queens in my hand, and when the cards were shown down there were only three. She had beautiful auburn hair and blue eyes; her features were quite straight, and her chin squarely sculptured. It was rather an impassive face, and her laughter lay chiefly in her eyes, but the bare fact of being in the same room with her made you gay.

We played on and on, stopping every now and then to lean back in our chairs and talk. Elalaine (I like to call her by that name best), Elalaine and I were hitting it off admirably, but Georgie seemed rather silent. I believe she did not look in my direction once, but I did not notice.

All too soon the villainous clock on the mantelpiece struck eleven. Georgie glanced at me (it was rather an angry glance, I thought), and rose from her chair.

"We must be going, dear," she said (she was speaking to Elalaine). "It has been *such* a delightful evening."

"Going!" cried Elalaine, with a little ring of consternation. "But I asked you to spend the night. Surely you needn't go?"

It seemed that her husband had gone out to some dance and had proposed sleeping with his friends, and that she did not want to be left alone. Georgie, however, insisted that she could not stay.

"Momma made me promise to be back by eleven," she said. "I guess the elevator will have stopped running already, and I hate climbing up those horrid stairs."

"Then Duncan will have to come home," observed Elalaine. "He won't like it; but if you are sure you mustn't stay, of course——"

I looked at Georgie as much as to say: "Don't be selfish; can't you see what a lot of trouble you are causing." But she only tossed her head. I believe she was doing it on purpose. Elalaine went outside to the telephone and began calling up her husband.

Georgie looked sulky, and said nothing to me. Five hours before, such treatment would have driven me to despair, but under the circumstances, I was indifferent. It has never been my way to have two women in mind at once.

"Well?" I said at last. The silence was a little bit marked. Georgie sat down on the sofa and began pulling on her gloves.

"I think," I said, "you have dropped your handkerchief."

"What do you think of her?" she said suddenly, her eyes on the door. I remembered that she was Georgie's friend, and that she had described her as the prettiest woman in the city.

"She is the most charming woman I have ever met," I cried rapturously. "I cannot thank you enough for bringing me."

"I don't think you have had very much experience with women," said she.

"Very little," I said, because I thought I had had a great deal. "But why?"

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"Because it is not usual, when you are with one girl, to talk about another," said she. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes flashing.

"You asked me," I said stupidly. "She doesn't give you the impression of being afraid to be left alone, does she?" I added. I think I had Elalaine on the brain.

"It seems hard she should have to drag her husband back. He won't like it. 'Pon my word, I think you ought to stop if you can, Georgie."

She tossed her head.

"Really," said she, "a woman of Elalaine Murray's age ought to be able to take care of herself. I prefer to be called Miss Mayland," she added.

"Very well, Miss Mayland," said I, with a mocking bow.

Fortunately, Elalaine came back at that moment.

"I cannot bear to be left alone in this house," she explained, helping Georgie on with her coat and kissing her affectionately. "When the servants have gone to bed one feels so lonely and helpless, and since the rush to the Randsburg mines began the place has been filled with roughs."

"Mr. Murray is coming back?" I asked, holding out my hand.

"Not till three or four, I'm afraid," she said. She looked nervous and a little bit white about the lips. It was on my tongue to suggest that I might stop till his return, but a certain difficulty about the choice of words, and also Georgie's presence prevented me from doing so. But I went rather reluctantly, cursing my want of courage, and when at the garden gate Georgie discovered her muff had been left behind I went back with alacrity, my heart beating a little faster at finding the opportunity had come suddenly again.

I had some hesitation about knocking at the door. Knowing we had gone, and that her husband could not have returned, Elalaine would naturally be terrified.

She threw open the door, however, boldly enough, though her face was deathly white, and I could see she was breathing hard. I went in for a moment, found the muff, shook hands again, and, since Georgie was out of earshot, I said half jocularly:

"I will come back and sit on the doorstep till your husband returns if you like."

"I think we might give you a chair in the hall," said she with a bright flash from her eyes. Now, whether she meant it or not I do not know, but I scrambled Georgie off my hands at the hotel door and took the first car back.

There are people at home who suppose that a Western city is at best a collection of wooden houses on two sides of a sandy trail. But Los Angeles has more electric light than London, and miles of asphalted streets, and shops which neither Paris nor New York could rival. The white posts of the cable-car wires give the streets a gay air, as Cheapside looks when coloured poles have been put up for the decorations on Lord Mayor's day. Late as it was, the sidewalks were still crowded with people, and every seat on the car was filled.

Two people sitting next to me were talking.

"I am sorry for *her*," said one of them. "Everyone likes *her*, but the husband's a devil."

"He's almighty handy with his gun," said the other rather enviously. "I was down there at the bottom of fourth street election time when Jim Blane pulled on him and shot him just beside the eye. He dropped down on his knees like a log and put his hand up to his eye; but he shot Jim through the heart afore he fell back unconscious. If that ain't shootin' I 'llow I don't know what shootin' is." The man laughed appreciatingly. "Dan Murray's not going to be left far behind in this world," he added. "There's his house."

He was right. I swung off the car and made my way to the door. The conversation I had heard deepened my respect for Elalaine, who could be so lady-like and so charming with such a brutal husband. She was surprised to see me, but decidely she was glad I had come, for she had worked herself into a terrible state of nervousness. She pushed a chair nearer the fire, and settled herself on the sofa. Her presence stirred me deliciously.

"Georgie Mayland's a very attractive girl, isn't she?" she said, evidently thinking that she had read something between the lines.

"I should be in love with anyone who was the means of bringing me here," said I.

Her graceful arm was resting on the curve of the sofa, her hand slighty dropped so that it looked like the neck of a swan. Over the top of her hand her eyes were laughing at me.

"I am afraid you think me a terrible coward," she said. "I would dearly like to have a man's courage."

"There is very little that is admirable in courage," said I deprecatingly. "Courage comes of bodily

Began pulling on her gloves.

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We talked on and on.

strength, and strength of good health, and a man with good health is not cursed with nerves. We can hardly be proud of a quality which the brutes in the fields have far better developed than it is with us."

But she shook her head.

"The lower animals don't appreciate fine degrees of danger," said she, "I have seen a dog attack my husband, which no man in his senses would do. It was ignorance, not bravery."

She got up and handed me a little silver box of cigarettes.

We talked on and on about a hundred things, and she drew from me many stories, which I always reluctantly tell, of my adventures in many countries, and chiefly how I had once defended a friend from a mob of two hundred who had come out to lynch him. In spite of the light way in which I naturally referred to such things, I think she was rather impressed with the brave deeds I had done.

Presently we both became hungry, and instituted an excursion to the servants' regions, and in ten minutes time had the little dining-room table spread with sardines and biscuits and whatever else we could find. I was drawing the cork from a bottle, standing just beside her chair, when she looked round at me and laughed.

"Do you know this is highly improper?" she said.

"It can never be improper to do good," said I, "and you are doing me a very great deal."

"I was wondering what Duncan would say if he came in and found us like this," Elalaine responded, pushing her glass a little towards me.

I laughed amusedly.

"What would he?" I asked.

She tilted her chair back the slightest possible bit, still keeping her hand on the glass.

"I don't suppose he would *say* much," she replied. "In fact I'm sure he wouldn't."

"As for what anyone thinks, it really does not matter so much," I observed, pulling at the cork.

"I don't suppose he would think a great deal either," she said. "When a man has lived so long as he has in mining camps and places he is apt to shoot first and leave speaking and thinking till afterwards."

The bottle slipped out of my hands on to the floor. Elalaine looked round in surprise, and I could see she was laughing.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"Nothing," I said rather quickly, "I thought I heard someone coming up the steps, that's all."

I mopped my forehead. The room was very hot, and I was perspiring.

"I wish Duncan *would* come," said Elalaine, with a little contraction of her brows. "It would be a lesson to him."

The sound of footsteps must have been imaginary, for no one came. Our supper was most delightful, though the conversation was a little bit frivolous. At three o'clock in the morning one cannot be expected to discuss logic. However, I was rather glad when Elalaine suggested we should move back into the drawing-room. It was more conventional there than sitting *tête-à-tête* over champagne and sandwiches.

She went back to her corner of the couch, and I to my easy chair before the fire.

"Sofas are very comfortable," I said philosophically, selecting another cigarette from the box which still lay within reach. "In my own rooms in London I never use a chair except for meals."

She was laughing at me over her hand again. I had a great mind to stretch out my own and take it.

"You luxurious creature," she said, pointing to where the matches stood on a little table at my elbow. She got up suddenly and sat down again, making more room on the couch. "Look," said she, "you can have that corner if you like."

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I went and sat down beside her.

We talked of many things, and so pleasantly that I had no idea what the time was, but I knew it must be getting late. Elalaine had suggested that if I felt like a whisky-and-soda I might mix myself one in the dining room, and I was hunting for a syphon when I heard some one coming up the front door steps. There was no illusion this time. I put down my glass and ran into the hall.

"Mrs Murray!" I called breathlessly. I wanted her to explain matters. If her husband were to come in and find me there he might, as she had playfully said, keep his thinking and saying things till afterwards. A couple of words from her would put matters right, but a man coming back to his own house, probably in a bad temper, and finding a stranger drinking his whisky-and-soda at four o'clock in the morning would just as likely as not be unreasonable and violent. It would not occur to him —right out —that I had been introduced by a mutual friend, and had stayed on out of consideration for his wife's nervousness.

The collar of his coat was turned up.

I could hear the latch-key already in the door.

In two strides I was at the drawing-room.

Elalaine was leaning back on the sofa asleep.

"Mrs Murray! Quick. For heaven's sake wake up!" I whispered fiercely.

But she did not stir.

I threw a quick glance over my shoulder. The front door was being slowly opened. A big screen was drawn across part of the hall, hiding the entrance to the servants' quarters, and behind this I darted. It was no good standing there to be shot. I was quite willing to attack burglars, but I had no wish to be mistaken for one. I crouched down instinctively, and partly because my knees were aching. Through a crack in the screen I saw Dan Murray come in like a man whose suspicions had been aroused.

The collar of his coat was turned up and his opera hat was tilted slightly over the right eye. He was a handsome fellow, with a pale complexion, and a heavy moustache, which drooped over the mouth. Somehow I felt relieved that I was not standing there facing him with my explanation, which I realised would sound uncommonly lame. If Elalaine had not been so idiotic as to fall asleep my horrible predicament would never have arisen. As things were, my best plan clearly was to stop where I was until they went up-stairs, and then to let myself out with as little noise as possible.

If ever one man has mesmerised another, I am sure by sheer force of will I preserved Dan Murray from hanging up his coat and hat, and at the same time discovering mine. But when I tried to keep him away from the dining-room where the remains of our meal were spread, I suppose my will-powers were not sufficiently under control. I heard him open the door, which I had taken the precaution to close behind me, and was seriously perturbed lest I should collapse on the spot with terror. My first impulse was to dart out of my hiding-place and forcibly to wake Elalaine up. I was gingerly shifting one lapel of the screen so that I could creep into the room unperceived, when the thought struck me that perhaps even her explanation might not be in time to save me from the attack of that quick-tempered giant. On considering the matter, I determined to stay where I was.

At the same time I made frantic endeavours to wake her up, in order that I might catch her eye and make signs to her to explain my position. But though I could see her when the screen was drawn back, I utterly failed to wake her. It was my fear that, not knowing where I was, she would make some rash remark and not only commit herself but me.

Presently I heard the dining-room door open and close again. Dan Murray had evidently swallowed that pill without a grimace. Or perhaps he had put the second place at the table down to Georgie's account. That, as a possibility that had not occurred to me before, caused me no little relief.

At the same time my mouth felt dry; and the ignominy of my position was particularly galling to anyone with a fine spirit such as I had. Here was I, hiding like a criminal, when my worst offence was that of being indiscreetly considerate for a woman's feelings. A man with sympathies is perpetually a man in difficulty, and the more I thought the matter over in that narrow corner behind the screen the deeper grew my determination to be in future over-selfish rather than too altruistic.

I knew Dan Murray had come out of the dining-room, but he had not gone past my little peephole. After an interval, which seemed to me like hours, however, I heard him coming down the stairs, and the next moment he had crossed over to the drawing-room.

Instinctively I drew the screen round me and stood there listening intently. There was another interval which seemed interminable; my heart throbbed unmercifully, and I was compelled to mop persistently at my forehead. I wondered what Georgie would say and think if she could have seen me at that moment, and I would gladly have given £1,000 to have found myself spirited back to our hotel.

The next thing I remember was hearing a piercing cry, and in an instant, forgetful of everything, I had sprung from my hiding-place, the huge screen falling behind me with a stupendous crash.

Elalaine was on her knees before the couch; her husband was standing over her; it seemed to me with his hand pressed on her throat.

He turned as I came in and loosened his hold. Then, before I had realised his purpose, he sprang at me, hurling me with the force of his blow across the room, and the next moment was out into the hall and had his hand on the front door.

Elalaine, too terrified to speak, was crouching back against the couch wringing her hands.

It seemed to me the verge of a terrible domestic tragedy.

"Look here," I cried, taking two strides in his

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direction; "it is for me to go, not you." I had drawn my revolver, but I flung it from me on to a chair, and stood there with my hands behind me, my lips tightly closed.

He stared at me for a moment with a world of mad hate in his eyes, and then threw open the door and went out.

I heard the sound of a window being thrown up, and as I swung round there came the crack of a revolver. It was Elalaine.

"What have you done?" I cried.

Her hands fell to her side, and she stood staring at me, her head thrown back, revealing the full rounded neck, her eyes blazing, her auburn hair tossed wildly over her forehead.

"You coward," she breathed at last.

I looked at her with amazement, wincing beneath the scorn of her voice. Then I pushed past her and drew the heavy curtains aside, expecting I do not know what awful horror.

"Your husband," I cried, "what has become of him?"

It was perfectly dark outside and quiet as death.

Elalaine glanced up at the clock; her face was ashen.

"I don't know," she said. "He ought to be back by now, and if I were you I should go before he comes." She kicked the revolver which lay smoking on the carpet towards me with the tip of her shoe.

"But——"

She silenced me with an imperious gesture.

"Take my advice," she said, "and go. Dan is a man, and can do things which I can only wish to do. No," she went on, as I tried to interrupt, "I won't listen. You came here on the pretence of affording me protection, and when the need arises what has become of you?" She laughed in a way that cut me to the quick. "Where are you?" she repeated with infinite scorn. "Hiding behind a screen. And there you stop shivering I suppose in your shoes while you allow the house to be burgled—even while I am attacked. A pretty figure forsooth!" and she laughed again.

It had never occurred to me that the man who came in with that deliberate step could be anyone but her husband. I tried to explain, but the words stumbled on my lips.

"Good-night," she said, her hands still behind her.

"Good-bye," said I. And I took down my hat and coat and went outside.

The man she had fired at had evidently not been hit. A woman's best shots come from her mouth.

The next night Georgie came to me after dinner.

"I suppose," she said; "you are going up to the Murrays' to-night."

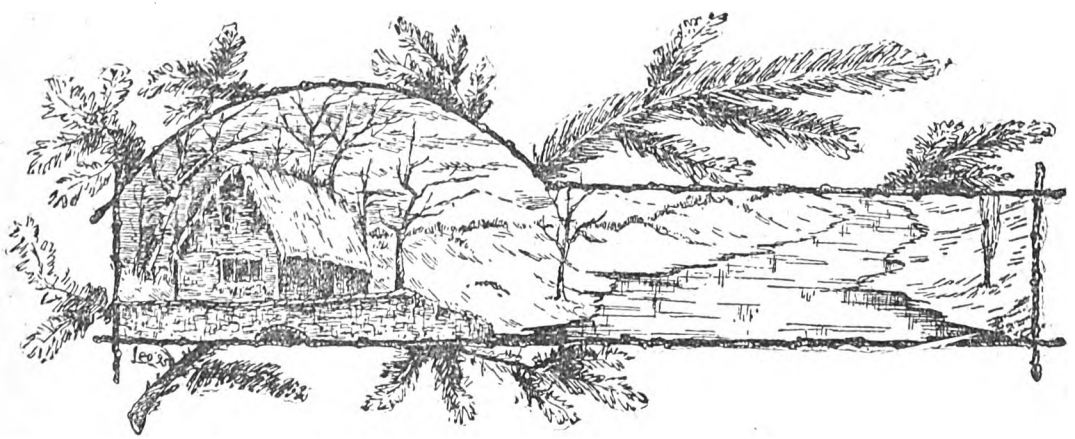
"I would rather stop here," I said truthfully.

I think she was rather pleased at that.

"But Elalaine?" she queried, with her head a little on one side.

"I don't care if I never see her again," said I.

I think I shall marry Georgie if I ever go back to Los Angeles—that beautiful City of the Angels under the bright Californian sky. MERRIDEN HOWARD.



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Another couple of centuries with a few added years have slipped away, and the next scene of the slowly-unfolding drama opens on the sea instead of the land. The Idea which Edward of the Longlegs had so clearly conceived and so very nearly realised, the idea that the frontiers of the United Kingdom of which he had dreamt should be its sea-coasts has all the time been growing and deepening, for, like all ideas which faithfully reflect some fact in the universe, it could not die, and was bound some day to become a fact itself.

Politically, England and Scotland were still independent kingdoms, but many old differences had been forgotten and forgiven, and they had come a great deal closer, as it was fitting that they should do on the eve of their final union. Moreover, they were one in their dread and hatred of that cruel and implacable Colossus which, with one foot on the East and the other on the West, bestrode the world, drawing vast treasures from hidden El-Dorados with which it built countless ships, and hired and armed innumerable men for the enslavement of mankind. For now we have reached those "spacious times of great Elizabeth," when that lusty young giant of Liberty, recently born into the world, was girding on his armour, and making him ready to grapple with the powers of oppression and darkness which were just then most fitly incarnated in the shape of Spain.

It is almost impossible for us of the present day to understand clearly what the Spain of those days was. She was the first naval and military Power of the world, her ships and armies were everywhere, her wealth was honestly believed to be illimitable, and moreover she was the recognised champion of the Catholic Church, whose spiritual thunders mingled with the roar of her guns, and which supplemented the terror of her arms by all the diabolical enginry of torture, and the awful powers of the Holy Office.

The world, in short, was on the eve of great and marvellous doings—on the one hand, so terrible in their deadly earnestness and tremendous consequences, and on the other so fantastically splendid in their almost superhuman daring and undreamt-of rewards, that it looked as though the Fates were preparing some gigantic miracle wherewith to astound mankind. And so, in sober truth, they were, and the miracle about to be wrought was the making of what we now call the British Empire.

In the beginning of the latter half of the sixteenth century there was a yellow-haired, blue-eyed, round-faced and sturdily-built youngster sailing to and fro as ship's boy in a tiny cockle-shell of a craft plying with humbler kinds of merchandise between the Thames and the coasts of France and Flanders. Whether or not he had heard any of those wondrous stories which the western gales were wafting across the Atlantic from the golden Spanish Main we do not know, but probably he had, and, like many another sailor-lad of his day, he had dreamt wild dreams of blue seas and bright skies, of white-walled cities crammed with gold, and of stately galleons staggering across that mysterious sea stuffed to the deck with the treasures they were bringing to pour into the coffers of the King of Spain.

And yet, wild as these dreams may have been, they would have been commonplace in comparison with the bewildering exploits with which this same blue-eyed sailor-lad was one day to realise and excel them. For this was he whose name the mariners of Spain were soon to hear shrieked out by the voice of the tempest, booming in the roar of guns, and echoing through the crash of battle. This, in a word, was Francis Drake—El Draque the Dragon, child and servant of the Devil himself, Scourge of the Church and Plunderer of the Faithful.

As I say, he may or may not have heard the story of the Golden West, but it is quite certain that he did hear much of the black and terrible tale which the refugees and exiles from France and the Netherlands had to tell, for not a few of them crossed over in the little barque in which he served, and he could not fail to hear what they had to say of the murders and massacres, the torturing and outrage with which Spain was disgracing her knightly fame and her ancient faith. They are horrible enough for us to read even here in the security which that gallant struggle won for us, and now when we can only hear the shrieks of the tortured and the groans of the dying echoing faintly across the gulf of three centuries; but what must they have been to Francis Drake, when he heard them told by those whose eyes had only just before looked upon the hideous reality—perhaps indeed by some of those racked and mutilated unfortunates who had managed to escape with their lives to see the sheltering hospitality of Gloriana the Queen? Was it any wonder that deep down in his boyish heart there were planted those seeds of hate and horror which later on were to bear such terrible fruit?

The lad Francis seems to have performed his duties as ship's boy as well as he did everything else, whether it was leading the Queen's ships to harry the coast of Spain or raging and storming through one of his piratical raids among the Fortunate Isles of the West, for when his master died he made him his heir, and so Francis became a trader on his own account. For a few years he was just a peaceful shipmaster, making an honest and hard-won living; but all this time events were

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arranging themselves in more and more martial array, and the bursting of the storm was not very far off.

The actual fighting did not begin in the guise of recognised warfare for a very considerable time. Spain and England were at peace, each trying to humbug the other, but between Protestant and Catholic it was otherwise. Armed cruisers manned by angry Protestants made their appearance in the Narrow Seas, and whenever they got a chance fell upon Catholic ships and avenged the sufferings of their fellow-heretics in a fashion at once prompt and pitiless, and this at length so exasperated Philip that he closed his ports to English trade, and Drake's occupation was gone. Better, in truth, had it been for Philip if he had left him undisturbed in his business!

He sold his little vessel, went to Plymouth, and entered the service of two kinsmen of his, one of whom was soon to prove somewhat of an empire-maker in his own line and whose name, with certain others soon to be mentioned, was destined to go down to everlasting fame indissolubly linked with that of Francis Drake. This was Captain John Hawkins, and when the young trader reached Plymouth he had just come back with a ship-load of gold and other precious things from his first venture in slave-trading, and now at least Drake, who was still a lad in his teens, must have heard something of the wonders of El-Dorado. Yet, curiously enough, when Captain Hawkins went back he did not go with him. He sailed instead, as a sort of super-cargo in another of Hawkins' ships to Biscay, and there a momentous revelation awaited him, as though to guide him on the path of his destiny.

At San Sebastian about a score of English sailors, once strong and stalwart men of Devon, crept out of the dungeons of the Inquisition and took passage with him home. King Philip had taken off his embargo now, and these men were the remnant of a crew of a Plymouth ship which he had seized in port when the embargo was laid on. The others had rotted to death during the six months that he had bestowed his hospitality upon them. We can imagine what talks they had on the way home, and no doubt El Draque bore the stories of these forlorn mariners well in mind on that most memorable day when he "singed the King of Spain's beard" at Cadiz.

John Hawkins came back from his second voyage richer than ever, and now all the mariners of the South Coast were beginning to dream golden dreams which were soon to become yet more golden deeds, and King Philip, to whom all such ventures were the flattest piracy, began to fear for his monopoly and instructed his ambassador in London to drop the hint that foreign trade with the Indies was forbidden, upon which, foolishly enough, or perhaps not knowing their own true strength, Queen Bess's councillors backed down and forbade John Hawkins to start again.

He, obediently enough, stayed at home, but a certain George Lovell got together an expedition and slipped out to sea westward bound. With him went Francis Drake, at length to see for the first time the blue waters and green shores of El Dorado. This time, however, it proved no El Dorado for him or his companions, for they came back with shattered ships and still worse broken fortunes. They had drawn a blank in the great lottery which half Europe was wanting to gambie in.

Nothing daunted, he shipped again, this time with George Fenner, bound for Guiana. Again, financially speaking, the voyage ended in disaster, but there was one incident in it destined to bear good fruit. A big Portugese galleasse, backed up by six gunboats, tried to enforce the prohibition against foreign trade. Fenner had one ship and a pinnace and with these he fought the "Portugals" and thoroughly convinced them by the logic of shot and steel that he was not the sort of man to be prohibited from doing anything he wanted to do.

This forgotten action is really one of great importance. It was Francis Drake's first taste of fighting, which in itself means a good deal, but it was also the beginning of that lordly and magnificent contempt which the English mariners of that day were soon to feel for all enemies, no matter how strong they might seem. It was this spirit which a few years later was to take Sir Richard Grenville

> With his hundred men on deck and his ninety sick below,

Into the midst of the fifty-three Spanish ships, which he fought for an afternoon and a night before he surrendered so sorely against his will and fell dead of his wounds on the deck of the Spanish flagship. It was this, too, which, when that long seven days' fight against the Armada was raging and roaring up the Channel, brought the flag of the Spanish Rear-Admiral down with a run just because the Little Pirate stamped his foot on the deck of that same *Revenge* and said that he was Francis Drake and had no time to parley.

Meanwhile the rumblings of the war-storm in Europe had been growing louder. The Netherlanders were at last turning on their torturers, Darnley had been murdered and Mary Queen of Scots put in prison, so Gloriana, feeling herself somewhat at leisure, took a hand in the next buccaneering expedition. If may be noted here, by the way, that there was no more ardent buccaneer and slave-trader in her dominions than Good Queen Bess herself. She lent ships though she witheld her commission, and her pirates did the rest. If disaster overtook them or if the Spanish Minister raged against their doings she promptly disowned them and felt sorry for her ships. But if they came back happily filled to the hatches with plundered treasure, she took her dividends and lent more ships.

It was thus with the expedition which sailed out of Plymouth on October 2nd, 1567, under the command of Admiral John Hawkins, whose second officer was Francis Drake. The diplomacy of the times called it the trading venture of Sir William Garrard and Co., but for all that there were two ships of the Royal Navy in it, the *Jesus* and the *Minion*, and the merchandise it carried consisted mainly of cannon and small arms, powder and shot, and cold steel.

The voyage began with a slave-raiding expedition down the Portuguese coast of Africa, whence with five hundred slaves they crossed to the Spanish Main. Here after varying fortunes, they filled their ships with treasure, and Hawkins turned his prows northward for home. But while crossing the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico a furious hurricane burst upon them and drove his gold-and-pearl-laden vessels so far into it, that he came to the bold decision to put into the Spanish port of Vera Cruz to refit.

In the harbour he found twelve great galleons loaded with gold and silver, waiting for the convoy to escort them to Spain. They were utterly at the mercy of the English ships, but John Hawkins, pirate and slave-dealer, was still an English gentleman, so he made a solemn convention to leave the treasure-ships alone on condition of being allowed to refit in the harbour. Hawkins was already known in Spain as the "Enemy of God," and Don Martin Enriquez, the new Governor of Mexico, had come out with special orders to abolish him by any means that might be found the readiest.

Don Martin seems to have thought that in this case,

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treachery would suit best, so he signed the convention and gave his word of honour as a gentleman of Spain that the English ships should be allowed to come and go unmolested. So for three days the work of dismantling went on in peace, and on the fourth, half-disabled as they were, they were attacked. It was a fierce and bloody fight, and it ended in the sinking of four galleons, the wrecking of the Spanish flag-ship, and the killing of five or six hundred Spaniards.

But on the English side only the *Jesus*, the *Minion*, and the *Judith* got away and, shot-shattered and half-provisioned, began to stagger homeward across the wide Atlantic. On the way the *Judith* was lost, and took to the bottom with her all the proceeds of many months of trading and fighting and privation.

He went down with his boot full of blood.

So the expedition came back poorer than it went, and Spain laughed aloud but, as will be seen, somewhat too soon. Drake got home first and no sooner did he land at Plymouth than he took horse for London. It so happened that a little while before Spanish ships carrying a huge amount of money to pay Alva's army in the Netherlands had been driven into the Thames by the Protestant rovers lately mentioned, and Gloriana, who never liked to let a good thing go, had held on to it on one pretext or another until Drake came hot-footed and angry-hearted to tell of the treachery of Vera Cruz.

Gloriana wanted nothing better. Her buccaneering venture had been a failure and here was a way of paying herself for the two ships she had risked, so she turned upon the Spanish Ambassador and told him point blank that until the injury done to her "honest merchants" was redressed she would hold the treasure in pledge. Naturally after that not a groat of it ever got to Alva or his soldiers.

That year, which was 1569, Drake went to Rochelle with Sir Thomas Winter. The next summer he married Mary Newman and a month or two later he was again steering to the westward in two little vessels, the *Dragon* and the *Swan*. The next year he went again, with the *Swan* alone, and this time he came back with a certain idea in his head which was magnificent to the point of absurdity. The adventures of the last two or three years had deepened his contempt for Spanish prowess, and now he laughingly proposed to go back, not to kill the goose that laid the King of Spain's golden eggs, but to rifle the nest in which they were deposited. This was Nombre de Dios, the strongest city in the New World, and the richest to boot.

The means employed were, as was usual in this age of wonders, ridiculously inadequate to the end to which they were devoted. Of late years certain bold mariners have sought to win an ephemeral notoriety by crossing the Atlantic in open boats. Francis Drake set out on a serious and momentous expedition to the Spanish Main in the *Pasha* of 70 tons followed by the *Swan* of 25—that is to say in a couple of fishing-boats. These two cockle-shells were manned by seventy-three men all told, only one of whom had reached the age of thirty. It must have looked more like a parcel of lads going afloat on a holiday spree than an expedition with which all the world was soon to ring.

There is no space here to tell of all that befell these absurd adventurers on their devious and tedious way to Nombre de Dios, though no romancer ever imagined such a story as their adventures make. So it must suffice to say that on July 29th he started out across the Isthmus of Darien at the head of seventy-three men to attack a strong city as big as Plymouth, and with these he actually fought his way into the town, established himself in the centre of it and held it for some hours.

If his men had been the seasoned buccaneers of his later raids he would probably have taken it altogether, but they unhappily found in the Governor's house a stack of silver bars twelve feet high, ten feet broad, and seventy feet long. This was a little too much for the nerves of the Devon boys, but Drake would not let them touch it, since the town was not yet theirs. Then a fearful rain-storm came on just about dawn and put out their matches and ruined their bow-strings, and then a terrible misfortune happened. Drake had been severely wounded in the leg, but he had concealed his hurt until the supreme moment came, and then, as he was leading his handful of heroes to the last attack, he went down with his boot full of blood. Something very like a panic now took his men, not for their own sakes but for his. In vain he stormed at them, and cried angrily:

"I have brought you to the door of the Treasure-house of the World! Will ye be fools enough to go away empty?"

"Your life is more precious to us and England than all the gold of the Indies," they replied, and so by kindly force they carried him down to the boats and rowed away, having accomplished perhaps the most splendid failure in history.

The fame of this exploit instantly echoed through the whole Spanish Main and thence across the Atlantic to Europe. A few days later he avenged his failure at Nombre de Dios by cutting a big ship out from under the guns of Cartagena. Then

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he vanished, leaving no other trace behind him than the poor little abandoned *Swan*. For the next few months nothing was seen of him, though his hand was felt far and wide along the Coast. Spanish store-ships disappeared, dispatch boats were intercepted, and coast-towns were raided with bewildering rapidity and effectiveness.

But all this time the deadly tropical fever was playing havoc with his little handful of men. His brother John died of it and man after man was struck down till at last, out of the seventy-three who had sailed with him from Plymouth, he could only muster eighteen fighting men when he at length started to plunder the mule-train from Panama.

On the fourth day of the journey a very memorable thing happened, for that noon he reached the top of the dividing ridge of the Isthmus and lo! there before him, only a few miles away, lay the smooth, shining expanse of the Pacific Ocean, that long-hidden, jealously-guarded sea on which his were the first English eyes that had ever gazed. He did just what such a man would have done in such circumstances. He fell on his knees and, raising his hands to Heaven, cried aloud:

"Almighty God, of Thy goodness, give me life and leave once to sail an English ship on yonder sea!"

Years afterwards the prayer was granted, and not only did he sail on the Golden Sea, but crossed it while he was making the first voyage that an Englishman ever made round the world.

Were I writing a book instead of an article I could tell of the plundering of the mule-trains, of the taking of Venta Cruz, where, to the astonishment of the Spaniards, he would not allow a single woman or an unarmed man to be hurt, and Nombre de Dios, which did not resist him so well the second time. It must, however be enough to say that this time everything ended happily for the remnant that survived, and that on Sunday morning, August 9th, 1573, while the good folks of Plymouth were in church, they heard a roar of artillery from the batteries followed by an answering salute from the sea and, straightway quitting their devotions, they ran out to learn the good news that Gloriana's Little Pirate had come back safe at last and well loaded up with plunder.

His next venture was nothing less than that famous voyage of his round the world, with the fairy-story of which we have here nothing to do save to say that the fame of it, no less than the enormous treasure, the plunder of a hundred ships and a score of towns, with which the poor sea-worn, worm-eaten, wind-weary *Golden Hind*, staggered one Michaelmas morning into Plymouth Sound, at last convinced Queen Bess that in her dear Little Pirate—whom, by the way, she had never yet openly recognised—she had a champion who was worth a good many thousands of King Philip's soldiers and sailors.

But now the first of Drake's open rewards was to be his. The *Golden Hind* was hauled on to the slips at Deptford, and Gloriana and her court dined on board. When the dinner was over she bade her Little Pirate kneel before her, touched him on the shoulder with his own sword and bade him rise Sir Francis Drake. The Spaniards, by the way, had another title for him, no less honourable in his eyes, and this was "the Master Thief of the New World."

For some considerable time nothing happened beyond the failure of one or two trifling expeditions—which failure was Gloriana's fault, and not Drake's—and the setting of a price of £40,000 by favour of the King of Spain on the Little Pirate's head—an investment of which Drake was soon to pay the dividend in the craft-crowded harbour of Cadiz.

Meanwhile, matters between England and Spain were going from bad to worse. For a few months unscrupulous intrigue, backed up by wholesale lying, hampered Drake most sorely in the preparation of that great work which was nothing less than the establishment of the sea-power of England. Everything that the fickleness of his mistress, the weathercock support of so-called friends at court, and the still more dangerous machinations of English statesmen in the pay of Spain could do, was done. The fleet, to his unutterable rage and disgust, was even placed on a peace-footing, dispite the fact that the noise of the Armada's preparations was still sounding across the Narrow Seas.

But, at last, by some means or other, a certain Spanish spy had got himself suspected and stretched on the rack. Now the rack, as a means of cross-examination, is not an ideal instrument, but it certainly served its purpose this time, for the spy in his torment gave away all the details of a vast scheme which embraced an alliance between France, Spain, and Scotland, together with a general Catholic uprising in England, which was to take place simultaneously with the Triple Invasion.

Never had England, and with her the cause of liberty, stood in such great and deadly peril. Gloriana at last flung diplomatic dalliance to the winds, stopped her lying and chicanery, kicked the Spanish Ambassador out of the country and let her Little Pirate loose. Yet even now there was another lull before the storm and this lull Philip took advantage of to invite a fleet of English corn-ships to his ports, where he seized them to feed that ever-growing sea-monster which he was going to pit against El Draque.

This settled the matter. Drake, only half ready for sea, put out with every ship that could move for fear more orders would come to stop him and, with an insolent assurance which augured well for the great things that he was about to do, actually ran his ships into Vigo Bay and forced the Spanish Governor to allow him to finish his preparations in Spanish waters. Then he turned his eager prows westward, stopping on the way at the Cape Verde Islands to lay waste Vera Cruz and make Santiago a heap of ashes.

Five years ago young William Hawkins had been taken prisoner here and burnt alive with several of the crew, and this was his way of wiping out the old score.

Then he sped on again, spent Christmas at Santa Dominica, refitted his ships and refreshed his men, and then fell like a thunderbolt on the famous city of Santo Domingo, the oldest in the Indies, founded by Columbus himself and ruled over by his brother. It was this that the Little Pirate had been preparing for during those other mysterious voyages of his. The blow was as crushing as it was unexpected, and the prestige of Spain in the West never recovered from it. The town was utterly stripped and dismantled by the victors. Fifty thousand pounds in cash, two hundred and forty guns of all calibres, and an immense amount of other spoil was brought away, and the whole fleet, after living at free quarters for a month, sailed southward, completely refitted and re-victualled at the Spaniards' expense.

When the news got to Europe, it was said that Philip had had "such a cooling as he had never had since he was King of Spain." It is both interesting and instructive to learn that not the least part of the booty took

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the shape of a hundred English sailors who were found toiling as slaves in the Spanish galleys.

Reinforced by these, Gloriana's Little Pirate crossed the Caribbean Sea and fell on Cartagena, the capital of the Spanish Main, and now the richest city in the Indies. Paralysed by the insolence of the attack, it soon fell under its fury and real strength. The booty was enormous, but the moral effect was still greater. The new-born sea-power of England had vindicated itself with triumphant suddenness, and Drake, having picked up the unfortunate remnants of Raleigh's colony in Virginia—the time for colonising not having come yet—entered Plymouth Sound again in the *Elizabeth Bonaventura* at the head of his loot-laden fleet, and reported his arrival, piously regretting that on the way home he had missed the Spanish plate-fleet by twelve hours "for reasons best known to God."

"A great gap hath been opened which is very little to the King of Spain's liking," was the Little Pirate's own comment on the brilliant achievement which had ushered a new power into the world. He might also have put it another way and said that with his well-directed shot he had plugged the source whence flowed the golden stream of Spanish wealth, for indeed it was nothing less than this. The Spanish Colossus suddenly found itself with empty pockets, Spanish credit was ruined at a single blow, the Bank of Seville closed its doors and King Philip, trying to raise a loan of half a million ducats, was flatly refused.

How hard hit he was may be seen from the fact that instead of hurling the whole strength of his laboriously-prepared Armada on the English coasts, he asked for explanations. Gloriana, with an almost splendid mendacity, disowned her Little Pirate once more and swore she had nothing whatever to do with him. But this Drake expected and went on with his own plans, having no doubt honestly paid up the Queen's full share of the plunder.

A few months more of diplomatic dodgery followed and then came the final opening of Gloriana's eyes. A letter stolen from the Pope's own cabinet proved to her beyond all possibility of doubt that the Great Armada was intended for the invasion of England and nothing else. Then she called her Little Pirate to her again and took counsel with him, with the result that the next time he hoisted his flag he did so on board the great *Merchant Royal* at the head of twenty-three sail including five battleships, two first-class cruisers, seven second-class, and about a dozen gun-boats. Nor did he go this time as the Queen's licensed pirate, but as her Admiral of the Fleet, duly commissioned in her name to burn, sink, and destroy, and to use all means whatever to prevent the various divisions of the Armada coming together.

Even now, at the last minute of the eleventh hour, treachery almost did its work, for there was an Opposition and Peace-at-any-price Party in those days, as there have been in later ones. Drake seems to have known what was coming, for, when the Queen's messenger dashed into Plymouth bearing the fatal orders, he had gone.

Happily there was no telegraph in those days. If there had been it would probably have proved the ruin of England and the triumph of Spain. As it was the next news that came was from Drake himself, telling, laconically as usual, how he had "singed the King of Spain's beard in Cadiz." When the facts came out, the said singeing was seen to amount to the destruction by burning and sinking of 12,000 tons of shipping, including some of the finest ships of war that floated. The whole English fleet had, as usual, been revictualled at Spanish expense, and four large ships full of provisions were captured intact.

From Cadiz the triumphant Admiral raged up and down the terror-stricken coast, storming strongholds, and burning and scuttling the store-ships of the Great Armada. He went to Lisbon where Santa Cruz, said to be the greatest sea-captain in Europe, lay, and, after vainly challenging him to come out an fight, politely offered to convoy him and his fleet to England "if by chance his course should lie that way." The fact was that the Colossus was paralysed. Drake had struck out straight at its heart and so doing had proved two principles of no small moment to the making of the British Empire: First, the true frontiers of a maritime nation are its enemies' coasts. Second, the only effective method of defence for such a nation is attack.

It was on his way home from this expedition, storm-shattered and disgusted at missing the Plate-Fleet, which had once more slipped through his fingers, that the Little Pirate took the richest prize of his life. This was the *San Felipe*. She was the King of Spain's own treasure-ship and she came, not from the West, but from the East. Though he knew it not, Drake had that day done a very great thing for England and the making of her Empire, for not only did the *San Felipe* carry treasure and rich stuffs to the value of something like a million and a quarter of our money, but she had on board dispatches, letters, and account books which let the English merchants into all the secrets of Spain's East Indian trade and led to the almost instant formation of the Honourable East India Company, itself an Empire-maker of no small account.

The epic of the Elizabethan era was now beginning to hurry towards its climax. But Gloriana was still surrounded by traitors and even now temporising was the order of the day. She was cast down by remorse for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and she even reprimanded her Little Pirate for doing her too good service and told Philip that he was in disgrace for exceeding instructions.

It was in vain that Drake and the other friends of England prayed and entreated and stormed and swore. In vain they pointed across the Narrow Seas to Parma in the Netherlands at the head of 30,000 of the finest troops in Europe and to the ports of Spain and Portugal, once more swarming with shipping and echoing with the noise of warlike preparations. For a time the liars and traitors had it their own way again. Drake and Howard implored her to let them get their ships fitted and go and fight the Armada in its own ports. No, she would do nothing. And she did nothing till at last arrived that fatal evening on which:

There came a gallant merchant-ship full sail to Plymouth Bay.

Golden weeks and priceless opportunities had been wasted by the fatal lethargy of the Court. Drake and Howard, instead of falling as they longed to do, on the wind-bound Armada in Vigo Bay and doing with it as Drake had done at Cadiz, were kept on the defensive, straining like blood-hounds at the leash, knowing that every moment that the good wind lasted was heavily fraught with fate for England and perhaps the world.

At length the wind went round and Drake, marvelling in angry wonder "how God could have sent a south-west wind just then," found himself baffled and beaten back, while Medina-Sidonia with his released Armada sailed triumphantly for the Channel. There was only one

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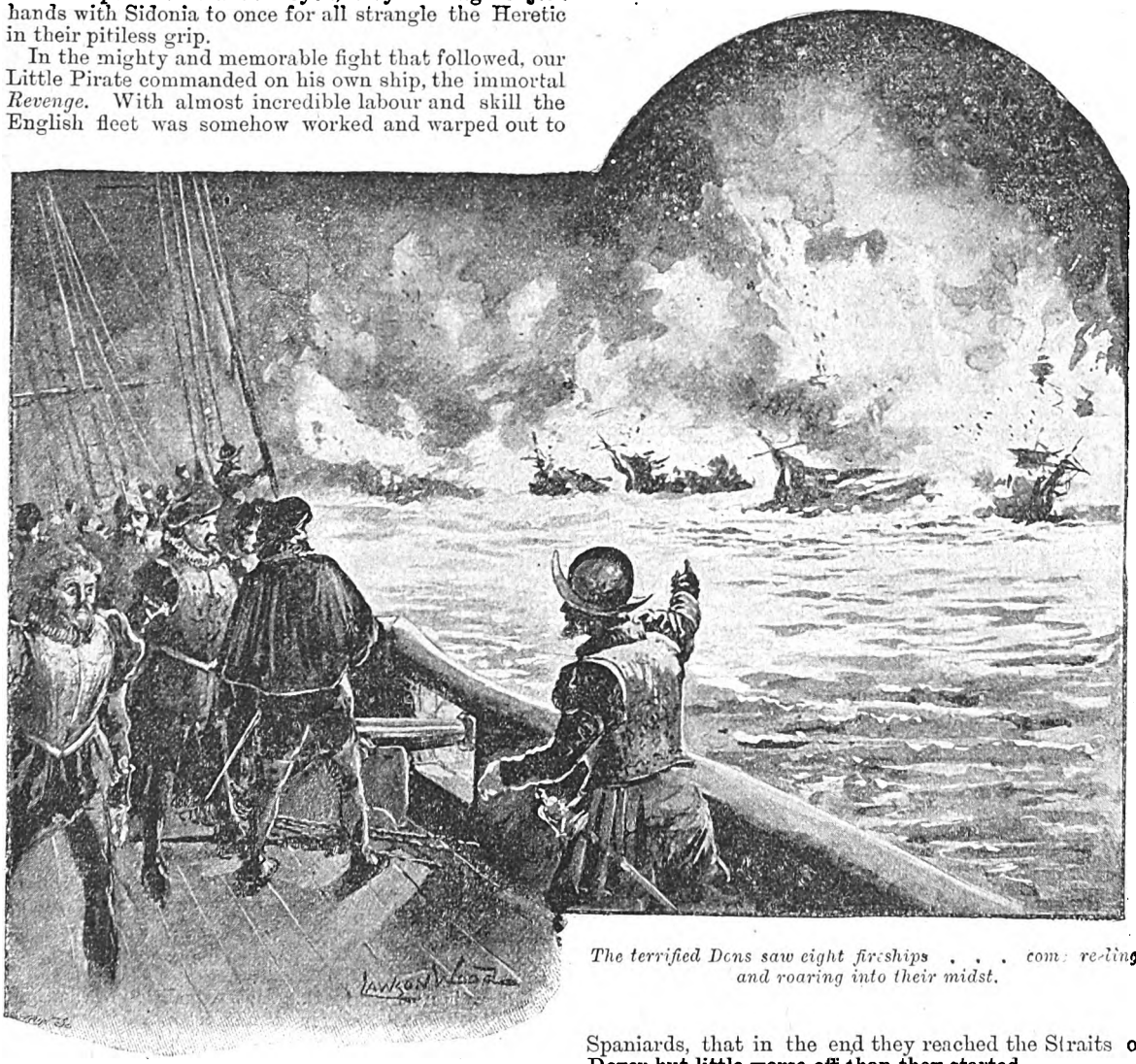
thing now to do if England was to be saved. Valour and heroism, self-devotion and skill must repair the damage that treason, lying, and weakness of head or heart had done. By this time the Armada should have been a crushed and tangled mass of burning wreckage, and so it would have been if Drake had had his way, and now here it was stronger than ever, its ships covering the hitherto inviolate sea; and there was Parma, with his transports still undestroyed, only waiting to join hands with Sidonia to once for all strangle the Heretic in their pitiless grip.

In the mighty and memorable fight that followed, our Little Pirate commanded on his own ship, the immortal *Revenge*. With almost incredible labour and skill the English fleet was somehow worked and warped out to the westward until, when that famous Sunday morning dawned, the sun looked, as has been truly said, upon a sight glorious for England. There was the great Armada, cresent-shaped, rolling up the Channel, and there, right in the wind's eye and on its rear, were two English squadrons, and a third was gallantly advancing out of Plymouth.

This one with true Elizabethan insolence steered right across the front of the huge fleet, firing into such of the Dons as came within range. Then it went about and joined the other English ships to windward.

Everyone has read of the long running seven-day fight that followed; everyone knows how the little, light-heeled English ships ran in and out among the great unwieldly galleons, tempting them out of their formation, and, having isolated one, fell on her like a pack of dogs on a wolf, and how, in spite of all that the English Admiral and his captains could do, the ever changing wind, and the ever succeeding calms so helped the Spaniards, that in the end they reached the Straits of Dover but little worse off than they started.



The terrified Dons saw eight fireships . . . coming reeling and roaring into their midst.

If Drake could have had his way these tactics would have been pushed farther, and every mile of the way would have been disputed, but Lord Howard, though a brave man, lacked the all-daring assurance of the conqueror of Santo Domingo and Cartagena. He would not fight until he had joined with Seymour and Wynter in the Straits. So it came about that on the seventh day—that is to say Saturday afternoon—the Great Armada, the poorer only by some dozen craft that had been captured or battered into wreck and ruin, was sailing gloriously past Calais with the French and

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English land well in sight and Dunkirk, the trysting place with Parma, only eighteen miles away.

England has never passed through such anxious hours as she did that afternoon and night. It seemed as though, after all, her new-found sea-strength had failed her, and that, despite all the brilliant exploits of Gloriana's Little Pirate in the West, he was powerless to protect her nearer home. What would have happened in the ordinary course of events no one now knows, for the Spaniards, stricken by some inexplicable madness, suddenly altered the whole course of events by what can only be called a freak of idiocy.

Medina-Sidonia, after having accomplished the most brilliant feat of seamanship that his age had seen, gave orders for the Armada to anchor! A few hours more and its work would have been done, with what results to England one scarcely cares to picture. So unexpected was this piece of priceless good fortune by the English captains that they had to drop their own anchors within range of the Spanish guns to save entangling themselves with the big Spanish ships.

All Sunday the two fleets lay within sight of each other, anxious councils of war were held on both sides, and so night fell without a shot being fired or anything done. By midnight the tide was swirling strong and swift from the English to the Spanish ships, and Drake was busy preparing his crowning piece of devilry for the edification of the Dons.

At about one o'clock on that calm, moonless morning patches of flickering, leaping flame began to show among the twinkling English lights, and these grew swiftly higher and broader, and a few minutes later the terrified Dons saw eight fire-ships, crowned mast-high with leaping flames, come reeling and roaring into their midst.

Then there was cutting of cables and slipping of moorings, and labouring with frantic haste to get the ships under sail. Galleon crashed into gallease, and gallease into cruiser in the wild haste and fatal confusion.

Marvellous to say, not a single Spanish ship took fire, but behind the fire-craft there was something more terrible and deadly still—El Draque and his guns. At the supreme moment Lord Howard weakly and foolishly turned aside to capture or sink a disabled gallease. If the rest of the fleet had followed him there might have been no Battle of Gravelines, no Trafalgar of the 16th century. But, as has been well said, it was the hour for which Francis Drake had been born. He set the *Revenge* on the wind, and, followed by the rest of the squadron, bore down in grim and ominous silence on the huddled, entangled Dons. Within pistol range of the great *San Martin* the *Revenge* burst into sudden thunder and flame and drove on enwreathed in smoke. In her wake ship after ship came on in perfect order, each raining her iron storm into the rent and splintering sides of the Dons as they passed.

Then from Dover way came the roar of guns telling that Wynter and Seymour had got to work, and so for three hours they went at it, the Little Pirate ever first, and revelling in the work that he loved to do for his dear England. He had forgotten all his mistress's slights and fickleness, all the harm that Court traitors had done him, all his suffering and privation on the windless seas and burning lands of the West. It was the hour of England's fate and his own, and there he was in the thick of it and was happy.

After three hours Howard and his laggards came up and the fight roared on flank and front and rear. Although the schoolbooks say but little about it, there had never been such a sea-fight in the world before, nor one on whose end such great issues hung. The Spaniards, caught between El Draque and the sands of Dunkirk—which to them was something worse than being between the Devil and the deep sea—fought with all their ancient valour, but ship after ship, as the battle roared on through the day, went down riddled with shot or took fire and blew up, till at length out of the forty battleships and cruisers which Sidonia had somehow got together to protect his rear, only sixteen were left, and they were little better than shot-shattered, fire-blackened hulks.

The powder on both sides was nearly done, but so too was the work of Drake and his ships. Fathom by fathom the north-west wind was driving the Dons on to the mud-banks of the Netherland shore, and the Little Pirate in his well-named *Revenge* was hanging on their weather quarter watching—and I doubt not praying—for the moment of their final ruin.

And yet he was not to see it, for when there was but five fathoms of water between the Spanish keels and the Dutch mud the north-wester dropped to a calm, a fresh south-wester sprang up in its place, and for the fourth time in seven days the Armada was saved from utter destruction by those fickle winds to which a pious sentiment has ascribed its ruin.

Down went the Spanish helms, and round came the dripping, labouring, Spanish prows, and ere long all that was left of King Philip's fleet was staggering away to the northward to begin that awful voyage round the north of Scotland and past the wild Irish coast from which so few were to return. Meanwhile the Little Pirate hung on to the heels of the flying Armada for two days and nights, until at length a tempest came rolling up over the Dogger Bank, and he ran in for safety under the Scottish shore, cheerfully leaving the Dons to the winds of Heaven, and the rocks that were waiting to finish what his own guns had begun.

With the victory of Gravelines, Drake's work as an Empire-maker comes to an end. The expedition to Portugal, for all its booty, was a failure and did nothing to enhance his fame. If his advice had been taken Spain might have been crushed and humbled for ever, but such was the hopeless weakness and vacillation at Court that, even after the Armada had shown her the true designs of Philip, Gloriana got into negotiations with him again. Over and over again her Little Pirate besought her to give him the means of striking the blow that should crush Spain and make England undisputed mistress of the seas, but it was not to be, and so at length, sick and sore at heart, he sailed away again to his beloved West, never to return.

There is nothing in this last expedition of his that is noteworthy save its continued misfortunes. It seemed that as though when the little *Revenge* went down, as she did in the midst of the fifty-three Spanish ships which she had fought "for a day and a night," she had taken her old commander's good luck down with her. At last on the deadly island of Escudo de Veragua the two guardian demons of El Dorado, fever and dysentry, struck him down with many another of his men. He lived to get away, but not for long, and six days afterwards, when his fleet came to anchor off Porto Bello, the heroic Little Pirate breathed his last and his gallant soul went to its account, passing away from earth on the very spot that had been the scene of his first sea-fight and his first victory.

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A Broken Mask

BY JOAN BARRETT.

CHAPTER X.

Two Events.

The sun, as it fell upon the well-redded floor of the old dairy, made the smooth bricks yellow-red in colour. When it touched the earthenware pans of unskimmed milk the cream looked richer and yellower, and the tin skimmers and strainers hanging upon the walls gained in brightness. Di's hair caught the sunshine and imprisoned some of its lustre as she moved briskly from pan to pan and removed the cream with deft fingers to the big white churn.

One's heart may be heavy, but there is always work of some kind to help one to forget, and the harder one works the easier the pain becomes. No one who looked at Di's quickly moving figure and absorbed face would have thought that she had passed a restless night, and that while she was mechanically measuring the cream her thoughts were far away from her occupation.

Laying her hand upon his arm.

"Slop, slop," went the cream as Di turned the churn handle, and "cheep, cheep," called the sparrows upon the moss and lichen-covered dairy roof. Out in the garden the snowdrops and crocuses raised their pretty heads and peeped through the snow at the white-covered evergreens and bushy dead-looking rose trees. The snow had broken down the creeping rose that climbed to the upper windows, and one long bough trailed heavily upon the path. The little pieces of red cloth with which it had been tacked to the wall looked like red flowers or berries upon its dark branches.

"Don't think about it! Don't think about it!" said the cream now to Di. "It will all come right! It *must* come right! John Gillway is not a bad man, and Kitty can't be a bad woman! *He* said you should know before long! Wait! Wait! Learn patience."

The dairy door opened, and the Nabob entered quickly, and closed the door behind him. His face was grey and haggard. There was an expression in his face that Di had never yet seen. All the good humour and the sunny frankness had died in his bright eyes, leaving only their brilliancy—a cold, steely sparkle, as though some inner emotion had killed the warm enjoyment of life, and that look of "Hail fellow, well met," with which the Nabob had met the entire world. There were dark circles around them. The lids were heavy. When Di laid her hand in his it felt cold and moist.

"What a charming old dairy yours is, Di," said he in a tone of forced cheerfulness. "By George, what a lot of milk your cows give! We don't get a quarter of the quantity." He bent over a pan, turning his back upon Di. "Seen Kitty this morning?"

"No! She never comes so early as this," Di answered. "It is only nine o'clock."

"She spoke of coming to see you early. I thought the little woman might have turned out. Well, I'm off, Di. Only looked in to say good-morning on my way to the Admiral's."

He turned, extending his hand. His face had grown greyer, and as his eyes met Di's steady, penetrating regard, she saw them grow humid. A great terror gripped her heart.

"Oh, Bernard!" she cried. "What is the matter? I can see that you are troubled!"

"I in trouble! Not I! Don't you worry your head about me, Di," he said, making a movement to gain the door.

Di stopped him, laying her hand upon his arm.

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"I feel sure that you are keeping something hidden from me—and it is something about Kitty."

"Kitty!" exclaimed the Nabob with a harsh laugh. "Well, I never did! How you women do jump at hasty conclusions! Kitty, indeed!"

"I know that something has happened, something to trouble you. If you don't tell me why you came here so early asking for Kitty, I shall go to The Towers and try to discover your reason."

The Nabob hesitated no longer. He spoke now with curt abruptness.

"Kitty isn't at home. That's all. I hoped she had come here."

"Not at home!" Di repeated. "Since—when?"

Her fingers tightened their hold upon the Nabob's arm.

"I don't know—her bed has not been slept in; her maid says she hasn't seen her since she left her alone in her room last night."

Di started. Her hand fell from the Nabob's arm, and dropped heavily to her side.

"Perhaps she couldn't sleep—and has gone for a walk—or a canter."

"She hasn't taken her horse. Her maid told me that some out-door clothing of Kitty's was missing; a seal jacket and cap and a muff, I think. If she has gone for a walk it is to meet that scoundrel, Gillway! Good Heavens!" cried the Nabob striding to the end of the dairy. "I have tried hard not to see things that must have made the whole countryside laugh at my blindness. I wanted Kitty to understand that I trusted her; I told myself that I *would* trust her, aye, in spite of my own observations. I saw how dull she grew when we were alone, and how she brightened at that fellow's approach! She never loved me, Di, never! God knows why she married me!"

He threw himself upon a stool, fixing his eyes upon the red bricks.

"When Gillway first came to the house, I spoke to Kitty. It was a difficult job; but I did it. I was wrong. I ought not to have said one word about him. She set up her back, and seemed to delight in meeting him, and in asking him to call, and to bring her things from Worley—books and music and wools! Then she used to meet him out in the fields and the lanes. I'm not a good horseman; I never hardly went with her, and then, it is so devilish hard to make oneself think ill of one's own wife, you know. Di, I thought I'd let her have her fling, and this is the result."

"Kitty has been thoughtless, very thoughtless," said Di tremulously. "But nothing more, Bernard. When she comes home presently from her walk—for, of course, she has gone for a walk—talk to her as you have to me. Tell her frankly that she is wrong to have so intimate a friendship with Mr. Gillway. She is very childish; but she will see how grave the matter is when you show her."

"And the end of it will be tears and a squabble. I haven't the power to make Kitty happy. I've done my best! I took that ghastly great house to please her; I've filled it with the people she liked to see around her, and what's the use? She was wild with excitement for a few weeks, and then everything palled upon her. We were never meant for each other, my poor little girl and I! Her tastes are so opposite to mine. I like the country, a plain and simple life without shams, and the eternal struggle to appear so many pounds richer than your neighbour, and Kitty revels in making people believe that she has ten pounds in her purse when it only holds five. Sometimes when I've thought over things I've found myself dreading the coming years, Di; for we must grow farther and farther apart, instead of becoming comrades and inseparable."

He covered his face with his hands, and sat in silence for a few moments. Di did not speak, her heart was too full for words.

"Well," said the Nabob rising and looking at her more cheerfully. "It's no good to worry. One can't go through life without finding a few small rough places. Depend upon it, Kitty finds it jolly hard, too, poor little soul! and she's so young! Just think, one can't expect much wisdom from a girl of twenty-one! I wonder, Di—I hardly like to ask you, it's such a delicate matter—but if you would speak to Kitty about these walks with Gillway. A woman," said he, with such pathos in his voice that the pain in Di's tender heart increased, "can do that kind of thing so much better than a clumsy man, and Kitty couldn't feel vexed with *you*."

"I'll speak to her, Bernard."

In the dairy doorway the Nabob turned. A shaft of sunlight falling upon his moustache turned it to gold, and accentuated the pallor of his haggard features.

"He can't have slept," thought Di, noticing the fatigue and worn look of his handsome face, and a feeling of indignation swept over her as she thought of Kitty, who might even then be flirting and laughing with John Gillway.

"I say," said the Nabob, very wistfully, "you'll forgive me for speaking like that about Kitty, won't you, Di? I've been bottling it up so long; I never meant anyone to know how I felt about it, least of all you. It seems a mean action to talk in that way of one's wife, eh, Di? It's like letting out a contemptible admission of one's own faults. After all, Gillway is the most to blame. It's a poor revenge for Kitty's slighting him to make people talk about her imprudence and to try to ruin her happiness; for I *might* have made her happy if he'd let her alone. That's his idea—a mean hound!"

Di's head dropped, and a mist gathered before her eyes. She felt the Nabob take her hand and press it, and knew that he had gone because of the sunshine that all at once had made a large patch upon the floor where he had been standing.

There was no sunshine in her heart. An awful foreboding of the truth oppressed her. She sat down and tried to think, and when her thoughts became unbearable she sprang up and recommenced her work.

The butter was ready for sending to market when Betty came "clack-clack" into the dairy upon her patterns, and with a great armful of fresh cabbage leaves to wrap round the pale yellow pats.

"The master's waitin' for the basket," said she. "Why don't you go to Worley 'long with him? Your cheeks are like that milk for colour."

Di rubbed her face with her apron. No, she could not go to Worley. She must go to Honeypots Farm and see John Gillway. She would make him explain his mysterious words of the previous night; she would tell him how wicked it was to foster Kitty's weakness, and if she met them together, John Gillway and Kitty, she would not spare either of them.

She waited until Farmer Strange had driven away in the light cart with the butter and apples and vegetables packed around his big feet, and at the back of the one seat, and then she hastened to put on her hat and jacket, and hurried across the fields to the farm.

She met no one on the way. A flock of gossiping starlings and a few sedate rooks were the only living creatures that crossed her path. Emily and Aunt Shales were not at home, for the house door was fastened when she reached it. Di had not thought to find the house closed; she had forgotten that it was market day, and that Aunt Shales and her maid might have gone to Worley. As she was turning despondently away a man appeared from the back of the rick where he had evidently been watching to see if anyone would open the door to Di's knocks. He was a smart, dapper-looking, thin little gentleman, with a clean-shaven face, and remarkably bright, penetrating eyes, that seemed to take in every detail of the girl's dress at one swift glance. His manner was very apologetic when he spoke.

"There seems to be no one at home," said he with a wide sweep of his soft felt hat as he approached Di. "I have knocked several times, and I can get no reply whatever."

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"It is market-day at Worley," Di said. "I expect everyone has gone there."

"Then they may not return until late, as the market does not begin until one o'clock. How very unfortunate. I was directed here by a person at the station, of whom I made a few inquiries about lodgings," said the stranger, with a gentle rub of his well-gloved hands. "I am seeking apartments, and hearing that Mr. Gillway was a well-conducted, single young man, I hoped to induce him to let me a couple of rooms for a short period. I—I was at one time acquainted with some members of his family."

"Indeed," said Di politely.

"Mr. Gillway has succeeded beyond his expectations in making the farm pay, I hope?"

"I'm afraid not!" answered Di, glancing at the gate by which she had entered the farm-yard.

"How very unfortunate! And yet," said the stranger indicating a shed with a jerk of his head, "he appears to have purchased a great quantity of expensive machinery."

He glanced questioningly at Di, as if seeking an explanation of the circumstance from her. She felt that she was

"I am quite unable to answer you."

being cross-questioned, and her expressive face betrayed her dislike to the process. The stranger was quick to read her expression.

"I would ask you to pardon my apparent inquisitiveness," said he blandly. "Seeing in you an acquaintance of Mr. Gillway, I presumed to gratify my curiosity about this son of my very dear friend. I fear that he has not made many friends in the neighbourhood?"

"I think not."

"He lives a very retired life?"

"Very."

"Has no visitors, I suppose, no gentlemen to visit him?"

"I believe not."

"Does he seem to—to—have much ready money at his command? I—I really would not venture to ask you all these questions if my anxiety concerning his financial position was not so great."

"I am quite unable to answer you," said Di haughtily. "Your best plan will be to put these questions to Mr. Gillway himself." She bowed stiffly and left him. The little gentleman looked after her ruefully, as though regretting his indiscretion.

On her way home, the stranger now mingled himself with the many worrying, torturing questions that filled Di's heart and head with pain. Who was he? Why did he appear so anxious for particulars of John Gillway's life?

No one had called during her absence, Betty assured her in answer to her eager inquiries. Di made a sorry pretence of eating her dinner, and feeling utterly incapable of work or rest, she got one of the farm lads to harness the pony in the smart little dog-cart that Kitty had left behind as a parting gift to her sister, and drove to The Towers. It was three o'clock before she drew up before the great hall door.

Did the footman who answered the door look at her oddly when she asked if Mrs. Eliot was at home? And was it merely her excited imagination, or did he answer her with a strange, insolent inflection in his languid drawl, as he informed her that Mrs. Eliot had been absent all the morning, and had not returned to lunch?

"And Mr. Eliot? Is he in?" she asked.

"No, m'm. Mr. Eliot has gone out on horseback."

Di lingered a moment in painful indecision. The footman's outer manner was respectful enough, and yet it struck her that there was an expression of familiarity in his smooth, fresh face, as though he guessed her uneasiness and its cause—aye, and knew some explanation of his mistress's absence.

"I'll leave a written message for Mr. Eliot," said Di after a pause.

The man bowed and ushered her into a costly-furnished morning room, lingering at the door while Di wrote a few hurried lines imploring the Nabob to send and let her know when Kitty returned, or to call upon her. As she laid the addressed letter upon the bureau, the footman advanced noiselessly into the room and stood looking at her expectantly.

"Give this to your master the moment that he returns," said Di. "You will not forget, will you?"

"No'm!" He was still regarding her in that perplexing manner, and Di flushed, drawing herself up as she went out to the trap. There was rude admiration in the man's eyes.

"Oh, Kitty, Kitty!" murmured Di, tightening her hold upon the reins. "*That man knows.*"

She never knew how she reached home. Hedges and trees and landscape blotted themselves together into one thick mist. She was thinking of her old father and wondering how she was to break to him the news of Kitty's flight. For Di felt sure now that Kitty had run away from her husband. Dared she hope that Kitty had gone away alone?

The sure-footed little pony turned in at the farm gates of its own accord, and halted in the yard. A farm lad slouched forward to lead it into the stable, and Di hurried into the kitchen, her heart beating high with a new and delicious hope. She had caught the sound of voices. How foolish and wicked she had been ever to doubt Kitty's loyalty, or to have harsh thoughts of her. She had merely been for a long, long walk, and now she was at the farm.

How unreasonable fear made women! But on the threshhold of the kitchen Di paused, chilled with the cold pang of disappointment. A visitor was indeed seated in Farmer Strange's favourite Windsor armchair, with her little fat feet perched snugly upon the polished steel fender. And the visitor, resplendent in a very tight-fitting three-quarter length black jacket, trimmed with dilapidated, rusty black fur, and wearing a ridiculously small bonnet, filled with gaudy scarlet poppies, was John Gillway's housekeeper, Aunt Shales. She turned her grey head as poor Di

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advanced, and smiled in a very flurried manner, rising hastily from her seat to show that although admitted upon friendly terms with the young mistress of Greyhouse, she had not forgotten that a difference existed in their social positions.

"Well, there, now!" she exclaimed. "Seems as if it was to be, now don't it? As sure as eggs is eggs, if ever I puts my nose inside your kitching I'm safe to find you out, Miss Di. Not as one can bide in the house all the time, cold as it is. But as I say, it's seasonable for the time of the year, so it is, now, and I'm one of them as 'ud rather be friz up and perished to nothink with a good English frost, than be grilled to a cinder, as my po'r Bill says he's a-bein' done at this very minute in India, with the sun they've got out there. I've no doubt but what the po'r boy 'll come back as

Di wrote a few hurried lines.

black as the niggers what lives in them outlandish parts, and him with a skin as fair as a lily when he 'listed in the army. Oh, he's a good-lookin' lad is Bill, or I should say he *was*. There's no knowin' what he's like now, what with gettin' his nose knocked to a pulp with a football when he was stationed at York, afore startin', and losing a front tooth at the same time! But it don't show in his photo. Oh, he *do* make such a nice photo, do Bill. He never did turn after 'is father, an' as I says, if he ain't got much to be thankful for in this world, he's got *that*—which is somethink, ain't it now?"

She appealed to Di, turning from her to Betty. The old servant was sitting facing the fire. She did not appear to have heard Aunt Shales, but stared into the red logs with a dazed, bewildered expression upon her rosy, withered cheeks that filled Di with terror.

"Does *she* know, too?" she thought, and turned to Aunt Shales as though for confirmation of her suspicion.

To her amazement Aunt Shales tapped her pocket, winked, glanced mysteriously at Betty, and then nodded her head towards the communicating door with the dining-room. So vigorously did she nod that the poppies in her bonnet quivered long after the motion had ceased.

"Betty," said Di, "will you let us have tea in the parlour?"

A fire was burning in the dining-room, throwing rosy shafts of light upon a large bowl of snowdrops that stood in the centre of the table. Aunt Shales paused in passing to admire them.

"Pretty things, they be, to be sure," said she. "An' good for sore eyes, so I'm told, not as I can speak from experience, never havin' yet bin bothered that way, though, as I said to myself this mornin,' it 'ud have been better for me and for *somebody* else if I'd been born blind, that it would! But there, I've long had my own ideas an' suspicions about things, for, as I've said many and many a time, where *do* the money come from to pay his way, seein' as he's no great hand at farmin', an' grumbles if everything put afore his eyes at meal times ain't of the very best quality, an' never gettin' any letters, an' out at all hours, an' all them heathenish books writ in some lingo unknown to honest folk, an' them trunks all locked up, it didn't look natshral, Miss Di, an' I'm not one to have dust thrown in my eyes for all as you never hears me say one word about nothink. Two and two don't make five *on*less you puts the one in, an' then, as we all knows, cases is altered. But right's right, and, as I've always said, wrong ain't no man's right, leastways it shouldn't ought to be, should it now?"

"I'm afraid," said Di feebly, "that I don't quite understand."

"Course you don't! As if anybody but them as lived under the same roof with him would understand; and Heavens knows it's hard enough for them, I 'spose," whispered Aunt Shales. "You knows the look of real di'mon's, seein' as you've wore 'em your own self an' have mixed with them as owns a-plenty?"

"Yes," Di answered, growing more and more puzzled.

Aunt Shales drew a bulky packet from her pocket, and handed it to Di.

"All bank notes!" said she. "I ain't to be deceived in *them*, an' they makes in all four hundred pounds!"

Again she dipped into her capacious pocket, pulled out a large leather case, opened it, and gave it to Di, drawing back a step or two to watch Di's face from her half-shut eyes.

Di looked at a diamond pendant that sparkled and flashed in the firelight. Upon the inside of the lid she read the following inscription:

To Mrs. Charles Lealter, upon the occasion of her silver wedding, a slight testimonial from her tenants and servants.

"Oh, Aunt Shales!" exclaimed Di. "What does it mean? How did you get these things?"

"I *have* bin wrongfully accused of tellin' lies, an' by members of my own fam'ly, as oughter have more respect for their own flesh and blood than to backbite them as is more innocent in the way o' lyin' than the lamb unborn," said Aunt Shales with deep feeling. "But a good conshuns 'ill carry you over a dirty puddle, Miss Di, and as I says you can't walk out in a muddy road an' not get a splash or two, no matter how careful-like you picks your footsteps, an' not bein' the Queen of England, I can't expect carpit laid down for me. *He'd* lef' the key in his writin' table—an' that's how I come by them things, Miss Di, and I do feel that grateful as that chatterin' magpie of a Em'ly didn't spy the key afore I did; for I knows what she is for a-peepin' and a-pryin' into things what ain't no concern of her'n, and couldn't be, not if she lived to a hundred! But them gals is like cats for creepin' everywhere an' sniffin' out things, that they be now, an' I knows it to my sorrer.

An' goodness knows as it's bad 'nough for me to carry inside me that I've bin in the employ of a house-breaker, an' no doubt he's a highwayman as well, without havin' that gal to carry the news all over Thorneydene, for them as ain't had no eddication to chuck in my face!"

Di drew a long, shuddering sigh as Aunt Shales paused to regain breath. Every flash from the sparkling trinket in her hand seemed a confirmation of the guilt of John Gillway.

(To be continued.)

"THE BIG BUDGET" IS COMING.

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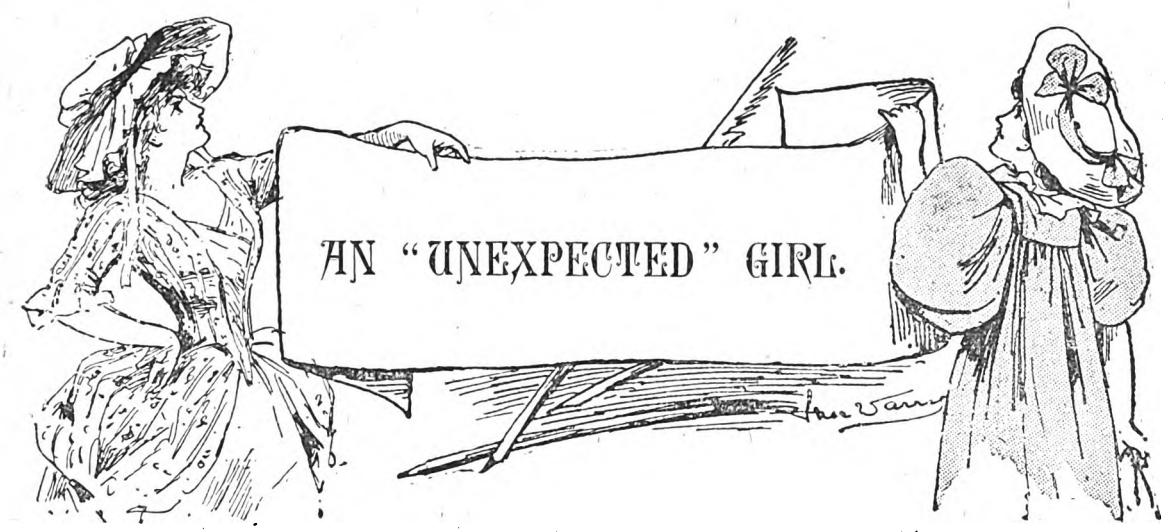

AN "UNEXPECTED" GIRL.

Her chief beauty lies in her originality. She holds you by her variety. Her actions not only carry this out, but she looks, if I may use the expression, "various."

Her face reminds me of a house built at different periods, its architecture is so "new," though the *tout ensemble* is charming. Her forehead is Grecian; her nose—is there a period that expresses a *retroussé* nose? Her mouth is what I call "early English," the sort of mouth you see in pictures of Queen Victoria, when she gives vent to that classic remark: "I will be good." Her hair is pure Corinthian, twisted, you see, and fluted, and yet massive enough to suggest the analogy. On the whole, she is satisfying.

I went down to see her the other evening and, to my horror, she appeared on the verandah on crutches. She was very solemn.

"Good gracious!" I exclaimed; "what is the matter?"

I suppose my face expressed rather more alarm than I intended, for she waved me off with one of the crutches.

"No, no; it's all right," she said. "Miss Macklimp was here to-day and I was nasty and impatient to her; she's a cripple, you know; and now I'm punishing myself; I'm trying to see how it feels."

I wasn't in the least surprised when she said she intended to keep it up all that evening. I hate crutches, they are so distant, so I persuaded her to pretend she was blind instead. I said it would be just as salutary. She cast away the crutches and shut her eyes.

"Oh, I don't like it!" she cried.

"You'll have to do it," I remarked; "your behaviour to Miss Macklimp was abominable. Now you see what it's like to be afflicted. I wouldn't like to spoil the effect of your little lesson, so I'll lead you about the garden for a while, though, of course, its a great nuisance."

She opened one eye and looked at me with all the suspicion that can be thrown into a single optic.

"Are you quite sure it's a nuisance?" she asked.

"To be quite candid," I replied, "do you think it could be anything else? I'm really engaged to play lawn tennis with Miss Foot, but this is duty, and however disagreeable——"

"Oh, you can go," she said icily. "I dare say it will be just as effective and twice as pleasant if Jemima, the housemaid, leads me about. Good-night."

"No," I said heroically, for I was determined to see the thing through, "I'll stay. You must promise upon your honour to keep your eyes shut, because we're not having a game." She opened her eyes at once and looked at me indignantly. "There you go," I went on. "What *is* the use of going about it in that spirit? If you're in fun, of course I've nothing more to say, but if you're in earnest you really should try to exercise a little self-control."

"All right," she said quite meekly. "Go on."

"Perhaps you'd better hold my hand," I suggested.

"No, no. It's so much more awful to try without you—I mean—to go by myself," and she went down the verandah steps and ran into a rose bush.

"You might have told me," she exclaimed indignantly, sucking her finger, with her eyes wide open.

"Now, my dear girl," I said in a fatherly way,

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"how can you realise the sensation of blindness if you open your eyes and stare at everything you run into? Take my advice and let me lead you. Most blind people have someone to guide them, a child or——"

"A puppy," she exclaimed in accents of delight. "Yes, I'm the poor blind Paper Man, and you are the puppy."

Perhaps she noticed something chilling in my silence, for she slipped her hand into mine and said:

"Are you bored? Do you want to go?"

Wild horses couldn't have dragged me from the spot, but it wouldn't do to tell her that, so I stifled a yawn, and said that as it was getting dusky it would be too late for tennis and I might as well stay. We went down the path into the shrubbery. She was keeping her eyes shut. I knew, because I was looking at her hard, and I knew I was looking at her hard because I stepped on two flower-pots and narrowly escaped a sunken water-barrel. She heard the crash.

"Where are we?" she asked.

"Don't look!" I cried. I was getting her nicely away from the house. "We're close to the dining-room window, and your Aunt Jane is on her way up to the summer-house."

"Let's go to Aunt Jane," she said. I don't think she believed me.

"All right," I said cheerfully, "but on no account open your eyes; you are doing very nicely." And I ran her carefully into a bush and then extricated her with my arm around her waist.

"You did that on purpose!" she cried, wriggling herself free. "It wasn't fair!"

"What wasn't fair?" I asked innocently, "and why should I do that on purpose? The path is confoundedly narrow." (It was eight feet wide where I stood.) "You can't seriously think it's any pleasure to me to go blundering about a garden like an intoxicated beetle. Look here—I mean *don't* look here—I'm going to tie my handkerchief over your eyes. I believe you've opened them at least five times."

She didn't deny it, and I tried to fix the handkerchief. When people have such soft hair they must expect it to be a nuisance to them. I like hair that is hard and bristly and can stand up for itself, but hers is simply impossible. It wasn't my fault that it got all twisted into the handkerchief and I had to cut off quite a large piece with my pocket-knife. I cut the handkerchief, too, which was much more serious, and will probably cost me half-a-crown to replace.

"And now," I said, "Aunt Jane is angry with you for your excessive unkindness to Miss Macklimp, isn't she?"

"She hasn't spoken to me all the evening," said the blind Paper Man pathetically.

"And you'd like to make it up, wouldn't you? Well, I have a plan. At this moment I can see Aunt Jane" (to the eye of the mind all things are clear) "standing at the door of the summer house at the top of the path. I will go away and you will walk up, just as you are, and give her a kiss and tell her you are sorry. Don't move the handkerchief, and she will see that you are really in earnest. Just go straight on; you can't miss her. Good-night, so glad to have been of use."

I couldn't say exactly how it happened. It just struck me that Aunt Jane might not be there after all, so I went round a side path to the summer-house to make sure. She was *not* there; she must have gone away during the interval. I never like to spoil an apology, so I thought it best to stand where Aunt Jane should have stood when the blind Paper Man came up the path. Of course it was a nuisance, but then——

Maggie Mann.

All London Cricketers should buy the

ATHLETIC RECORD

PUBLISHED ON MONDAY, JUNE 7th.

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MONDAY MORNING, JUNE 7th.

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REDUCTION OF SUPERFLUOUS FAT.

We have received a copy of "Corpulency, and the Cure," and a very useful and well-written little treatise it is, showing how from 3lb. to 14lb. of fat can be harmlessly removed in a week. We quote rather an amusing extract which was published on the subject by the *European Mail*. The Editor says: "I noticed the other day that someone had contributed a paragraph containing instructions for persons who wished to reduce their weight. I don't doubt but what, if the advice given were followed, the desired effect would result; but to follow it out properly one would not have much time left during the day. Care was to be taken not to eat this and not to eat that, while to dream of certain drinks was sufficient to increase the weight by about a hundredweight. Now, Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., is my man. His treatment does not consist of any starvation business. Quite the contrary, for the mixture he prescribes is an invigorating tonic, and improves the appetite wonderfully. He treats corpulence as a disease, and so long as his instructions are followed, no one need worry about dietary restrictions, but jog along in peace and continue the usual breakfast of half-a-dozen poached eggs, two or three gammon rashers, and a pound of steak. It is a good job for the success of the 'Pickwick Papers' that the book was written before Mr. Russell came upon the scene, otherwise it is doubtful whether we should ever have heard of those jovial characters, Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Weller, senior, or that truly wonderful being, the Fat Boy. The only case I can speak of personally in connection with this mixture, is a friend of mine, who tried it with remarkably good effect. He was enormously fat, and although he did not believe in Mr. Russell's treatment, when someone told him the mixture made a very pleasant drink in hot weather, he tried it for this purpose. This was in June, a few years ago. In September he had to be measured for a new suit of clothes, as those he had were getting very loose, and didn't fit at all. He continued with the mixture, and the tailor had to take fresh measurements at Christmas—well, he didn't quite have to put on a couple of overcoats so as to make a shadow, but the measurements round his waist were just half what they were twelve months before. Like a sensible man, he always recommends Mr. Russell now wherever he can. So do I." His book only costs two penny stamps, but is worth a guinea. Send to Woburn House for it.—*Boston Independent*, January 9th, 1897.

CORPULENCY, AND THE CURE—EIGHTEENTH EDITION.

The appearance of an eighteenth edition of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's now famous "Corpulency, and the Cure," constitutes an unusual phenomenon in the publishing world, such as suggests some curious considerations. What, it may be demanded, are the characteristics of the books whose popularity is so enormous as to enable them to run through eighteen editions within a comparatively few years? Some little time ago it became a favourite recreation—much to the advantage of certain publishers—to make out a list of "a hundred books" with which it was suggested all students ought to be familiar. How few of these, the results of the highest efforts of human thought, have reached an eighteenth edition before generations, sometimes centuries, after their original publication has passed away. It would seem, indeed, that immediate popularity can be gained—and, what is more to the purpose, steadily retained up to an eighteenth edition—only by ministering, in a remarkable and exceptional degree, to the requirements of stern utility. This, indeed, is what Mr. Russell has accomplished by the intr duction of the novel method of curing obesity, which is fully described in his book. This compendious little volume of 256 pages may be had (post free), we note, by sending two penny stamps to the author's offices, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. The enormous circulation represented by these eighteen editions is fully accounted for by a perusal of the book. It is quite evident that—as is proved by the evidence of thousands of cases successfully treated—Mr. Russell has completely revolutionised the treatment of corpulence. He has shown that any person may get rid of the superfluous fat carried on the body within, at the outside, a few weeks' time, and at such a rapid rate that 7lb. or 8lb. are frequently disposed of within a week. This is done, too, without undue interference with the ordinary habits of life in respect to eating and drinking, and—paradoxical as it may appear—the amount of food consumed is generally increased during the process of weight-diminution. The weighing-machine is Mr. Russell's ally, constantly appealed to, in order to place the results beyond doubt. Such conditions are so obviously suitable to the requirements of fat persons that their generally growing desire to study the book is easily explained.—*Grantham Times*, January 9th, 1897.

HOW TO CURE CORPULENCY.

The main feature of fat in the animal body has been made the subject of much spirited discussion: on the one hand, it was contended that satisfactory evidence exists of the conversion of starch and saccharine substances into fat by separation of carbon and oxygen. the change somewhat resembling that of the vinous fermentation; it was urged, *per contra*, that oily or fatty matter is invariably present in the food supplied to the domestic animals, and that this fat is merely absorbed and deposited in the body in a slightly modified state. The question has now been decided in favour of the first of these views, which was enunciated by Professor Liebig, the very chemist who formerly advocated the second opinion. By a series of very beautiful experiments. MM. Dumas and Milne Edwards proved that bees feeding exclusively upon sugar were still capable of producing wax. Dr. Ebstein advocates the use of fat in cases of corpulency, while other doctors, as high up the ladder of medical fame, recommend lean meats, while others worry the unhappy victims of obesity by insisting upon administering copious draughts of hot water, fasting, a most pernicious practice, we believe. Although so much has been written on this subject by the learned foreigners of the medical faculty, no theory is more effectual in the reduction of corpulency than the one advanced by Mr. F. C. Russell, the author of "Corpulency, and the Cure" (256 pages), an interesting little brochure, now in the eighteenth edition, which can, be bought for two penny stamps from the publishers at Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. He goes in for facts and not fancies, and practically says, first ascertain your correct weight; then drink three doses of a vegetable compound, perfectly harmless of a most agreeable flavour; then step upon a weighing-machine in twenty-four hours, and see if you have not lost 2lb. or more of unhealthy fat. The book is well worth reading.—*Southport Visitor*, January 19th, 1897.

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Answers to Correspondents.

THIS number contains the last instalment of the Picture Puzzle Competition in *Short Stories*. Fasten the lower half of each sheet together, and inclose them in an envelope marked "Peers," to reach this office by the first post on Saturday, June 12th. As this number of *Short Stories* is published three days earlier than usual, this will give you ample time. In asking you to inclose a small subscription to the FRESH AIR FUND, I should like to say that on the last occasion readers of *Short Stories* responded liberally, and I hope that this time they will do even better.

B. S.—Wellington was taller than Napoleon by something like an inch and a half. The latter was 5ft. 7in. in height.

TIM.—The list of celebrities who do not smoke include such great names as Gladstone, Ruskin, Swinburne, Blackie, and Grace. On the other hand there are perhaps an even greater number of celebrated individuals who are scarcely ever seen without a cigar or pipe in their mouths.

G. T.—Before a foreigner can become naturalised in this country, he must first of all reside within the United Kingdom for not less than five years. Having accomplished this, he should apply to the Home Office.

CYRIL.—All books sent to the Queen with the idea of them being accepted must be specially bound and the Royal Arms stamped in the corner.

S.—THE seasons are supposed to commence on the following dates, although of course, we cannot guarantee their safe and punctual arrival:

Spring ..... March 20th.
Summer.....June 21st.
Autumn.....Sept. 23rd.
Winter .....Dec. 21st.

ALICE.—In the London Zoo, there are something like 2,563 animals, viz., 669 mammals, 1,427 birds, and 467 reptiles. Of course this number is constantly being added to.

ALEX has heard that many individuals are making handsome incomes at the present time by writing advertisements in an attractive and novel form, and asks us whether there is any truth in it.————Undoubtedly. Advertisers are always pleased to consider novel and smart ideas for advertising their goods, and, if any ever occur to you, submit them to some of the large advertisers, who, you may be sure, will pay handsomely, if they think the idea worthy of acceptance.

VOLUNTEER.—You must serve twenty years as a volunteer before you become entitled to a long-service medal.

CLAPHAM JUNCTION asks why all the porters on the South-Western Railway wear red ties. Because they have no option, CLAPHAM JUNCTION. It is part of the men's uniform, and red is selected so that in case of emergency the scarf my prove useful as a danger signal.

H. R. R.—Large, wide-spread nostrils are supposed to denote ample lungs and good health.

S. T. S.—Yes, it is quite true that a large amount was offered some years back by the Government of New South Wales for means of extinguishing the rabbit pest. The exact reward offered was £25,000, but we do not think it was ever gained by anybody.

CLERK.—I fully sympathise with you in your difficulty, but do not advise you to emigrate to either of the countries you mention, for although the employment of women in England has made good berths very much scarcer for men, the competition is still keener in Germany and Holland. Whenever girls can be employed they are taken in preference to young men; indeed, the clerks and bookkeepers of the Munich bank are nearly all women.

W. R. B.—It certainly does seem strange that the British Army should be almost the only one that does not employ trained dogs as spies and messengers. The Germans, French, Austrians, Russians, and Italians have all found them of great assistance in times of war.

NEWLY MARRIED.—By all means confide your difficulties to your wife. Her sympathy is sure to go a long way towards removing them. Have no secrets from one another, for if your union is to be a truly happy one there must be absolute trust and mutual confidence between you.

E. R.—Hamburg possesses the largest telephone exchange. It can accommodate 10,000 subscribers. No other exchange has more than 6,000 subscribers.

BOB asks which is the largest kitchen in the world.————The Bon Marché in Paris. This mammoth establishment gives employment to some 4,000 people. The smallest kettle in the building is capable of holding 100 gallons, and the largest 500, whilst each of the fifty roasting pans is big enough for 300 cutlets.

L. J.—On the average concert grand pianoforte, a note struck with a moderately hard blow will continue to vibrate audibly for about twenty-five seconds.

H. H.—The Prince of Wales was married at the age of twenty-two, the Duke of Edinburgh at thirty, and the Duke of Connaught at twenty-nine.

L. M. is about to be married to the "dearest little girl in the world," and candidly tells me that with the exception of one thing he would be the happiest man alive. But a little thing prevents this, for although for many years his character has been absolutely unstained, he regrets that in his earlier days he was once tempted to commit an offence which was followed by a brief term of imprisonment. He ever regrets that unfortunate time, especially at the present moment, for he scarcely likes the idea of marrying a girl who believes him to be the soul of virtue and honour. "What shall I do under the circumtances ?" he asks.————Make a clean breast of the whole affair to your *fiancée* who, if she loves you to the extent you describe, will not only forgive you, but think far more of you than if you waited until after the wedding-day to make the revelation.

ADA.—You should certainly not draw your conclusions of a man by what he tells you, but rather, as in the case of a watch, judge him by his works.

E. B. is engaged to a lady who, unfortunately, numbers a good many young fellows amongst her acquaintances. But it is not this that E. B. objects to, for, as he says, this fact only goes to show what a charming, irresistible maiden she is, but E. B. dislikes to hear her address them all by their christian names.————That is very probable. But surely you can prevail upon your sweetheart to drop a habit which gives you pain. Just tell her your feelings in regard to this matter, and we feel sure that if the young lady has any affection for you, she will take care not to continue the objectional practice any longer.

Notice to Competitors.

IN all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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Can be **CURED** by taking

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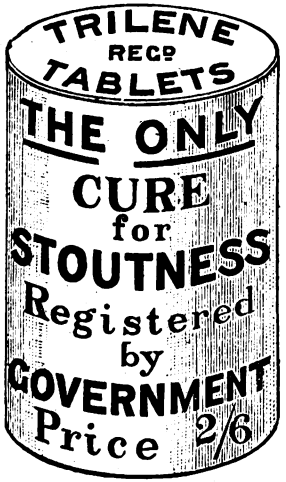

For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

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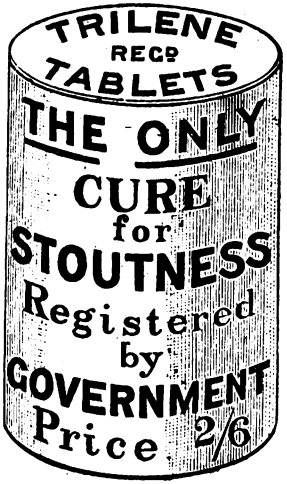

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87, Alexandra Road, Norwich.

"GENTLEMEN,—I have had some boxes of your Tablets for my wife, and she has derived great benefit from them.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Illustrated Family Novelist, November 30th, 1895, says: "A great many women who are plump by nature worry about their stoutness. However, there are some perfectly safe remedies for embonpoint, among them being the Trilene Tablets, which are not only safe, but absolutely beneficial to the general health, and speedily produce the desired effect."

MR. TAYLOR, Church Farm, St. James, Halesworth, says: "I have lost quite 2 stone since taking your Tablets."

"6, Brighton Terrace, Hull.

"MRS. JOHNSON has much pleasure in saying she has derived great benefit from your Tablets."

"3, Castle Road, Deal.

"MRS. J. PEARSON is glad to say she is much thinner."

Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.

MISS S. J. PRITCHARD says: "They have done me good. I am 21lb. lighter already."

"Bretton West, near Wakefield.

"MISS L. LANGFIELD has taken a box of Tablets, and is already 7lb. lighter."

MRS. HUTCHINSON, 46, Irwell Street, Widnes, Lancashire, writes: "I have taken three boxes and am reduced a stone."

A. D. BILLINGS, Bell Inn, Aldershot, writes: "Have derived great benefit already. Less in size and weight, and breathing greatly improved."

25, Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.

MISS M. FLAVELL says: "I have lost 2 stone, and am much better in health."

Extract from *Bury and Suffolk Times*, June 15th, 1894: "Miss Atherton sings and dances as piquantly as ever, and is a marvel of agility, considering how much flesh she has put on of late. Her friends should induce her to take a course of Trilene Tablets, about which I hear wonderful things. One portly acquaintance of my own by merely a few weeks' use of these little Tablets, has reduced his bulk perceptibly. I am assured the Tablets are harmless and tasteless, and that the Trilene Company in Finsbury Pavement, London, are doing an enormous and ever-increasing trade."

MR. GILLESPIE, 50, Chancer Road, Forest Gate, Essex, says: "I have lost just 3 stone."

2, Chariot Street, Hull.

MR. JUBB, Chemist, says: "My customers speak highly of your Tablets."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.

MR. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17½ stone, and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

MR. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17 stone, was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15 stone."

Aspern, 29, King's Hall Road, Beckenham.

MISS S. WOODHOUSE writes: "I have much pleasure in stating that your Tablets are really a safe cure for stoutness; they have cured me, and I am a perfect figure now."

MRS. GIBBON, of Radford Cottage, Bitterne, says: "I have derived great benefit from your Tablets, especially abdominal."

The Lady, October 8th, 1896 (giving advice to a reader who complained of stoutness), says: "The Trilene Tablets help to reduce stoutness, if taken daily; they are made of purely vegetable ingredients, and are quite harmless."

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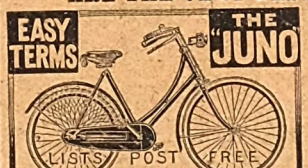

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100 Pieces for £1 1s.

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THOUSANDS SOLD ALL OVER THE WORLD.

A Dinner Service of 50 pieces is included, which is guaranteed to be worth the guinea alone, and a China Tea Service of 28 pieces finished in gold, together with a lot of useful kitchen crockery.

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For Pale Faces.

Anæmia, or Poverty of Blood, is the cause of the many pale faces we see at the present day. Anæmia is usually accompanied or followed by Indigestion or Debility, Irregularity, Depression of Spirits, Fatigue, Faintness, Nausea, Headaches, Pains in the Side and Back, Palpitation and Coughs. If neglected, more serious affections frequently follow. Jolly's "Duchess" Pills will restore colour, health, strength, and beauty, and make the palest face clear and rosy, thus producing a lovely complexion. A box containing 60 doses, sufficient to cure any ordinary case, post free 2/6, or six boxes for 12/6, from

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EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 442. FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 19TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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DR. MACKENZIE'S ARSENICAL SOAP,

which contains special ingredients for beautifying the skin and complexion. It is most emollient and soothing, and can be used by those with the most delicate skin even when they are unable to use any other soap. Deliciously and expensively perfumed, and guaranteed absolutely harmless, and TO CONTAIN ARSENIC.

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AT ALL CHEMISTS AND STORES, OR POST FREE FROM S. HARVEY, 5, DENMAN ST., LONDON BRIDGE, S.E.

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Ellaline Terriss writes from the Gaiety Theatre: "I have tried Dr. Mackenzie's Complexion Soap. I think it is quite one of the best I have ever used, and can thoroughly testify to its excellence."

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Cynthia Brooke writes from Adelphi Theatre, London: "I consider Dr. Mackenzie's Arsenical Toilet Soap positively the best I have ever used for the complexion."

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An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87, Alexandra Road, Norwich.—Gentlemen,—My wife was very stout, but your Tablets completely cured, and were of untold benefit in various ways.—J. R. CANHAM."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.—Mr. I. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17st., and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.—Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Miss WEBSTER, 4, West View Terrace, Worcester, says: "I cannot say exactly how much reduction, but think it has been about 2st."

Miss A. ATKINS, 329, Smithdown Road, Liverpool: "I lost nearly 1st. while taking the one box."

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No. 442.] For the Week ending June 19th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

SILENCE ✲ IS ✲ GOLDEN.

A STORY OF THE MONMOUTH REBELLION.

MANY people have wondered why I set such store by this old coin. This old guinea of the time of Charles II. with the words "Silence is golden" so deeply graven on the reverse side, has aroused great curiosity and many are the questions that have been put to me concerning it. I have always considered it wise to decline answering those inquiries; but it now seems to me that I ought not to permit the story to die with me. I feel that an incident so intimately connected with the history of the country, an incident which might have altered the Succession itself, should be recorded. It was only known to four of us, and the other three have been dead these many years. So I will write it down and place the manuscript among my books and relics, where it will be discovered some day when I am gone.

I was a boy of six at the time, but the events which I am about to chronicle made an ineffaceable impression upon me. That which I did not then understand has become plain to me since, so that I am able to set down the story as a coherent whole.

It was in the year 1685; Monmouth had landed at Lyme Regis, raised his standard, and proclaimed himself king. My father, who lived near Sedgemoor, secretly favoured the Duke's cause, but he was quite against the Rebellion, which he considered ill-advised, and had declined to take part in it. I well remember the march of the rebels into Bridgewater, my father having taken me there; and I can even now see my father shaking his head, and I wondered why he did so—for to me it was a grand sight. Events proved that he had reason for sadness; and I, as I recall the scene, can well understand that dubious movement and grieved expression.

One evening—it was the evening of the day on which the fatal battle of Sedgemoor had been fought, as I afterwards learnt—my father and I were seated in the best room of our little house. It was dark and I should have been in bed, but all our men-servants and labourers had left us to join the Duke or to run away, and our one woman-servant had also fled, so my father had allowed me to sit up and keep him company for a while. Occasionally we heard the sounds of hurrying fugitives who had crept out of their hiding places and were trying to escape in the darkness. My father was sitting in an old chair and I had just left my own seat to climb on his knees. Scarcely had I nestled my curly head on my father's breast, than there came a knock at the outer door that startled us. It was a peculiar knock; as though someone were in a hurry and very anxious to gain admittance, yet half afraid to make a noise.

"Some poor fool wants to find a place of refuge," muttered my father sadly. "Well, I must help them."

"Perhaps it is Mary come back again," I suggested. I was just a little frightened at the unexpected visit.

"Perhaps it is!" exclaimed my father brightly. But boy as I was, I could see that he did not think so, but was pretending because I was afraid.

We went to the door, for I grasped his hand tightly.

"Who's there?" asked my father.

"Open quickly!" replied the stranger. "Open, if you are still a friend of the cause!"

I felt my father's hand tremble. He gently released himself from my grasp, and, drawing back the bolts, threw open the door.

"Enter, my lord! You are welcome!"

We could see two figures in the doorway. There was a whispered conversation between them which finished by one pushing the other forward.

"No! You go alone," said the one. "If they catch me, what does it matter? *You* will be more likely to escape in that case, as they will think that you are near at hand and not seek you so close to this accursed place. Waltham," he added in a higher tone, "you were right after all. Yet I beseech you to help his Majesty in his hour of need." And he was gone.

The new-comer hesitated a moment, but my father firmly and politely pulled him inside and shut the door.

"Come this way, sire," he said, "you may rely upon all the help I can give you."

"Call me 'James' or what you please, but not *that!*" replied Monmouth, for I knew afterwards that it was he. "Those who promised their help failed to keep their word. My cause is lost, and I am a fugitive on whose

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head a price will soon be set. Grey tells me that you are a friend and that you will hide me for a few days, and help me to escape. I can offer you no reward save the thanks of an unsuccessful man—a rebel!" The last words were spoken so bitterly—so bitterly!

My father made no reply, but hurried him into the room we had just quitted and very soon placed some food before the Duke, whom I had an opportunity of observing closely. I remember that I felt great pity for the dejected-looking man, whose general appearance took my boyish fancy. I did not understand what it was all about, why he should come to us; that he was hiding from somebody was plain, but I was too young and too tired to grasp the meaning of what was taking place.

Our guest ate hungrily and had soon finished the meal. My father and he then spoke together for several minutes, and at the end of the conversation he led Monmouth out of the room, I following them. We went through the passages towards the back of the house, where there was a large disused apartment—a place like a barn, in which, in fact, stores had been kept in past times. It had been shut up for years, ever since my father's mother had met with a fatal accident while mounting a ladder to reach the high ledge.

"The place is dusty," said my father, "but it is the safest part of the house. We can soon spoil the chance of tracing the footsteps by running a broom over the floor."

Attracted by a curiously-shaped piece of wood which I saw near the doorway, I stopped to examine it and so lost the rest of the conversation; when I looked up again with a yawn my father was shutting a door in the wall at the further end. It was a panel door, and when shut it could not be distinguished from the other panels.

Just at that moment, a faint noise—a succession of thuds, it seemed—struck upon our ears. My father ran swiftly on tip-toe along the passage, returning the next instant.

"They are here!" he exclaimed. "Quick! There is no time to lose!" He seized the Duke by the shoulder and hurried him back to the panel. In an instant it was opened and Monmouth had sprung from the ground into the hiding place, which was about four feet from the level.

My father took up a long strip of wood that was lying on the floor and raked the dust in all directions. Louder and louder became the knocking. My father extinguished the light, half dragged me out of the room and locked the door, taking the key with him.

Thud, thud, thud!

"Open in the King's name!" I heard a voice shout.

Hastily brushing the dust from his clothes with his hand, my father went to the door, grumbling very loudly as he shot back the bolt.

"What is the meaning of this?" he growled. I was surprised; I had never heard him speak in such a surly manner. "Isn't it enough to be——"

"Keep that surly tongue of yours quiet!" said one who was in front.

They pushed their way inside, about a dozen of them. Two of them held torches, which lighted up the passage in weird fashion. Two of the men were better dressed than the others and were evidently in command.

"Where are they?" asked one of these two. Then, as my father did not reply, he continued: "You have two rebels in hiding here, I say! Where are they?"

"There are not two rebels here," answered my fathe quietly.

"You shall suffer for this!" exclaimed the other furiously. But the first interrupted him.

"You can't make a horse drink if he is unwilling to do so; you know the proverb, and enough about human nature to understand that it is useless to waste time in talking to this man if he refuses to open his mouth. All this time the rascals are getting away from us, most probably. Let us search the place!"

The other bowed, gave orders to his men, and they marched along the passage, taking my father with them. I remained near the door, bewildered.

After standing there for two or three minutes, I began to grope my way in the dark towards the staircase with the intention of following them. I stepped upon something hard, close to the wall, and picked it up. It was a large key. I was fingering it, wonderingly, when the man who had seemed to be the chief of the little band came towards me with a light.

"Well, my little man," he said in rather a pleasant tone, "what have you got there? Oh, a key. It appears to be the one I am wanting. Your father opened that place at the back with a key like this when he went in there a little while ago, eh?"

"Yes, sir," I replied unsuspectingly.

"Ah! I thought so! Now you come along with me and show me all about the place, like a good boy!"

Completely won over by his pleasant manner and glad to be of use to such a gentleman, I went with him.

The key fitted the lock and we were soon in the place which my father and I had entered with the fugitive Duke only a few minutes previously.

"H'm! I think I am on the right track!" he muttered, half audibly, as he looked on the floor. "So he is hidden here, eh?" he inquired, turning to me. "Ha, ha! Your father *is* a clever man! I'm sure nobody would have guessed that a man was hiding in this big room. Now I wonder if I could find where he is hiding, eh? *You* know, don't you? Silly man to hide away when I want to give him something! Where is he?"

Don't blame me. I was only a child. I did not understand what it all meant; I was tired, excited, charmed by the man's pleasant way of talking, and proud that I knew something that he did not.

"I'll show you!" I exclaimed. And without waiting for him, I ran across the dusty floor and pulled at the lower end of the panel.

"So he is in *there!*"

Struck by the change in the tone of voice, I looked up at him in surprise. He paid no further heed to me, but drew his sword and tried to force open the panel. It opened suddenly and the Duke jumped down in front of his pursuer.

"I should not like to see you break that sword, my dear uncle," he said with a touch of irony, "so I spare you any further trouble. Had I known that *you* were so near, I would have awaited your arrival."

The man called "uncle" stepped backwards in the direction of the door and began to cry out for the others, but Monmouth shot quickly past him and flung the door to.

"No, no!" exclaimed the Duke. "We have a little account to settle quite privately. It seems to me that you have gone a trifle too far in your desire to catch me. Fancy His Majesty the King of England turning rebel-catcher! Now listen! Two years ago, there was a plot against my father and your brother—the Rye House Plot, it was styled—in which you were kind enough to say I took a leading part. On that occasion also you put yourself to some trouble to seek for me. You were

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always against me! We met in the open and we fought a duel, or, I ought to say, *half* a duel. I am recalling the circumstance, lest you have forgotten it. It was agreed that we should fight with pistols; that we should toss for the first shot and that if the other were able to fire, he should have *his* turn. You were fortunate; you fired first—and missed! Before I could raise my pistol, some of the Royal troops appeared—it may be that they should have arrived sooner!—and I thought it prudent to take my departure without delay. I have had to wait for my turn, but it has come now and I mean to avail myself of the opportunity!"

By the feeble light of the lantern, which he still held, I could see that the King's face had grown pale.

"Hand the light to the boy," continued the Duke. "Ah, would you!" he exclaimed as the King made another attempt to get to the door. He snatched the lantern from him and pointed the pistol at his head. The King shrank back and Monmouth bade me hold the light.

"Take your stand against the wall or I will shoot you where you are! That's right! Twenty paces was it not? Well, I will give you the full distance! Now, boy, stand on that piece of wood and hold the lantern above your head. So! That will do."

He raised his arm and pointed the pistol at the King. I looked first at one then at the other of the actors in this strange scene. I saw that Monmouth's hand trembled.

Bang!

I uttered a cry of terror and dropped the lantern. I heard an oath, followed by a rush of footsteps, a scuffle and the clash of swords. I fled into a corner and hid my face; but something impelled me to look round at the two foes. By the light of the moon which gleamed through the only window in the place, I could see them engaged in a desperate fight; oaths mingled with the ring of the blades, and even to me it was evident that they were in deadly earnest. But they were destined not to finish the struggle.

The door was thrown open and my father rushed in, holding a torch. He seemed to grasp the situation immediately. Stooping down, he placed the flaming torch against the woodwork. He clutched me by the collar and pushed me through an opening into a place which I know now was our garden. I saw him run back, upset the King, and drag Monmouth out. The next thing I remembered was that my father had me in his arms and was running hard, he and his companion panting for breath. In the distance I could see the flames leaping up into the sky.

"We have a good start," my father jerked out. "That old house will burn like tinder; and as they do not know their way about it, they will have enough to do in looking after themselves for a minute or two. That is our chance."

"May the King be burnt!" exclaimed the Duke savagely.

"The King!" said my father in surprise.

In a few words, Monmouth explained. My father made no reply.

On they went; not keeping to the road, but forcing their way through holes in the hedges, running in all directions, until thoroughly exhausted. Then they sat down in a dry ditch and rested.

The Duke and my father began to talk earnestly and in whispers as soon as they had regained breath sufficiently. Worn out with fatigue, I fell asleep.

I was awakened by something touching my forehead; it was my father kissing me. I was lying on a bed, where they had placed me just as I was, for fear of disturbing me by taking off my clothes. My father and the Duke, dressed as peasants, were about to leave the room.

"You will stay here with good Master Methold, Edward," said my father, seeing that I had woke up. "He will take care of you. I must go away for a while. God bless you, my boy!" Tears stood in his eyes, and I heard him say in a low voice: "*He* alone knows whether I shall ever see the boy again!"

I clung to him, crying bitterly. He kissed me again and again, and then led me to Master Methold. Monmouth drew from his pocket a guinea—*this* guinea—and placed it in my hand.

"Take this, my child," he said sorrowfully. "It is all I have to give you to compensate you for the loss of a father's love and care. I do not blame you; but when you grow up, remember that 'Silence is golden.'"

For more than three years I remained with Master Methold, who treated me with great kindness. I heard that the Duke had been caught and executed, but I had no tidings of my father for two years, when Master Methold told me that he was living somewhere across the sea, and would be able to fetch me one day. It was more than a year after that ere I again saw my dear father. He was much altered and greatly affected by the meeting. He had prospered abroad; and now that the King was dead, and the Monmouth Rebellion nearly forgotten, he considered that he would be safe in England if he lived in another part of the country under an assumed name.

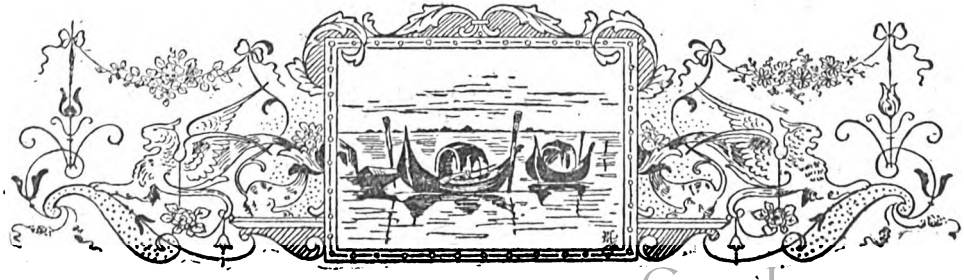
* * * * *

I, James Harlow, grandson of the writer of the foregoing, found the manuscript covered with dust among some old books. I have transcribed it.

My grandfather directed that an old guinea which he possessed should be buried with him. Not until this manuscript was found did anyone understand the reason of this strange request.

My grandfather was always a very quiet man.

GEO. DAY.



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BY GEORGE GRIFFITH.

"HE is perhaps the only example which history affords of one man having governed the most opposite events and proved sufficient for the most various destinies."

No man's character was ever so completely and so tersely summed up as the great Oliver's is here in these few words of a critic belonging to another race and nation, and, as regards his varied destinies, it may be added that no man ever was raised up and set to work by the Controller of human destinies as opportunely as he was.

History shows no parallel to it, not even in the oft-quoted story of Cincinnatus, and certainly in all the long array of our rulers there is none other whose story is so crammed with wonders or who crowded so many notable and pregnant acts into the busy days of a few years as this gentleman-farmer of Huntingdonshire, who at forty-three left his farming and vestry-meetings and the like and girded on his sword to go and fight the good fight of freedom, and who at fifty-two laid it aside to prove himself as good a statesman and ruler as he had been soldier and general.

His claim to a foremost place among the Makers of Britain is a twofold one, for he was a restorer, a re-invigorator, as it were, of this realm, as well as a very considerable widener of it. When the futile and inglorious reign of "the most learned fool in Christendom" came to an end, all the brilliant promise of the Elizabethan age had been woefully obscured, and the glories of the great Queen and her pirates looked like those of a summer sun setting behind a bank of fog.

In the words of Macaulay: "On the day of the accession of James I. England descended from the ranks which she had hitherto held and began to be regarded as a power hardly of the second order. . . . He began his administration by putting an end to the war which had raged many years between England and Spain, and from that time he shunned hostilities with a caution which was proof against the insults of his neighbours and the clamour of his subjects."

How different this from the gallant days of Gloriana and her knights! And yet this poor crowned and sceptred ninny aspired to be a despot even as his son after him did. It is true that these realms were beginning to need a despot and that badly, but not such a one as could ever have been born of that hopeless House of Stuart. A despot who is a strong man may be good or evil as he uses his opportunities and his powers, but the whole stage of history has not yet held a despot who was also a weak man who did not prove himself at once a curse to his country and the world.

The story of the feeble violence and silly cunning with which Charles the First sought to enforce that ridiculous theory of his about the Divine Right of Kings has been too often and too variously told for us to need to trouble with it here. There *is* a Divine Right of Kings, as the great Oliver was very soon to show with most unmistakable and most unanswerable logic, but the kind of king who really has divine rights, does not usually have them because he is the son of his father, and especially of such a father as James the First of England and Sixth of Scotland.

Our present concern is with the fact that this Empire of ours, in a most critical state of its process of making which came very near to one of unmaking, was saved and transformed from weakness to strength by the substitution of the real despotism of the Lord Protector from the sham of histrionic despotism of Charles the First.

The fact was that the body-corporate of this infant empire was assailed by the worst of all national disorders, internal disintegration. England, the very heart and centre of it, was about to be rent in twain by the frenzied and pitiless talons of civil war, and that is a war in which the right side—which of course is always the best side—must not only win, but utterly crush and pulverise the other unless wreck and chaos irretrievable are to follow.

This was the central idea that the Great Oliver grasped just as Edward of the Longlegs had grasped his brilliantly premature idea of the United Kingdom. He was the last of that series of iron-handed men that had begun with William the Norman. The watchword of his whole public life was "healing and settling." The wounds of his country had to be healed and its disorders settled, no matter by what means, but it had to be done, and in this deep-rooted conviction we see at a glance his kinship with the other Empire-makers who had gone before him.

Of his early life there is little to be said, though it is noteworthy that he was once fined £10 for neglecting a summons to appear at the King's coronation and receive the honour of knighthood. He little thought then that he would one day find it his duty to refuse the crown and sceptre of England.

Everyone who has read even the school books knows that when the war actually began all the apparent advantages were on the side of the Royalists. Though the first battles afforded the extraordinary spectacle of mere conflicts of amateur soldiers, few of whom had ever seen a real fight before, the Cavaliers, trained to horsemanship and the use of arms, and versed in all manly sports, made far finer fighting material than the raw levies of the Parliament. Had this difference continued victory must have remained, as it began, with the Royalists, with results to the nation that could hardly

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have failed to be of the very worst sort. This is what Cromwell himself says on this all-important subject:

"At my first going out into this engagement I saw our men were beaten at every hand. Your troops, said I, are most of them old, decayed serving-men, and tapsters and such kind of fellows, and, said I, their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons and persons of quality. Do you think that the spirits of such base, mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen that have honour and courage and resolution in them? You must get men of spirit and, take it not ill what I say—I know you will not—of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go, or else you will be beaten still."

These wise words, which, by the way, were said to no less a man than John Hampton himself, form a key to all the battles of the Civil War. No sooner did Oliver come on to the field as a plain captain of yeomanry horse than his keen, if untaught, eye instantly recognised the one great virtue and strength of the Royalist party. They had an Idea, a devotion, a principle for the sake of which they were ready to sell their lands, melt their plate, beggar their families, and lose their own lives, and men so equipped could only be successfully met and withstood by men who, as he himself put it in that quaintly eloquent phraseology of his, "made some conscience of what they did," and thereupon he set himself to find such men and make soldiers of them.

How well he succeeded the following extract from a contemporary news-letter written some ten months after the outbreak of war will sufficiently tell:

"As for Colonel Cromwell"—promotion, it will be seen, was somewhat rapid in those stormy days—"he hath two thousand brave men, well disciplined. No man swears but he pays his twelve pence. If he be drunk he is set in the stocks, or worse. If one calls the other Roundhead he is cashiered; insomuch that the countries where they come leap for joy of them and come in and join with them. How happy it were if all the forces were thus disciplined!"

On the field of Marston Moor, Prince Rupert nicknamed Cromwell "Old Ironsides," and from that day to this the most invincible troops that ever marched to battle have been named after him. Years afterwards, when his work and theirs was done, their leader was able to say of them: "From that day forward they were never beaten and wherever they were engaged against the enemy they beat continually."

This is literally true. Whether in skirmish or battle, at home or abroad, whether pitted against the disorderly chivalry of the Loyalists or the rigid discipline of the finest Continental troops; whether storming a breach or bearing the brunt of a half-lost battle, these psalm-singing, hard-hitting Crusaders of the new Church Militant not only were never beaten, but never once failed to hurl the enemy back in confusion and disaster.

In them, in short, that stubborn English valour which has since pushed its way all over the world was first *disciplined*. They formed the first model ever seen of an English regiment, a combination of many units of strength and valour moving and fighting as one, and the fact that "Old Ironsides" was the first man thus to add discipline to valour is in itself no small portion of his title to fame as an Empire-maker.

The first occasion on which these Ironsides made their mark in battle is one of even greater importance than the battle itself, for it marks the entrance on to the stage of history of the first regularly disciplined English regiment, the parent of those who, on a thousand fields since then, have proved themselves worthy of their grim but splendid ancestors. It was the first time, too, that they had a chance to try conclusions with Rupert and his Cavaliers, hitherto unconquered and irresistible.

It was July 2nd, 1644, on a dull and storm-threatening afternoon, that Cavalier and Roundhead first met in a really serious fashion. Compared with what was now to be done Edgehill and all that had come after it had been trifles, for so far the conflicts had been those of amateurs at the art of war, each engaged, as it were, in licking the other into shape, and the conclusion that they now had to try was which of them had got into the best shape. There were about four-and-twenty thousand each of them as they stood through the anxious hours of that summer afternoon on either side of a ditch running across Marston Moor, each watching for a chance to attack, but feeling, no doubt, that the doings of the next few hours would decide an issue which needed a certain amount of thinking over.

The two armies were drawn up upon what is now the regulation pattern, right and left wings and centre. Cromwell with his Ironsides on the left of the Parliamentary army faced Rupert on the right of the Royalists, and he was supported by the infantry of what was then known as the Eastern Association. The King's centre was held by Newcastle, and against it was the Parliamentary centre reinforced by nine thousand Scots Infantry. The Royal left wing was composed of Goring's cavalry regiments and was faced by the Parliamentary right wing under the two Fairfaxes.

During the afternoon there was an exchange of cannon shots which doesn't seem to have done very much harm on either side. Prince Rupert, with his usual impetuosity, had been for some hours wanting to get over the ditch and try conclusions with the Ironsides, who were posted on a little eminence amidst standing corn, and who had wiled away the anxious hours of waiting with mutual exhortations and psalm singing, not a little to the amusement of Rupert and his gallant scapegraces, who were yet to learn that these close-cropped, grim-visaged Puritans could ride and fight a great deal better than they could sing.

The King's older generals, no doubt contemplating Continental etiquette, had decided that it was too late to fight that evening and had withdrawn to their quarters Cromwell, laughing at etiquette as he did at everything else that was not of practical utility, saw his chance, jumped the ditch and went hot-footed and hot-handed into Rupert's ranks. A bullet scored his neck, and hearing someone cry out that he was wounded he shouted: "All's well. A miss is as good as a mile," and charged on. Whether or not he was the first to use this now favourite expression I am not able to say, but at least it was characteristic.

The charge was met in a fashion worthy of Rupert and the gallant gentlemen who followed him, and we learn that after the first onset the Ironsides reeled back, but it was only for a moment. Some Scots cavalry came up behind them, they surged forward again, discipline and valour did their work, and a few minutes afterwards Prince Rupert and his merry men had met more than their match, and, ere long, to use his own words, Colonel Cromwell "had scattered them before him like a little dust." The remnants of them were chased and cut down with ruthless severity, which was then part of the Puritan character, almost to the gates of York, eight miles away.

But Cromwell, profiting by the mistakes which Rupert himself had made in his headlong charges, kept his men

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well in hand, and when once the Royalist right wing was broken, led his men round to see how the battle had gone on the Parliamentary right and centre.

If he had not done so Marston Moor might have replaced Charles Stuart on the throne of England. Goring had broken up Fairfax's cavalry as completely as Oliver had broken up Rupert's. He had flung them back upon their infantry supports, breaking these in turn, after which he flung himself with the seemingly triumphant Royalists of the centre on the Scots Infantry, taking them in flank and almost routing them, too. Only three regiments of them out of nine held their ground, the rest had broken and fled, and the Earl of Leven, their leader, was already making the best of his way towards Leeds.

The battle at this moment presented one of the strangest spectacles in the history of warfare. On the one side Prince Rupert with his broken brigades was flying towards the North, on the other Leven and Manchester and Fairfax, believing the day hopelessly lost, were making equal haste towards the South. Such was the juncture at which the Man of Destiny arrived. He was in command of the only really disciplined force on the field.

Mr. Frederick Harrison, in his excellent monograph on Cromwell, thus graphically describes what happened: "In an hour the genius of Cromwell had changed disaster into victory. Launching the Scotch troopers of his own wing against Newcastle's Whitecoats, and the infantry of the Eastern Association to succour the remnants of the Scots in the centre, he swooped with the bulk of his own cavalry round the rear of the King's army, and fell upon Goring's victorious troopers on the opposite side of the field. Taking them in the rear, all disordered as they were in the chase and the plunder, he utterly crushed and dispersed them. Having thus with his own squadron annihilated the cavalry of the enemy's both wings, he closed round upon the Royalist centre, and there the Whitecoats and the remnants of the King's Infantry were cut to pieces almost to a man."

Such was Marston Moor, and how completely it was the work of the one man of destiny may be seen in the fact that, complete and crushing as the victory was, its advantages were almost entirely negatived by the incapacity and imbecility of the Parliamentary leaders in the West and South. Everyone of any consequence wanted to be supreme leader; no one had either definite plans or the capacity to carry them through; and when at last there was a prospect of bringing matters to an issue on the field of Newberry, the Royalist forces, though half-beaten, were allowed to get away with all their guns, stores and ammunition in spite of the fact that Manchester was in command of a very superior force.

This was as good as a defeat for the forces of the Parliament, for it was the cause of dividing their councils. Manchester and those who sided with him had apparently begun to fear the terrible earnestness of the Captain of the Ironsides, and were for making peace with the King and patching matters up somehow. But Cromwell, with deeper insight, saw that the quarrel had now gone too far and that it could not stop till one side or the other had had a thorough and decisive beating, and that side he was fully determined should be the King's.

The dispute ended in the fall of Manchester and the triumph of Cromwell. Then came the re-organisation of the Parliamentary forces under what was at this time the New Model, and this New Model, be it noted, was the first standing army of professional soldiers that the United Kingdom had ever seen. Its nominal Commander-in Chief was Sir Thomas Fairfax, but its master spirit and guiding genius was Oliver Cromwell.

But meanwhile the tide of Royalism had been on the rise again, sweeping up from the West and South. The armies faced each other on the borders of Leicestershire, but Cromwell was not there. Fairfax, no doubt knowing his own weakness, entreated that he might come and command the horse. He came, and then, as Clarendon pathetically remarks, "the evil genius of the Kingdom in a moment shifted the whole scene," and it is related that when, after rumours had been for some days flying through both armies as to his arrival, "Old Ironsides" at last came upon the field of action, all the cavalry of the Parliament raised a great shout of joy.

The battle that he came to fight was Naseby, and, saving for the superior discipline displayed on both sides, almost exactly the same things happened as at Marston Moor. Cromwell this time commanded on the right wing, but Rupert was placed at the Royalist's right, and was therefore opposed, not to Cromwell, but to Ireton, his son-in-law and second self. Once more the left wing of the Parliament was broken and scattered by the furious charge of the gallant Cavaliers, once more the centre under Fairfax was "sore overpressed" and thrown into confusion, and once more Cromwell and his Ironsides, having ridden down everything that opposed them, swung round behind the rear of the victorious Royalists, swooped in a hurricane of irresistible valour and determination on their flanks and rear, turned defeat into victory and snatched triumph out of disaster.

It is true that even then there seemed so great a chance of the Royalists retrieving the day that Charles, who had put himself at the head of the flower of his cavalry, had thought himself warranted in crying: "One charge more, gentleman, and the days is ours!" But while he was thinking about this, Cromwell, Fairfax, and Ireton had, by the exercise of almost superhuman energy, reformed the whole of their army, horse, foot, and artillery, into complete battle-array on a new front, and against this the fiery valour of the Cavaliers dashed itself in vain.

Once more valour with generalship had conquered valour without it. The defeat was utter and crushing. For fourteen long miles the pursuit went on and only stayed when the walls of Leicester were in sight. The King's army was utterly destroyed and he himself never again appeared at the head of a force in the field.

During the twelve months that followed we see the erstwhile Farmer of Huntingdon in a new light as the beseiger and reducer of strong places. His methods were logical, effective and, we may fairly add, pitiless. Those days were not these any more than William the Norman's or Edward Longlegs' were Cromwell's, and moreover we must remember that he had set himself with all the strength of his mighty nature to stamping the plague of civil war out of the Three Kingdoms with such dispatch as was possible, and it had got to be done speedily, for outside were the enemies of Britain waiting to take advantage of the weakness that this plague might leave her with.

First he summoned the stronghold to surrender, threatening all with the sword. If this is refused he selects his point of attack, batters away at it till he makes a practicable breach, then he gives another chance of surrender, this time with somewhat better terms, but this is the last grace. Refusal now means wave after wave of his irresistible iron and leather-clad soldiery

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pouring into the breach, till at last all opposition is beaten down and then massacre for which, it may be added, he and those with him are never at a loss to find a biblical precedent.

The victories that he won by this method were simply amazing. In about sixteen months he was engaged in some sixty battles and sieges, and took fifty fortified towns and cities with over a thousand pieces of artillery, forty thousand stand of arms, and between two and three hundred colours. The end of this wonderful campaign was the Storm of Bristol. This happened on the tenth and eleventh of September, 1646. As a feat of warfare it is almost incredible. The second city in the kingdom, defended by properly constructed earthworks and fortifications, and garrisoned by four thousand troops with a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, was stormed and taken with a loss of under two hundred men!

The King's infantry were cut to pieces.

It reads more like one of Drake's insolently valiant attacks upon a Spanish treasure-city than a desperate conflict between Englishmen and Englishmen. There can only be one explanation of it, and that explanation is summed up in the two words: Oliver Cromwell. We are bound to grant that the valour was equal on both sides, but equally we are forced to admit that all the genius and generalship were on one.

Looked at from our point of view, there were terrible blemishes on these triumphs. Every advantage was pursued with the unsparing ferocity which was possible only to religious bigotry fired to a white heat. It is only reasonable to suppose that these Puritan champions of the new faith were fired with just the same furious and pitiless zeal as that which inspired the Israelites in their attack on Canaan, or the first armies of Islam in their assaults on the idolators of the East. They slew and spared not, they hewed their enemies in pieces as Samuel hewed Agag "before the Lord," and they honestly believed that the Lord looked down with approval on them and their bloody work.

Priceless treasures of art were destroyed, not only without remorse, but with grim exultation. To them they were abominations of the heathen, just as the Canaanite idols of silver and gold were to the armies of Israel. But however ferociously it was done, the work was done thoroughly, and by August, 1646, the fall of Ragland Castle following on the surrender of Oxford, brought down the curtain on the first act of the Civil War. Charles gave himself up to the Scots at Newark, and Oliver turned to fight the enemies of his own household.

The chief of these enemies, curiously enough, was that same Parliament in whose name he had won all his brilliant triumphs, and a conflict, very interesting to the student of humanity, now began between the Man of Action and one of those Talking Machines which the good Earl Simon some four centuries before had found so singularly ineffective.

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There is no need to tell in detail how the struggle went. Everyone knows how Cromwell preached and prayed and stormed at the self-sufficient busybodies who thought themselves a power in the land because they called themselves a parliament. Then, seeing that no other method would stop their gabble, he brought in his soldiers and turned them out to talk in the streets or wherever else they could get anyone to listen to them, while he went on with his work.

It is not very many years since Thomas Carlyle, who perhaps understood Cromwell better than any other man not living in his own age, was walking over Westminster Bridge with a very distinguished British officer one night, when the mother of Parliaments was busy tearing her hair and rending her garments over some wordy futility or other, and, jerking his thumb towards the lighted windows, he said: "Ah, my lord, I should like to see the good day when you would go in there with a file of Grenadiers as old Noll did with his dragoons, and clear that nest of cacklers out. Maybe the nation would get some of its business *done* then instead of only getting it talked about."

From this there is a certain moral to be drawn by the wise. For my own part I should dearly love to know with what words old Noll himself would have answered the Sage of Chelsea.

The payment of the Scots' arrears by the Parliament, their surrender of the king—who, by the way, was a great deal stronger in helpless captivity than he had ever been at the head of an army—and his seizure by Cromwell through the instrumentality of Cornet Joyce and his troop of horse, now led up to a very singular situation. Cromwell, the conqueror, went over to the side of Charles Stuart the captive, and if it had not been for that fatal twist in the king's moral nature, there is no telling but that he might have been re-seated on a throne supported and surrounded by the pikes and sabres of the Ironsides.

But unhappily for him, it was not in Charles Stuart's nature to "go straight," and, in the end, after Cromwell had faced and quelled a mutiny among his own men on his account, he discovered that the king was playing him false, that he did not honestly wish to follow his policy of "healing and settling," but only to regain his freedom and try the hazard of battle again.

From that moment Cromwell was his unsparing enemy. Now he saw in Charles "The Man of Blood" who, for the sake of a personal aspiration and for personal profit, was eager to once more set his subjects by the ears and light the flame of war from end to end of the country.

West and South and North the Loyalists were arming and rising again and the Scots were marching across the Border, so the Man of Destiny stopped talking and preaching, buckled on his sword and strode out to battle once more.

The first rising was in Wales, and that he crushed as promptly as he did pitilessly. Then he turned with a weary and war-worn army of some seven thousand men, so wasted with marching and privation and sickness that, as a record of the time tells us, "they seemed rather fit for a hospital than a battle," to face the invading Scots in the North.

He met them at Preston. They were three to one—or rather, to be more exact, twenty-four thousand to seven thousand—well armed and found and confident of victory. Yet never did the military genius of the great Oliver shine out more brilliantly than now. What followed was not a battle; it was an onset, a chase, and a massacre which lasted three days and extended over some thirty miles of country. When it was over Cromwell wrote in one of those marvellous dispatches of his: "We have quite tired our horses in pursuit of the enemy. We have killed and disabled all their foot and left them only some horse. If my horse could but trot after them I would take them all."

The next act in the swiftly-moving drama was the trial and execution of him who to this day is considered by some to have been a royal martyr, who only exchanged an earthly for a heavenly crown, and by others is looked upon as the man who deliberately made himself guilty of the worst of all national crimes, the crime of civil war. That is a matter for each one to decide according to his own convictions, which, be it noted, some two and a half centuries of argument have not yet altered. Here we are only concerned with Cromwell's share in it.

There can be no doubt to an unbiassed mind that at one period he honestly tried for a monarchical settlement of the difficulty. It is equally undeniable that he considered Charles's double-dealing responsible for what he held to be the unpardonable crime of the Second Civil War and therefore as having incurred for a second time the guilt of blood. That the execution, or murder, of the king met with his entire approval cannot be doubted, since before it happened he said to Algeron Sidney: "I tell you we will cut off his head with the crown upon it."

So, whether crime or act of justice, it was done, and Cromwell, perhaps more than anyone else, was responsible for it.

The next act is the Dictatorship, and the first scene in it the re-conquest of Ireland, with its massacres and bitter, pitiless persecutions in revenge or punishment, as you will, for other massacres which had gone before. It is a piteous story, and one of no great credit to anyone, but, to borrow the maxim of Strafford, the former tyrant of Ireland, it was "thorough." In nine months with about fifteen thousand men, the Dictator had stamped the Irish rebellion out and made "the curse of Cromwell," a phrase that will dwell on Hibernian lips for many a generation.

But no sooner was the Irish revolt drowned in blood and flame than Prince Charles, afterwards Charles II. of infamous memory, took the Oath to the Covenant, and the Scots rose to support him. Cromwell crossed the Border on July 22nd, 1650.

As it happened the Scottish general was Leslie, the old comrade who had fought at his side at Marston Moor. For some weeks the Scots played a waiting game, and Cromwell, with his men wearied and falling sick, and with no other base than his ships on the coast, hurled texts and biblical harangues at the enemy. In fact, as Mr. Harrison cleverly puts it, "it was not so much a battle between two armies as between two rival congregations in arms."

Leslie and his preachers fired other texts back at him and kept out of his way until the fatal 3rd of September came. By this time Cromwell had only eleven thousand men capable of bearing arms and they were in no great state for fighting. Leslie had twenty-two or three thousand Scots and all the advantage of the position, but the Fates had already taken the matter into their own hands. On the afternoon of the 2nd Cromwell saw that the wary Scot, as some say, driven by the frantic exhortation of the preachers, had forsaken his post of vantage. "The Lord hath delivered them into our hands!" he cried, and straightway began to set his battle in order.

The next morning, while it was yet moonlight, they

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came to blows. In an hour or so it was all over. The Scots fled in utter panic and confusion, "being made by the Lord of Hosts as stubble to our swords," to use Oliver's own words. When the rout was at its height the sun rose, scattering the morning mists. "Let God arise and His enemies be scattered!" he shouted exultantly through the roar of the battle, and then—how characteristic it was of the man!—he halted his army in the very moment of triumph and sang the one hundred and seventeenth psalm, beginning: "O praise the Lord all ye people for His merciful kindness is great towards us!" Then he unleashed his bloodhounds again and the rest was massacre.

Another year passed in miscellaneous fighting and arguing, slaughter and psalm singing, and once more the sun of the 3rd of September, Cromwell's Day of Fate, or, as Byron puts it:

His day of double victory and death,

dawned, this time over Worcester, the scene of "the Crowning Mercy." The same miracles of generalship were accomplished, the same tremendous victory was won at a ridiculously small expense—under two hundred men to conquer an entrenched army of fifteen thousand—and this was the end of the fighting at home.

But meanwhile there was fighting abroad, and, more than that, the fame of the great Oliver and his marvellous doings had been ringing from end to end of Europe. As Clarendon, the historian of the Royalists, candidly admits: "His greatness at home was but a shadow of the glory he had abroad." The mastery of the seas was wrenched out of the hands of the Dutch by Drake, the sea-power of England was organised as its land-power was, and Britain rose at a bound from the degradation to which she had sunk under the first Stuart to the proud position of the first naval and military Power of the world, and the greatest ministers and monarchs in Europe, even the Pope himself, were forced to respect the prowess and cringe for the friendship of the Farmer of Huntingdon.

If, as has been aptly suggested, the great Oliver could have lived to an age which is now a normal one for statesmen, the disgraceful and ruinous interval occupied by the reigns of the second Charles and the second James might have been spared with all their infamy and national loss, and William of Orange might worthily have continued the work which Cromwell so well began. But the time was not yet and so it was not to be. The great ideal of his life, a Protestant alliance, was never realised. His last days were days of darkness and suffering, social, mental, and physical.

Once more the Day of Fate came round, and between three and four in the afternoon the watchers by his bedside heard him sigh deeply and heavily. Some say that he whispered: "My work is done"—and then he died. This may be fact or fancy, but, be that as it may, no man had a better right to pass out of the mystery of the things that are into the mystery of the things that are to be with such words on his lips than Oliver Cromwell, General, Statesman, and King in everything but the empty name.

(Next Week, "William of Orange."

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By Fred Whishaw.

Author of "A Boyar of the 'Terrible.'"

SUMMARY.

The story is told by a 'Varsity man, who, seeking adventure, joins Jameson in his raid against the Matabeles. During a brush with the enemy, Joe Wright, a fellow trooper, meets with his death-wound, and, before expiring, bequeaths a satchel containing his life history and the revelation of a wonderful secret to the narrator, who continues the story in the words of the written confession of his dead comrade. Some years previously, Wright had been a private in a Royal Rifle regiment, stationed in Rajpore, India. He and three companions made a midnight raid on a Hindoo temple, in order to steal a diamond of exceptional value and beauty, situated in the forehead of an idol.

CHAPTER IV.

A Fearful End.

Johnny laughed when he drew the winning lot, and said that luck had come in his way for once.

"Give us the chisel, Alf!" he said, "and I'll have the thing out in two shakes."

"Be careful, Johnny," I warned him; "remember what Miles told us about this idol. He says it's generally known that the Joss can take good care of itself; there may be something in it!"

"Rot!" exclaimed Johnny contemptuously. "The priests spread a report of that kind about to save themselves trouble. Why, don't you see they'd have to watch the blooming thing night and day if it wasn't for the funk they've established about it? They're paid for watching, too, you may bet, and they prefer going home to bed. I'm not afraid. Give us the chisel, Alf!"

"There isn't smoke without a fire somewhere!" I persisted.

"Rats!" said Johnny irreverently; whereat we all laughed, and Hitchins gave him the chisel.

Whether I live for fifty years or but one night from the moment I write these lines, I shall never forget the next scene. That dark heathen temple, and the hideous, cross-legged gods squatting around and about us in every direction—some scowling savagely at us, others seeming to smile with malicious delight as we stood and plotted against the well-being of their principal and chieftain, and everyone of them looking all the more diabolically malevolent and repulsive in the dim light that our lanterns shed about the place.

Johnny did not seem to realise any of the creepiness and horror that I felt. His was a joyous, devil-may-care kind of temperament that would never give way even for a moment to "the blues." He never knew what fear was, did dear old Johnny Phelps, but took one thing with another, accepting everything that destiny brought him with a laugh and a joke, and making light of the most dangerous and difficult matters that others would look grave over. Lord! you should have seen him, as I did, in some of those little frontier wars we were engaged in at that time—fasting, hemmed in in passes—it was all the same to him; he was the life and soul of the rest of us. Poor old Johnny! But my thoughts are running away with me, as they do sometimes, and I must get back to that Joss-house and the idol.

Johnny took the chisel and mallet.

"How am I going to get at him?" he said, laughing.

"Go carefully up and stand on that kind of prayer-carpet in front of him; that's probably where the Johnnies kneel before him," said Jake. "Go carefully, though, in case he lets out at you when you come near."

"Yes, go carefully, for goodness' sake!" I added. I don't know how it was, but my heart was full of a kind of terror, and I wished a hundred times that night that we had never come out on this godless job.

"Oh, I'll go carefully, right enough, don't you make any mistake about that!" laughed Johnny.

"Be ready to jump backwards if you hear any kind of a rumble or creaking!" said Alf. "I'll bet the old boy won't move much without his machinery creaking; it isn't as if chaps came and woke him up every day."

In deference, I suppose, to our advice, Johnny felt his way step by step towards the pedestal on which sat the big idol; he did so with apparent caution, though I do not believe he felt any anxiety. Still, he crawled on, pressing down each foot in turn with a "Woa, Emma!" or a "Steady along, there!" and making sure of each foothold before trusting the whole weight of his body to it.

So he reached the little prayer-carpet that lay before the pedestal, and stopped upon it a moment to pass us a comical bow and a wave of the arm.

"Safe, so far!" said Johnny; "now then, you ugly old varmint, how'm I going to get at your third eye?" he continued; "guess I'd better gouge it out best way I can, what say you, mates?"

"See if it's firm in, or only in a sort of setting," suggested Alf; "it looks to me as if it sat in a kind of hole, pretty loose, and the stone around not touching it."

"Lord! so it is!" said Johnny, looking closer; "there's a rim of space all round it—my! don't it glitter! What'll we do with it when we've got it?"

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He fell over me.

"Keep jolly quiet till we get to England!" said Jake, whose whole frame shook with excitement, as I could plainly see; as for myself, my teeth were all a-chatter; but then I felt in a real old superstitious terror, such as I had never experienced before.

"Well, here goes!" said Johnny.

He inserted his chisel in the chink that encircled the diamond, feeling here and there for resistance, but finding none.

"It seems to be set in a kind of tube or something," he said, "running straight down into the old boy's head; what's the object of having it that way? Probably if I press it, it'll disappear down the tube; that's where the secret is, depend on it! You touch it and it's gone—and not a bad plan either!"

"Press it gently with your fingers and see," said Jake; "what if it drops down into his stomach? We'll hack the Joss into a jelly but we'll find it again!"

Johnny placed his thumb on the great flashing stone. I remember the moment as though it were yesterday. I remember the feeling of intense excitement that had begun to lay hold of me, the offspring, I dare say, of the example of Jake and Alf Hitchins, both of whom stood by, pale and trembling, fidgeting with impatience and agitation. I remember Johnny laughing as he pressed the diamond with his thumb, and I remember thinking how differently he approached this matter from ourselves—he being full of fun and lightheartedness, regarding the thing as a good lark, and no more, while we were terribly in earnest. I remember thinking all this as he touched the diamond, and then there was a sudden quick movement of something, a slight whirr or grating sound that made us all start back in guilty terror, and where Johnny had stood but a moment before there was no sign of him.

"Good Heavens!" ejaculated Jake hoarsely. "What's happened? Where's Johnny?"

"The trap, the trapdoor!" I muttered. "I saw it open under his feet—under the prayer carpet—God have mercy upon us all, let's get out of this awful place!"

"What, without the swag, and without Johnny?" said Jake. "Not I! Lift the prayer carpet, Alf, and we'll prize the thing open—we may be able to get the poor chap out."

"Lift it yourself," said Alf, who was all of a tremble, whether with horror or agitation. "I won't go near the blamed thing."

"Give us a hand then, Joe," resumed Jake—"we shall be all safe if we stand outside the carpet—quickly, the poor chap may be suffocating for all we know!"

We tore up the carpet. Underneath it was a wooden square of about four feet each way let into the tiled floor, but there was no handle to it, or anything that could be grasped to pull it up by. We put the chisel under the sides, here and there, and tugged at it, but in vain—we could make no impression upon it.

"What's to be done?" I gasped. "Will you wait while I run home and fetch a pick or something?"

I looked up as I spoke, and it was as well that I did, for over me stood a tall priest in the act of bringing a curved sword down upon my neck as I knelt at the trapdoor. I don't know where the fellow came from. The others saw him at the same moment, and each—as I dare say I did, too—shouted something inarticulately, and sprang back.

The priest's sword descended, but I had slipped out of the way. He struck at me again, but I darted in this time, and grabbed him round the knees. He fell over me, and we struggled together on the ground.

Whether he lost his sword as he fell or whether Jake Daws possessed himself of it as the Josser and I rolled about I do not know, but Jake got the sword, and presently brought it down upon my antagonist's head just as I had shaken his hands from about my throat, and was on my knees over him ready to scrag him in return.

The priest ceased to struggle. He opened and shut his mouth once or twice, then his legs and arms straightened out, and his jaw fell—he was dead.

"You've killed him, Jake," I said. "Lord forgive you!"

"You fool, it was the only thing to do!" said Jake savagely. "You didn't want him to remain alive and give us all away, did you?"

This certainly would have been awkward.

"Still, it's murder," I said. "You can't get out of that, Jake. Besides, what are we going to do with him now?"

"Why, send him after Johnny," said Jake.

"Stop!" cried Alf. "Don't do anything in a hurry. I've an idea. Why shouldn't we make use of this blamed Josser, Jake, now we've got him? We'll lie him along the prayer carpet, first tying him to the idol with a sash so as he doesn't disappear; then one of you chaps climb up behind the Joss—it'll be safe from there—and press the blooming jewel; down'll go the trap-door, and the priest'll go half way down and stick there with the trap-door half open and half shut. Then we can look and see where Johnny is, and we can fish out the jewel at our leisure, for the blamed thing can't work its spring, or whatever it is, when it's jammed."

"Why, you're a genius, Alf, you infernal coward, after all!" said Jake, with a coarse laugh, and a coarser oath.

"And what's more, we can leave the chap half in and half out, and they'll think he took the diamond and dropped it down the hole when he was caught," I added, forgetting the murder and everything else in the desire to save my own skin.

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"And that's true, too," said Jake; "so come along, my gay sportsman, and do your part in this 'ere play!"

With the words, he dragged his victim to the trap and laid him across it.

"Hold on to him, you Joe," he said, "that's better than tying him up, for we might make a mess of it, and forget to untie him afterwards, so hang on to his foot, and see he don't drag you down. Now, Alf, you blamed funkstick, climb up behind and touch the button, and the figure will work."

"Not I," said Alf, shrinking back, "there may be some infernal murdering trick from that side as well."

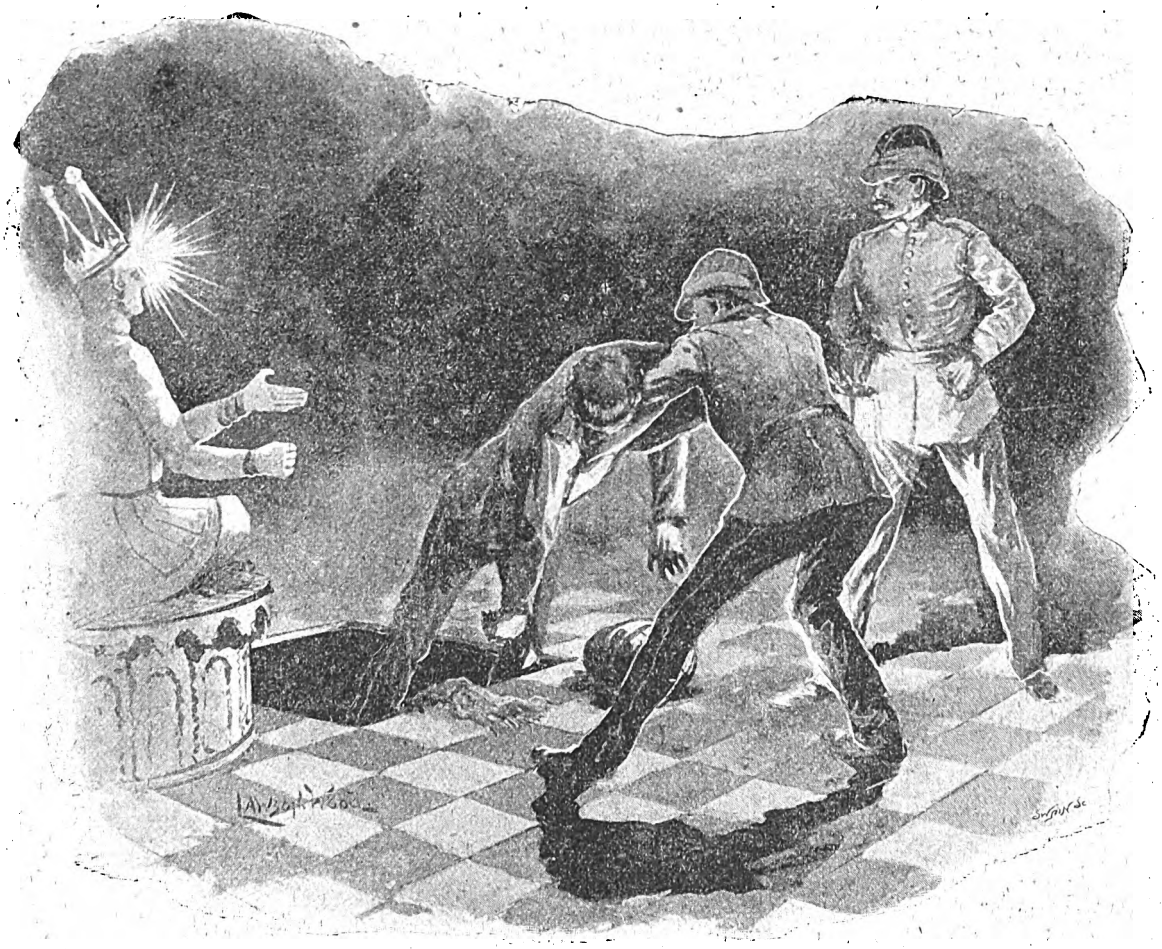
my voice sounded hollow and echo-y, as the voice of a man who speaks down a well.

But there was no answer from Johnny.

CHAPTER V.

THE REAL ARTICLE AND THE SHAM.

JAKE took one of the priest's shoes and let it fall through the half-open trap-door, placing his finger to his lip to enjoin silence. It seemed to me that several seconds passed before I heard anything. Then came a splash.



He fainted, even as I pulled his legs out.

"Oh, I see," said Jake, "so that's why one of us was to do the job, is it? Upon my soul, Alf, I'd kick you blue if you was worth it; here, give us the blamed cask-hoop! Hold on to the Josser, Joe, for all you're worth!"

Jake took the sword, and reaching over the carpet, made little dabs at the diamond till he touched it with the sword-point.

Instantly there was the same whirr or creak, the trap opened and the body of the priest slipped downwards, but I had him tightly by the leg, and held on; then the door came back and jammed him fast, leaving an aperture of a foot or so at the side.

I quickly seized a lantern and peered down, hoping to see or hear Johnny. I shouted his name over and over again;

"Ah," said Jake, "I thought so; it's a well. Poor old Phelps; so *he's* gone. Well, anyway, there'll be one less to divide."

"Oh, he *can't* be dead, Jake," I cried, all the horror of the thing suddenly overwhelming me. "Dear old Johnny *can't* be dead, so suddenly and so horribly. For Heaven's sake let's do something to save him. Raise the alarm and get some ladders. I'll go."

I was up, and half-way to the window before Jake laid hold of my shoulder and stopped me.

"Don't go playing the fool, Joe Wright," he said, "or we shall know where to put *you*, and that's where poor Johnny is. He's drowned as dead as a cat by this time, man. You aren't going to sink the ship for a dead man, no,

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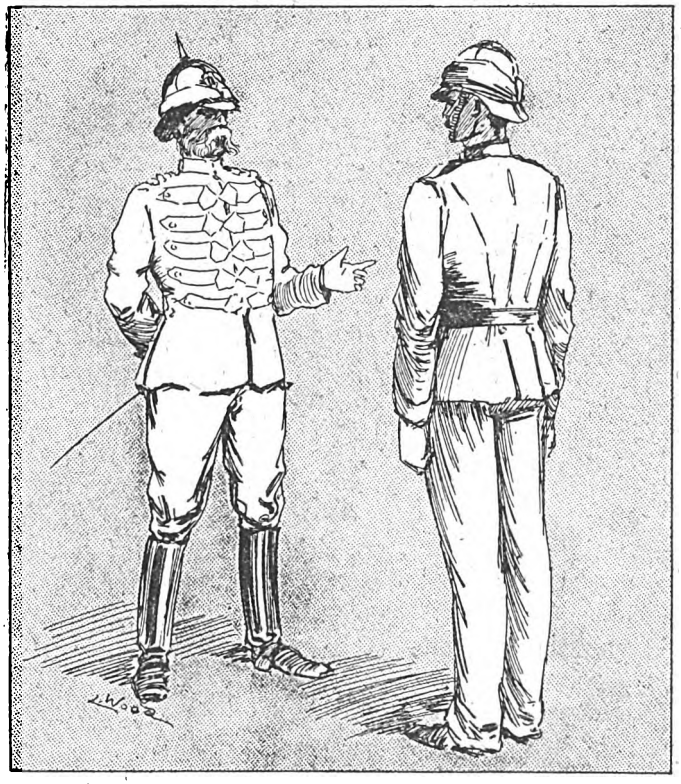
nor for twenty Johnnies, alive or dead. Now you know what Alf Hitchins' and my game is; we've got to keep our necks clear of the rope, sonny, and so have you, so no bloomin' nonsense!"

"I'm as good a man as you, Jake Daws, and perhaps a little better," I said, "and as for Alf, he'd be a good man in a fight if his tongue was a weapon, so I'll have you know that I'm not to be dictated to. Johnny Phelps has got to be saved, I tell you, if he's alive."

"Lord, man, what a fool you are to-day!" said Jake. "Shout down the well again, if you like; do you suppose the chap wouldn't answer if he heard? I tell you he's drowned as dead as the Armada; come, go risking our heads, and your own, too, for a dead man. Johnny Phelps was a good chap, and I'm as sorry for him as you



"Was anything wrong with him?"

are; but dead he is, and that's certain. So be sensible, and we'll have this bloomin' jewel and divide the proceeds, and the Josser here shall get the blame. What say you, Alf?"

"Of course he's dead," Alf assented. "Come, be a man, Joe, and not an infernal fool; you've insulted me to-night, but I forgive you because we can't afford to quarrel now. Besides, if you was to run out like a blooming idiot, and give the alarm, why, I'd have you notice that I've got the sword and would stop your little game in a jiffey!"

I turned contemptuously from Alf Hitchins, and bent over the trap door once again. I called repeatedly down it, entreating Johnny to answer and promising to come down and fetch him if only he'd give tongue; but there was no answering voice, and I was compelled to conclude that he was drowned, or dead some other way, as no doubt he was. At last I abandoned the task.

"There, you see!" said Alf, "now be a sensible chap and stop that rot; what's the next move, Jake—you be skipper, and we'll take our orders from you."

"Well, out with the diamond then, first!" said Daws. "Where's the chisel?"

But the chisel had absolutely disappeared, and I make no doubt that it went down into the *oubliette* with dear old Johnny.

"Take the sword then, you Alf, and dab gently with that; here—stand off the carpet in case of accident—go carefully, and don't chip the jewel; hold on to the Josser, Joe Wright!"

It was as well that I was by. Hardly had Alf touched the big diamond with the point of his sword, than the machine responded instantly. The body of the priest was not thick enough to jam the trap so wide that it would open no further. Alf Hutchins, in sudden terror, overbalanced and stepped upon the priest's body. To save Alf I let go of the dead man, a piece of whose garment came off in my hand, and gripped the live one, nerveless and senseless with abject terror, perhaps pardonably so, for as a matter of fact, he would have followed the priest had I not gripped him just in time, and he was, indeed, half in and half out of the pit. He fainted, even as I pulled his legs out and allowed the trap to close with a bang, having let the sword fall down the well as he stumbled and fell over. Jake laughed aloud.

"By Gum, Joseph, that was a near shave!" he said. "It looked like as if you and I were to divide the swag, my son! Lord! what a fool the man was! Why must he lose his head and the sword too, plague take the idiot! How are we going to get the thing out without it—and the chisel gone too—yes, and the priest, that was going to take all the blame off us! What are we going to do, Joe Wright?"

It was perfectly clear, the idol had beaten us. "We must go home without it!" I said, "and as for the priest, it's just as well he's gone, Jake, for anyone could see that you, or some other murderous villain, had bashed his head in."

"I call that grateful, now!" said Jake, "considering that I saved your life from him!" This was not true, for I had the fellow at my mercy when Jake struck. "However," he added, "it's true the wound would have been seen, and I don't suppose the other Jossers believe that the old idol could have let fly at him, though the general public might."

"Anyhow, there's a bit of his robe sticking out of the trap now!" I said, "so he'll be the suspected party after all!"

"Good!" Jake assented; "then come, let's clean up a bit, and as soon as Alf revives we'll be off for the present; but we'll have that diamond one day, sonny, you see if we don't!"

Hitchins came round presently, and having tidied up the place we all three took our departure, Jake turning to shake his fist at the idol before he climbed to the window:

"Ah, you infernal old villain!" he said, "we're a-coming back, don't you make any mistake! We ain't done with you and your bloomin' one eye yet, not by a longish bit!"

We had no difficulty in getting safely into quarters after this escapade that ended so tragically for poor Johnny; but there was necessarily considerable excitement in the regiment over the disappearance of our unfortunate companion. It was very awkward for me, personally, because the Colonel, knowing that Johnny was a particular friend of mine, examined me pretty closely as to whether I knew anything about him.

Naturally I was obliged to say that I did not know what had become of him, though I supposed he must have

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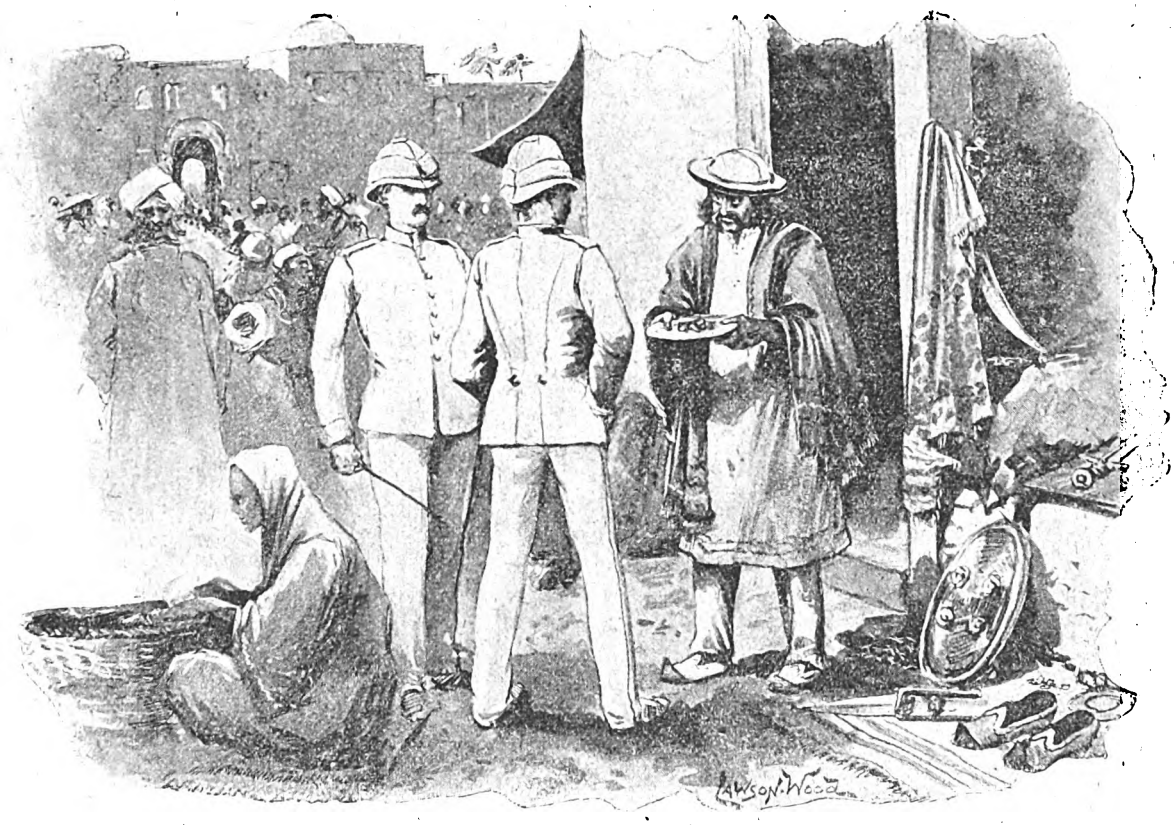

The man produced a saucer filled with counterfeit gems.

deserted for some reason of his own. I trotted out this theory because it was the popularly received explanation of his disappearance, as held by the regiment in general.

"But why—*why* should the poor fellow desert, and the regiment so soon going home again?" asked the Colonel, puzzled—and no wonder—to account for the mysterious affair. "Was anything wrong with him? Was he discontented? Did he imagine himself unfairly treated? Was there any love trouble?" The poor colonel fired a whole string of suggestions at me in his desperation. I caught at the last. I said Johnny *had* got himself into rather hot water, having promised—in one of his reckless moments—to marry a native Mohammedan girl whom he pretended to adore and who adored him without any pretence at all. This girl, I said, had lately worried him to carry out his promise which, as a matter of fact, Johnny never had the slightest idea of doing, and had threatened to make things pretty unpleasant for poor Johnny with his officers if he did not act up to his word before leaving the place for Bombay and England.

This proved a good idea on my part, and seemed to satisfy and somewhat amuse the Colonel, who nevertheless gave orders for a hue-and-cry to be raised, in hopes of finding our poor drowned Johnny. The girl was also questioned, but had nothing to disclose as to her faithless swain, and eventually the search was abandoned and the usual notices issued describing Johnny's appearance, and calling upon all men to hand him over, if found, to outraged authority.

Meanwhile my confederates and I consulted often enough as to our next move, for I may as well confess that, greatly as I now hated both Jake and Alf for the cold-blooded murderers they were, yet I quite realised that I was myself an accessory, and therefore as guilty as they, or near it, and as much in their power to destroy as they in mine. Moreover, in spite of the horror I still felt whenever I acted over again that night's work in the temple, and thought of poor Johnny precipitated into that hideous pit and drowned without hope of succour, yet whenever I recalled the splendid, flashing gem in the forehead of the idol, that evil thing that had been the cause of all this horror and crime and misfortune, I felt that, in spite of everything, I must return and renew the attempt to possess myself of it.

Both Jake and Alf Hitchins were at least equally fascinated and determined to achieve where we had all failed, and many were the consultations we held as to how and when this was to be effected.

One afternoon I walked with Jake through the native bazaars of the town close to which our barracks were situated.

Suddenly Jake jogged my arm.

"Look there, Joe! See the little idol on the bracket there?" he whispered. "That's a miniature of our sportsman up at the temple!"

I looked, and with a shock I recognised it immediately; there it sat, a little, devilish, complacent idol of six inches in height, but fashioned beautifully, in exact imitation of its huge original, down to the very expression of the face, and to the gem in its forehead, which was, of course, a minute specimen, by comparison, and probably a dummy diamond at that.

"Lord, I must have that!" said Jake.

We asked the price of the idol, and inquired what it represented.

The native, whose property it was, then launched out and gave us, in mixed language, a long account of the great idol of which this was a copy. He informed us that there

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was a mystery connected with the god, who was known to punish instantly and terribly those who attempted to touch the magnificent diamond, which was the pride of the temple, and was placed, just like this little one, in his forehead.

"Only lately," he continued, speaking mysteriously and in a whisper, as though he imparted to us a secret which no one else should be privileged to hear, "only lately one of the priests in charge of the temple had been guilty of an attempt to rob the idol, for which sacrilege he had been instantly slain by the god." I asked how this was known. "Because there was nothing left of him but a portion of his garment," said the man, "and a stain of blood on the floor; the rest of him, it is said, disappeared utterly; truly it is an awful thing to offend this great god!"

"That must be a wonderful jewel to tempt a priest to risk his own destruction," said Jake, who never turned a hair, though I felt that I was pale and trembling; "what is the size of it?"

The man produced a saucer filled with counterfeit gems of the exact size and appearance of the real diamond, for the possession of which we were already bartering our souls.

"There," he said, "these are the *fac-simile* of the Eye of the Sun" (these are not his exact words), "I sell hundreds of them. Every English Sahib that comes to the town carries one away with him."

"I'll take one," said Jake, and take one he did, choosing a lovely specimen; and—as I hope to be forgiven—no one who was not an expert could have said it was not a real diamond. We did not buy the model of the idol, however, being too absorbed by this new thing to remember it.

The artificial gem cost us, I think, a rupee and a half—it makes me laugh to think of it, in spite of everything!

CHAPTER VI.

WE LIFT THE BIG JEWEL.

"WHAT did you buy the thing for?" I asked Jake as we walked down the street.

"Why, to make a swop, to be sure, with the real article. This one will suit the old Joss equally as well, and we'll take the liberty of having the other. As for the sportsmen that go there to pray and clean up the place and so on, *they'll* never know the difference, I lay a dollar; they won't suspect it's a dummy, and if they did find out, we should be thousands of miles away by that time."

This was a pretty good idea of Jake's, who was no fool, though a first-class rascal.

That night we two and Alf held a serious consultation. There was but a week now before we should leave the place for ever and sail for England; it was time we made our *coup*.

Therefore the following evening was fixed upon for our renewed attempt, for which we had gradually prepared during the past few weeks, Jake having collected; that is, certain articles and hidden them in the grove that surrounded the temple. There was a large sack, full of rubbish, designed to perform the part of victim to the god's diabolical mechanical revenge. Then there were powerful pincers and a chisel and a brace, all of which we took with us, and lastly, a sword-bayonet which Jake insisted upon wearing.

"Come now, Jake," I said, "no more murders; one's enough."

"Oh, *rats!*" said he. "Self-preservation's the first law. The Jossers had best stay away, and not come poking around on tiptoe from nowhere, if they want to preserve whole skins. What would you do, mate, if one came around while you were there? Not leave him with all our secrets in his hands, *I* know. You'd stab him as soon as I would."

"I wouldn't!" I said. "No murdering for me!"

"All right, then," said Jake, "we'll see. Perhaps there'll be another Josser, and perhaps there won't. I shall be interested to know how you propose to act if he does turn up, supposing he's not to be knocked on the head."

"Sufficient for the day," said I weakly, for, as a matter of fact, I did not see any way out of the difficulty excepting that which Jake indicated—always supposing that another priest should turn up; but, as Jake presently suggested, probably for my consolation, it was likely that no watch would be kept upon the idol since his last achievement, for it was now abundantly evident that the god was quite able to look after himself!

That night found us safely within the temple—Jake, Alf Hitchins, and myself—together with the paraphernalia we had brought with us, including two steel bars of some eighteen inches in length with which we proposed "to hold

Something struck my legs from under me.

the Joss's mouth open, so as he couldn't bite," as Jake picturesquely expressed it, meaning by this that we purposed to hold the trap door wide with them while we worked away at the diamond.

However, since—with all our precautions—there would still be some risk for the actual worker, we drew lots for the post of honour. We did this with three matches, each cutting off a piece of a match and placing it in a cap; then having shaken the cap to mix the matches, we each drew one, the shortest to have the dangerous job.

Jake and Alf both drew before me, and I have always thought, though I said nothing at the time, that they cheated me, pretending to feel about in the cap for the matches while in reality they were measuring them by the touch; anyhow, I was left with the shortest, and the job fell to me.

I did not like it, for besides the danger of the thing itself, I had no confidence in my associates. I felt that they doubted and distrusted me, and would not be sorry if something were to befal me akin to that which befel Johnny; therefore I kept a sharp look-out the while I worked.

First I went behind the idol, and pressed inwards his jewel-eye, the "Glory of Rajpore" as we now knew it was called, as well as "The Eye of the Sun."

Instantly the trap opened, sank, and closed again with a snap.

"Woa, a bit, sonny!" cried Jake, "I wasn't quick enough!"

I repeated the performance. This time Jake slipped his

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sack in, preventing the reclosing of the trap, which now yawned wide, and remained so. Alf handed the steel bars, and with these Jake quickly jammed the thing in its present position.

"Glory!" he ejaculated, when this was done; "now work for all you're worth, Joe Wright, for the thing's as safe as a church."

I now stood close to the trap, but beyond it, and touched the spring a second time, but there was no result; Jake's arrangement had succeeded in rendering the diabolical machinery of the god harmless.

Then I started working in earnest. I was pretty nimble with my fingers, and presently I had loosened the diamond by working under it with my chisel. Very soon after this I had it safely in my hand. It had rested, I now saw, in a kind of cup at the upper end of the tube, which communicated with a spring which worked the infernal machinery. I cannot describe the thrill I felt, holding that diamond for the first time in the palm of my hand; it seemed to set me afire, head to foot.

"Hand down the swag!" said Jake, "and take this dummy gem."

"Lord!" he continued, as I obediently handed down the glorious jewel; "Lord! why, it's as exactly like the other as two peas. See, here, Alf—ain't it a wonder! Take the dummy, Joe, and stick it in where this one was!"

While I was doing this Jake and Alf conversed, but in such very low tones that I could catch nothing of their observations.

I succeeded in fixing the dummy jewel easily enough. It was a simple arrangement, and all I had to do was to push the base of it well into the socket, and then jam the edges of the tubing over it. I had the whole thing fixed up in a few minutes.

"Hold on a minute and see if the blooming mouse-trap works first," said Jake.

He removed the supports, and the trap banged up to the floor level. I touched the diamond and the machinery worked easily, that is, the trap opened and shut again with a whirr and a bang, just as it had when it swallowed poor Johnny.

"Try it once more, so as to be sure," said Jake.

Just then, even as I placed my finger upon the spring to work the trap, it occurred to me what a fool I had been to let Jake hold the big diamond while I stood in this position; if I had held it or put it in my pocket until the job was finished, I should have been perfectly safe against any murderous tricks he might play me, whereas now—if it were to occur to him—he had me more or less at his mercy. He and Alf together could easily push me suddenly upon the fatal spot as I touched the spring, and in a moment I should be dashed to the bottom of the pit, like Johnny.

It has taken several minutes to explain this sudden terror of mine, but the idea flashed through my brain in the thirtieth part of a second.

At the very same instant something struck my legs from under me, and I fell forwards, knocking my forehead against the idol's pedestal, and subsiding on the floor with a large part of my body across the trap-door. Owing, I suppose, to the inspiration of terror that had darted through my mind, or mistrust of Jake, I had not pressed the spring, and to this fact I doubtless owe my life.

I sprang to my feet and confronted Jake, catching hold of him by both shoulders and shaking him to and fro.

"Explain, if you can, you infernal blackguard," I said, "before I smash you."

"Let go, you fool," said Jake, laughing, but looking very wickedly. "You were standing with a foot on the trap, wasn't he, Alf? You'd have been in in another second if I hadn't pulled you back."

Alf assented.

I knew it was a lie, and that the blackguards had meant to murder me, but I thought it better to pretend that this explanation satisfied me. After all I had gained much by the episode, for I now knew for certain that this precious pair were minded to get me out of the syndicate and divide the proceeds of our enterprise by two instead of three parts. And since this was the state of affairs it was just as well to know it.

So I stared him in the face a while, as though weighing his words, and presently let go of him with a laugh, and said if that had been so it was all right, and I begged his pardon.

"Granted, mate," he replied, "but, Lord love you, what a fellow you are to suspect a friend. Why, what should I gain by murdering you, do you suppose?"

"Well now, upon my life it struck me that you might be doing it for the sake of a bit of extra gain," I laughed, "but I see, now I think of it, that it couldn't have been that, for a third part of the value of this little Glory of Rajpore will keep a man nicely for the rest of his days without his having to murder a friend to make it a half!"

"Why, that's the very truth, my son!" said Jake heartily, "and you go and suspect an innocent party of a crime he'd scorn to commit, and hadn't had no idea of committing. It's too bad."

"Well, shake hands on it!" I said. "It's all right now," and so I shook hands with my would-be murderer, knowing him to be so, but making belief I had no suspicion; and presently, having left the place as tidy and clean as we had found it, and the big Joss grinning away as complacently, with the dummy in his forehead, as though he still wore the Eye of the Sun there, we took our departure and got safely home to quarters with our big prize in hand.

I spent the remaining portion of that night in pondering deeply upon my position. I may say that I honestly wished to Heaven that I was out of the whole business with its horrible tale of dishonesty and crime and the detestable evil conscience that attended such things. But in it I was and in it I must remain, and since I could not escape the disagreeables of the position, I was determined that I would see to it that I reaped my fair share of the advantages of it.

Now I was convinced before everything that Jake's ultimate intention in this matter was to have the entire profit to himself, and that he would either rid himself of me or of my company as a preliminary step to that end, and I racked my brain to devise some plan by which to defeat his projects, as I understood them.

The upshot of my cogitations was an odd one. I visited the bazaar on the following morning and bought a second *fac-simile* of the Eye of the Sun.

(To be continued next week.)

YOU CANNOT

Find a more interesting paper for Sunday reading than *The Sunday Reader*. This week's number is particularly good. There are competitions, and amongst the prizes is a magnificent

TEN-GUINEA SINGER SEWING MACHINE.

The contents of this week's *Sunday Reader* include an interview with Lady Henry Somerset, the Opinions of Prominent Preachers on the Immortality of Animals, Anecdotes and Stories of Queen Victoria, an illustrated article about a Tomb with Eighteen Effigies, a picture of a Minister who Preaches in Policeman's Costume. In addition there are scores of articles, anecdotes, and stories of a most interesting character, and the paper is illustrated profusely throughout.

Every Thursday. **The Sunday Reader.** *One Penny.*

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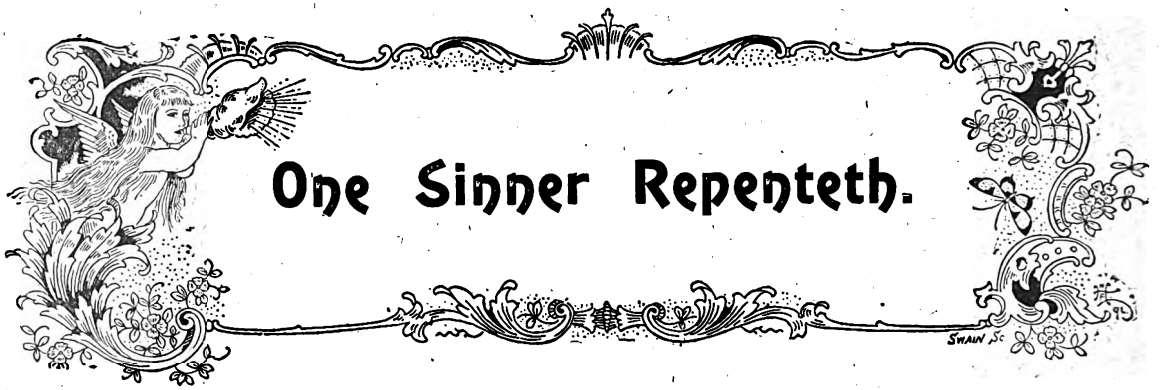

One Sinner Repenteth.

We paused upon a ledge of rock and looked down into the valley. A beautiful valley looked away from the great world by mellow ranges of encircling hills. Soft symphonies in colour, chain upon chain they rose and linked themselves with the uncertain blue of east and west. Green meadow slopes led to a shining upland, bright with autumn's harvest.

As we seated ourselves upon the trunk of a tree, felled by lightning in a recent storm, Charles Dysart began this story:

"Three years since my wife and I wintered in the South of France; on our way home we stopped at Paris. The evening after our arrival we attended a ball given by friends at their new house in the Bois de Boulogne.

"The affair was notable: everyone of wit, wealth, birth or beauty was present; the drawing-rooms were thronged with representatives of every creed and clime. In the midst of this brilliant assemblage my wife was conspicuous for her loveliness, and her rare gifts of language drew about her a score of diplomats.

"Next morning, the papers contained elaborate descriptions of the function and dwelt with admiration upon my wife's dress—her jewels inspired especial comment.

"I laid aside my paper and looked out of the window. My eye rested upon the tender green of early budding trees. The spirit of spring was everywhere—it seemed to tincture my very soul—and there came upon me a longing to leave the town.

"'Louise,' I said, 'let us spend the day at St. Cloud.' She acquiesced with an almost childish show of pleasure, and soon we were on our way to the lovely spot.

"The end of a happy day found us back in the capital, aglow with happiness. Something, however, followed, close upon our return, which diverted our thoughts.

"We found our apartment as we had left it. The morning papers lay in confusion upon the table, our books and other paraphernalia were undisturbed.

"As we contemplated dining out, my wife at once went to her room to prepare her toilet. She was slightly fatigued and said, as she left me:

"'I dislike to wait upon myself; it was a mistake to send Alphonsine on ahead;' and I was coward enough to answer:

"'I told you so.'

"Then she left me with reproach written upon her face, and I picked up some unanswered letters with a determination to do my duty. In a few moments I was aroused from my task by a stifled scream. I hurried to the door crying:

"'What is the matter?'

"Louise stood in the centre of her room, pale and trembling, scattered about her in all directions lay the contents of two empty trunks.

"'My jewels!' she gasped.

"'What of them?'

"'They are all gone!'

"For a moment I stood transfixed and mute before her.

"My memory is not quite clear as to what we did during the ensuing hour. Of course, we summoned the manager of the hotel, who behaved very well and offered to do all in his power to facilitate the recovery of our chattels.

"He, however, pointed out the fact that we had neglected to deposit our valuables in the safe which the hotel provided for that purpose, and called our attention to notices to that effect in all the rooms of our suite. He declared that the hotel could not be held responsible. The notice of our loss was sent to police headquarters, and detectives were immediately set to work upon the case.

"Louise and I were late for dinner. The evening was a blank to me.

"The remaining days of our sojourn we devoted to seeking our belongings. A suitable reward was offered and a description of the missing trinkets telegraphed to all parts of the country, but at every point the police were baffled, and in the end we came away without a clue or the least hope of recovering our property.

"A month later I was seated in my den in Park Lane when the butler informed me that a man wished to see me.

"'His card,' I said absently, not raising my eyes from the magazine before me.

"'If you please, sir, he is not the kind that would have a card, sir.'

"'A beggar?'

"'Looks like it, sir.'

"'Why did you let him in? Have I not told you that I cannot receive such people?'

"'I did not let him in, he said he would wait upon the steps.'

"'It is impossible for me to see him, Caulkins. In future you must be more careful.'

"'But he seems very anxious and worried, and says that you alone can save his soul, sir.'

"'Distress,' I exclaimed, flinging the book from me, realising with impatience the feeling of selfishness which had at first prompted me to turn him from the door—'distress shall always find a friend in me.' I advanced to the hall, bidding Caulkins admit the man.

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"He came in, shuffling and shy. He was undersized and ill-favoured, having a motley collection of strangely assorted features. He wore shabby clothes of the coarsest make. When he spoke I was struck with the singular beauty of his voice, which was refined and musical, like a skilfully-tuned stringed instrument.

"'Pardon me for intruding upon you,' he began, 'I come to make a sad heart happy by giving to a worthy man his own.'

"His words surprised me.

"'What do you want?' I asked.

"'To speak with you alone.'

"There was a persuasive quality in the tone that made his request a command.

"I assented, and led him into the billiard-room. When he entered, he looked hurriedly around him with a mistrustful glance, then he abruptly closed the door and locked it.

"'May I examine the cupboards?' he asked, slowly and sweetly, like an obedient child suing for some trifling indulgence.

"I was too stupefied to reply. He opened the cupboards, inspected them, and then investigated the wide fireplace, after which he seemed entirely satisfied.

"'Mr. Dysart,' he said, 'now that we are alone I can speak. I feared to approach the subject before any one, as it is of a purely confidential character.'

"He leant forward with both arms upon the billiard-table and looked at me very earnestly. I then noticed that there were tears glistening in his eyes.

"'Mr. Dysart, I am—a thief.'

"My heart throbbed violently, not from fear, but from a sensation of poignant pain which his voice awakened. The announcement ended in a muffled sob. Instinctively I murmured: 'Poor soul.'

"'Thank you, God bless you, for those words!' The way in which he uttered this would have softened a stone.

"'I have come to you, because you are honoured among men, because in my darkness, in the depths of evil, I have watched your unselfish devotion to mankind; and for years I have longed to come once, face to face with you and pour out my soul. Others have tried to help me, but they have failed. Their narrow charity and intolerant virtue stung into life my worst passions, and rebellious, unredeemed, I left them—still a sinner.'

"His voice broke with emotion.

"'Charles Dysart, you can save me. Listen: I was born in a hillside hamlet of Berkshire, on an old farm where my people for generations had dwelt in peace and consecrated their simple lives to honest toil. I was one of many children, and my boyhood was mainly spent in taking honey to market, as my father owned an apiary. I suppose you never heard of Silverdeen honey? Ah! it was sweet as innocence! I was a shiftless lad and wayward, but never wicked. When I was sixteen my father died, and some of us went to work. That was the beginning of the end. A country lad, I came to the city to get employment, and I went to the bad. Evil companions, bad examples, and my own weak nature, have made me what I am.'

"Here a violent cough seized him, and when he had succeeded in controlling it he was pale from the wrenching he had sustained. In acknowledgment of some proffered remedy, he smiled faintly and said:

"'Oh, no matter about the cough, it is an old story. I have a weak lung.'

"After a pause he went on. 'My mother is still living, and I want to see her—you can't know how much I long to hear her voice. She is very old and blind, and she has prayed all these years that her lost sheep might be found. Some weeks ago I wrote to the postmaster and asked for news of her. His answer made me wish to go home, for in it he said—he is a good man and verger of the old church where I prayed as a child—"There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth."'

"I went forward and held out my hand. 'Let me be a friend to you,' was all I could say. There was a strange yearning look in the man's face, as he checked his impulse to take my hand, replying: 'Don't tempt me. I cannot take your hand until I have earnt the right to touch it, and I have not yet finished my story.

"'Six weeks ago you were in Paris. I stole your wife's jewels.' His voice rang out in a plaint, then silence fell between us. When he spoke again, it was thus:

"'Your wife lost a diamond and sapphire bracelet, an emerald ornament for the hair, a watch crusted with brilliants, two stars and a crescent of diamonds, a dragon fly of opals, a pendant of turquoise and a pearl necklace of seven strings. My partner, Slim Sanxy, and I took them. It was a big haul and we managed it with professional finish. Some second-rate bunglers would have taken the traps out of the city, but we knew they were safer in Paris. Some novices would have picked out the stones, but we realised that the pieces were more valuable intact, and that time would make it possible to pawn or ship them. In all this we showed the skill, born of good training.

"'We divided the spoil; I got the whole kit except the necklace, which more than balanced the rest. Slim has a weakness for pearls, and he cheated me in that deal. While you had the best detective talent of half-a-dozen cities at work, your jewels were lying in a little trunk in a back attic in the Rue Garrol. The pearl necklace is still there. I have quarrelled with Slim and we have dissolved partnership. We were a celebrated firm, Sanxy and Meridan. Some of the small pieces of jewellery are here in town, the others are in a Safe Deposit in Manchester, so I can't restore them to-day. I will fetch you the watch and bracelet in half-an-hour, and everything else shall be given back before I am a week older. I ask nothing from you, I only beg you to help me to be an honest man in future.'

"He was out of breath from his rapid recitation and another fit of coughing came upon him. Bewildered as I was I found voice to say:

"'I will help you. Bring me back the bracelet if you can, my wife values it more than all the rest of her ornaments. I gave it to her when we were engaged.'

"'I knew,' he sighed. 'I saw the inscription inside of it, "Louise from Charles." I once had a sweetheart of my own, and, had she lived, I would have been a better man.'

"'The necklace, can I recover that also?'

"'Yes, telegraph to Scotland Yard for a man to go to 87, Lockspur Street, and ask for Casper Meridan—that's my name—Meridan will not be in, then ask for Slim Sanxy. If he is out, let the officer go to the back attic—the house is only three storeys—and in the back room, under the bed, he will find a little trunk with one hinge off and a broken lock; round it is tied a thin rope, knotted in six places. In the bottom of the trunk is a newspaper package which contains the case of pearls.'

"'You say you can get the bracelet and watch to-day?'

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"'Yes, here are the pawn tickets.' He drew them from his pocket.

"'Have you the money to redeem them?'

"'Not at present.'

"'How much do you need?'

"'Ten pounds. I can get that amount from my friend Wilkes late this afternoon.'

"'But I want my wife to have her bracelet as soon as possible. I will give you the money.'

"'I cannot accept your offer. Remember, Mr. Dysart, I am a thief by my own confession.' I handed him the money.

"'I will be back in half-an-hour.'

"As he unlocked the door he turned, and, noting some half defined expression on my face, burst into tears, then he laid the money upon the billiard table.

"'I see you don't trust me,' he cried his voice husky from humiliation. 'Take back the money, I will leave you the tickets, and you can send one of your servants for the things.'

"The man groaned aloud: 'Charles Dysart, you do not trust me,' the words vibrated through the room like an accusation and I felt like a criminal before his judge.

"'Good-bye,' he added, hurrying into the hall.

"I followed him in haste and drew him back into the room. In my heart rang the sweet old text, and, as I laid my hand upon Meridan's wrist, I whispered:

"'"There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth." I have confidence in you, and I insist upon your taking the money. I will try to help you to a better future. Bring my wife's things here in half-an-hour, I will wait for you. I shall also telegraph to Scotland Yard. I believe everything that you have told me.'

"A look of great joy overspread his face and for a moment the whole man seemed transfigured. Reverently he took my hand and touched it with his lips. Then he murmured: '"There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth."'

"The music of the words will linger in my memory for ever.

"When he was gone I told all to Louise and we fell to making plans for his redemption.

"The clock struck—our half-hour was over.

"An hour went by and still we waited. The shadows deepened and waned.

"At eight o'clock Meridan had not returned. Torn by conflicting emotions, I passed the night between doubt and belief, between hope and fear; at heart despising myself for my lack of faith.

"In the morning I decided to call at Scotland Yard. The Inspector received me in his private office, blandly smiling and politely interested. I related to him in detail every incident of the previous day.

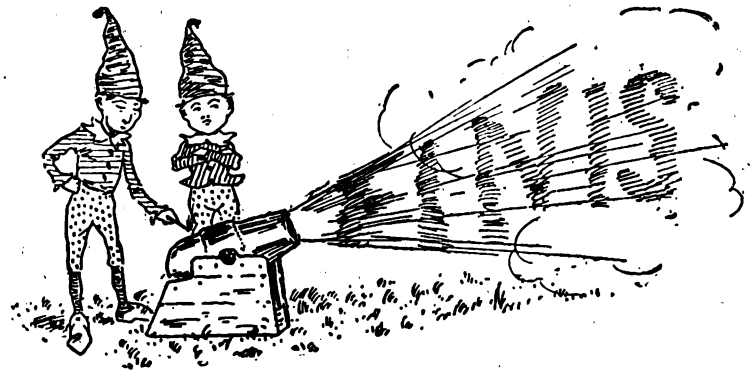
"When I had finished, not a muscle of his face betrayed his thoughts. He rose and walked to a cabinet, from the second drawer of which he took a photograph. Handing it to me, he said pleasantly:

"'That is your man.'

"'Yes.'

"'Robert Bolton, aged forty-one, a native of Lancashire. One of the most audacious rogues in Great Britain. Commonly known as Silvertongue.'"

H. P. Rogerson.



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Frederico's Revenge.

Under the cherry trees, hung with their red and scarlet spheres, the stranger cantered his tired steed wearily. He inhaled the sweet fragrance of the berries with the subtle aroma of long-dry meadows moistened by recent rain. A dreamy breeze stirred the leafage and shook down sundry of the ripest fruit to the soft grass at his horse's feet. The inharmonious notes of the locusts and katydids mingled in chorus in his ears.

At the laburnum tree near the gate the stranger tethered his horse, and lifting the latch, passed in under the white sprays of the Cherokee roses with a sigh. His smooth black hair and piercing eyes—fine still, in spite of his forty years—his flowing moustache and rather ostentatious attire proclaimed him a Spaniard, and being a Spaniard, it irked him to exert himself so near the hour of siesta. But there was that in his mind that overcame his lassitude, though the house he approached through the avenue of laurels was in fair Virginia, and it was the month of June.

In the open space before the door, where a low chair was tilted tenantless against a tree, he hesitated a moment and felt for something in the breast pocket of his bright-buttoned coat. There was a sharp "click," that scared away one or two of the fowls feeding there, and reassured, he went up the two stone steps.

The door stood ajar, but was hastily drawn open as his foot scraped the top flag, and a girl in cool white and blue stood in his way.

"What do yuh want hyar?" she asked somewhat aggressively.

The weary *caballero* stood still a full minute before he framed words in answer. Never before had he seen such lustrous eyes, such a delicate olive face, so handsome a head of hair. Never? Yes once—years ago—he had seen a face like that, the very reflex of that, though scarcely quite so fair—seen it and loved it. The fire of a sudden animation awoke in him.

"Is Señor Harding at home? I have a wish to see him," he finally said.

"He iz mendin' hiz hay-ricks tuh-day, sir," replied the girl, eyeing the handsome stranger curiously, while she deftly twined a red sash round her waist. "but ef yuh pertticklerly want tuh see him, yuh kin wait. Yuh kin sit thya', while I tidy." And she pointed to an old rocker opposite the window.

Without another word she bustled about her "tidyin'" duties, flitting about the large room with a certain easy grace and anon stealing sidelong glances at the stranger. His eyes followed her everywhere, and when her shapely little head came in the path of the pattern of light that crept in between the fluttering clematis of the window, she looked so radiantly lovely that the visitor half repented of his errand.

The old-fashioned clock announced noisily that half-an-hour had gone, and the girl busied herself laying a white cloth on the table and bringing out the dinner, and he saw, with a vague wonder, that she set out three plates, and placed a knife and fork and spoon by each.

"Dad'll not be long now," she vouchsafed him abruptly. "I'll call him."

She went to the doorway and trilled out: "Coo-ee! Coo-ee!" in a sweet if penetrating voice. "I reckon that'll bring him hyar, moughty quick!" she said.

The stranger, regarding her southern, almost Spanish beauty, with very open admiration, said slowly:

"*Creo mio!*—believe me—no man could decline a summons from one so fair!"

"Yuh're tol'able complimentry, stranger," she laughed, not ill-pleased, "but I ain't s'posin' yuh think compliments ez new to me?"

Federico Vadés comprehended her full Virginian idiom perfectly. It reminded him—as did her face, her eyes, her rich brown throat—of a time long past, a bitter-sweet amour upon the plaza of a house in far Seville.

"Of course not, Señorita," he said, in his best English, "your beauty commands it from men, as it must provoke envy in women. But is that not the *padre*—Señor Harding?"

"Hyar he iz—en dead tired, too; ain't yuh, dad?"

"That's so, honey," broke in a strong masculine voice. "Fyah tired out, en ready for a glimpse of your pret'y face, en a taste of dinner."

The iron-grey man—old in work and worry, if not in years—picturesque in his soft felt hat, rough suit, and cowhide boots, had got thus far in his observations when he caught sight of the stranger—who had risen and stood with hand in his pocket—on the opposite side of the table. He started violently, as though the car of memory had jogged suddenly over a deep rut in life's road, and looked keenly at the unbidden guest. His hand sought his hip

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pocket, and on his face was something like the queer expression on the other man's.

He was silent awhile, and the Spaniard never spoke while the girl glanced from one to another in surprise. At last his lips moved, and he said deliberately:

"So yuh've found me out, hev yuh? Well, yuh know Eph Hardin'—you *did* know him"—with a grim relaxing of the features—"en you don' expect Ephraim Hardin' tuh go back on eny trouble ov his own creatin'?"

The tone, though low, was one of concentrated earnestness, and the last syllables conveyed a defiance, a menace.

A red flush mounted to the Spaniard's brow, and his arm moved as though he would withdraw his hand. He caught the girl's swift glance upon him, and paused, irresolute, unnerved.

"Why don' yuh speak?" asked Harding. "Yuh may ez well get through with what yuh hev tuh say, en let me sit down."

"You know well what I might say," replied the stranger significantly. "I have not come all the way from España (Spain) for a little purpose. I was accounted a good marksman in the army twenty-five years ago."

"So yuh wuz," said old Eph, recovering his usual complacency and helping himself to bacon and greens as he sat down. "So yuh wuz, ef I 'member right. As fur that, Eph Hardin' wuz never reckoned a slouch when shootin' wuz concerned. Eph Hardin' hez been reckoned considrabul smart as a shooter—cert'n'y."

The quiet assumption of superiority implied in this speech nettled the other, and with a Spanish oath he drew something bright and shining from his coat and laid it on the cloth before him.

"If you have one to match that," he said, "we will finish our disagreement now and have done with it. I would have shot you like a dog as you came in, but for your daughter here—she is so much like her mother. For her sake we will fight our quarrel fairly."

Quick as lightning Ephraim whipped his revolver out and laid it opposite the other.

"Thank yuh fur nothin!" he said. "Ef yuh hadn't been so pow'ful dil't'ry, I shud hev plugged yuh orf ez soon ez I seen yuh—what's that fur, Evely?"

For the girl, pallid-faced and wide-eyed, had sprung forward and placed one hand on each implement of death.

"Yuh've no right to fight hyar, before me," she cried. "Leastways, 'thout tellin' me the why and wherefore ov it."

"Yease, honey, yuh're right. Yuh shud know. En ef yuh kin wait, señor, I'll tell her now. Its cert'n'y pertickler she shud know."

The other nodded; his eyes once more wandered to Eveline's southern features and furry hair. She rose from the table and went and stood with her hands behind her in the dappled sun and shadow of the window.

Harding slowly laid down his knife and fork and twisted round his chair. Then he cleared his throat once or twice.

"Yuh remember yo' mother, Evely? Yuh remember how sweet she wuz—jes' like yo'self, darter?"

Eveline acquiesced quickly.

"En yuh kyarnt rec'lect me being bad in no way, Evely? Yuh don' know enybody ez kin p'int tuh enythin' ez old Eph Hardin's done ez he oughter be 'shamed ov, do yuh? Yuh kyarnt say ez I've ever been mean, kin yuh?" asked Ephraim confidently.

"No dad," said the girl, wondering what connection there was between the two queries. "Yuh've aluz been straight, yuh've never been a crook."

"No, yuh never heard of Eph Hardin' bein' mean, Evely—neyther yuh nor enybody else hyar hez heard that. But I *wuz* mean once, en it wuz fur yo' mother's sake, honey. Don't shift from where yuh are, Evely—yuh look jes' like her, so,—en I'll tell yuh how it wuz.

"It's a long time back now, when I wuz a foolish young cub, en had been sent out tuh Yewrope tuh see the sights. It *wuz* gettin' time fur to come home, en I had fetched up in sleepy Seville — Sayveelyay, they call it thyar—whah yo' mother wuz bawn. She was of'en at a house whah I visited, en this hyar young fellar—he wuz young, then, yuh mind—wuz engaged to mah'y her when she came ov age.

"I don' know how it wuz, but I envid *him* at ferst, en then I came tuh lovin' *her*, en the thing wuz done. She loved me, as yuh know, honey, but dar'n't go agenst her folks while Federico held her tuh her bond, en nacherally I wuzn't goin' tuh allow ez a Yankee shud give in tuh a lazy Spaniard ez wuz fit for nothin' only tuh sit under orange trees and smoke cig'rettes from sun-up till owl-time. It riled me, darter, tuh think ov, en besides, tho' I wuz young, I loved yo' mother 'nough fur twice my age."

Ephraim paused a moment, reflectively. He was outwardly as unmoved now as though he was alone with the white-clay pipe he twirled in his fingers with the deftness born of long habit.

"I've never tol' this tuh enybody befo', en I don' like it now," he pursued slowly, "but I s'pose it hez tuh be done. Well, tuh make it short, I pertended for a while tuh be indifferent tuh yo' mother an' great pards with Federico hyar, so's I could find out somethin' about him ez wud give me a lead in gettin' him outer my way. En I hadn't long tuh wait fur that somethin'. I found ez he wuz a big polertishun—a Republican—en wuz plottin' agenst the crown, en so—but shuh, darter, yuh kin see now what I did, sure-ly?"

"Yuh split on him tuh the Guv'n'ment, so's he got impris'n'd, en then, hidin' yo' part in it, yuh came express tuh hyar with yo' wife—with mother."

"Hit's right good guessin', is yo's, Evely! Hit's jes'

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what I did, en since then till now I've never seen nor heard of Federico hyar."

"En now he's cum—en about time he did come!" said Evely, carried away by her strong sense of justice. Her father was silent.

"Now you know why I am here, señorita," said Vadés, impatiently. "It is time we ceased talking, and came to deeds. I have suffered long and bitterly, and travelled far to find your father out, and my horse is waiting at the gate. I have sworn to have vengeance on the man who has ruined my life, and we Spaniards never forego a revenge."

His hands clutched the revolver. His fingers rested on the trigger. Old Ephraim made a swift move as though to raise his weapon, too, as he left his chair, then suddenly let his hand fall, and stood there motionless, not speaking. Federico Vadés levelled his weapon full at his adversary's heart; the muscles of his face contracted grimly.

"Yuh sharn' kill him, stranger!" cried the girl. her love reviving in an impulse. "Yuh sharn' kill him 'thout killin' me ez well. He's my father, en my mother loved him—en tol' me to take kyar ov him fur her sake. Yuh kyarnt tuch him now!"

Her strong arms were round the old man's waist; her pulsing form betwixt him and the threatening death.

"Don't make me look a fule, gyrl," said Ephraim angrily, struggling with her. "I'm one to stand up fur my own misdoin's. Lemme go, honey"—in a softer tone—"Yuh kin arsk Federico hyar whether he'll be likely to st›p shootin' fur yuh."

A day ago the Spaniard would have ridiculed the suggestion that he would have felt any qualms in such a position. Now he hesitated, muttered indistinctly, dropped his right hand, and stepped back a pace.

"I can wait," he said sullenly, folding his arms.

Eveline disengaged herself from her shame-faced parent and regarded the stranger curiously.

"What 'ud yuh say ef I cud tell yuh how to have yo' revenge 'thout killin' dad—en me?" she asked. "Ef yuh cud take somethin' from him ez he kyars fur more than his life?"

The man returned her gaze steadily, thought a moment, and decided:

"If I could do that, señorita," he said, "it would be a keener pleasure, if there is anything that——"

There came a queer gleam—an admixture of self-abnegation and mirth—into the girl's clear, round eyes, and her red lips framed the words:

"Yuh'll mah'y *me*, en take me away. Yuh're in love with me now, else yuh'd have fired."

Her face was radiant, she was altogether lovely—the very image of her mother. Federico stepped forward, letting his revolver fall from his nerveless fingers. He drew closer and took her hand, and as she bent towards him, kissed her on the lips.

"As you say, Evely. You are dearer to me than his own life. Come, my horse is waiting."

The girl took his hand without a tremour, and followed him into the sun-glare of the doorway. The iron-grey man left by the table neither moved nor spoke until their shadows fell across the white-flagged floor to his feet. It was all so sudden, so entirely unforeseen.

"Say, Federico," he said, turning quickly, "hit's scarcely so pertic'ler that yuh take Evely 'thout her dinner. Kyarnt yuh wait a few minnits—bein' ez we're quits?"

His voice was steady yet, but there was a suspicious glisten on the lower lids of his eyes.

He spoke to Vadés, but he was looking past him at his daughter. Señor Vadés looked into her face likewise, read consent there, and turned back into the room.

"Yes, Ephraim," he said. "I can wait now I find revenge so very sweet!"

Harding grew even graver than his wont, and the hard lines on his forehead puckered into painful distinctness.

"This iz all very well," he said "but I want to arsk yuh each a questyen. En answer me straight, both ov yuh, er things stands ez they did befo'. Do yuh *love* her, Federico, same's yuh loved her mother, same's *I* loved her?"

"*Si*, señor. She is her mother young again."

"En yuh, Evely, does yuh love *him*, same's yo' mother loved me?"

"Yes, dad."

"Yuh ain't playin' with me, darter? It's a fac'?"

"Yes, dad. I'm ready tuh mah'y him when the hay's got in."

Ephraim was satisfied. Even a katydid cleaning its long thin legs on the window-sill, escaped his usually ruthless fingers.

"Yuh cert'n'y air sweet, sugar," he said, seizing her hand and drawing her towards him. "Yuh air. But yuh ain't goin' from hyar tuh-day, nor tuh-morrer, ef I guess right. Yo' dad'll be thya' when yuh air wed, er there'll be some moughty pow'ful ructions in this part ov old Virginy!—En yuh ain't goin' jes' yet, son-in-law prespective!" he added.

Nor did Federico. Sounds of quiet talk and sundry peals of laughter came from the house at intervals the rest of the day, and later, the glow of lamplight through the warm red curtains. The sun went down without the silence of the avenue of laurels being broken by the noise of horse-hoofs on the soft grass, and it was quite dark when the pointers of the Great Bear, shining through a rift in the breaking night-clouds, saw the *Caballero* come out to feed and stable his weary steed, and then go in again, bolting the door behind him.

GEORGE C. WALLIS.

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on Jubilee Day; of that there can be little doubt. The crush in the streets will be tremendous, and as there is little possibility of your being able to obtain a vehicle from the station to the seat which you may have engaged, you will have to force your way through the seething mass.

The most sensible thing under the circumstances, therefore, will be for you to carry in your pocket a copy of *Pearson's Weekly*, dated June 26th, with the special insurance coupon signed. Then, in the unhappy event of your meeting with a fatal accident, your next of kin will receive £100, which is the amount guaranteed by the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Corporation, Limited.

This valuable number of the paper will be published on Friday, June 18th, and will contain full particulars of the conditions under which the claims will be met.

It goes without saying that you, yourself, will not disregard this advice. Do your friends who are going to the Jubilee procession in London a good turn by telling them about this.

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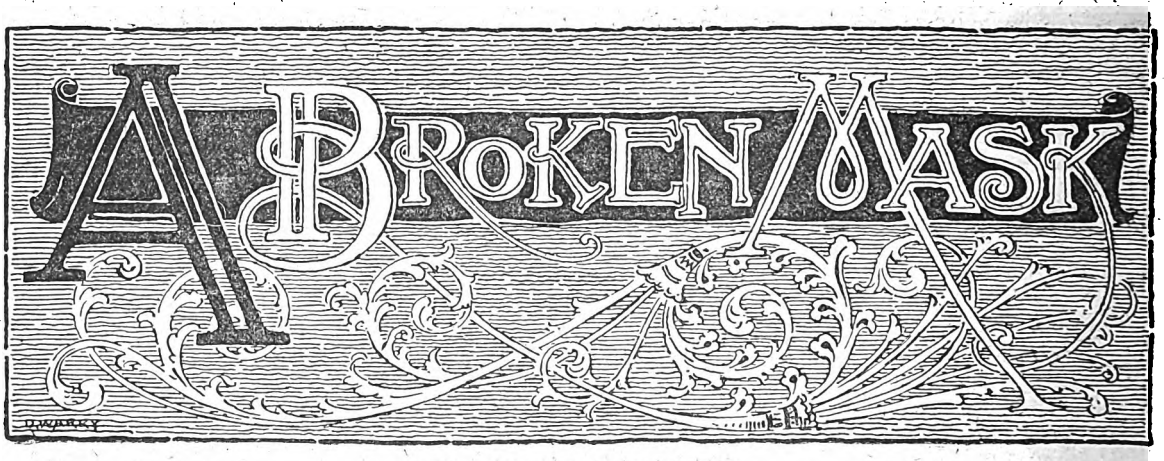

BY JOAN BARRETT.

CHAPTER XI.

A VERIFIED SUSPICION.

FROM the kitchen came a cheerful clatter of tea-things as Betty arranged them upon the tray. Aunt Shales pricked up her ears at the sound, sucking in her full lips as she watched Diana's pale face.

"As you knows," said she, "them di'monds was stole from that po'r Mrs. Lealter two nights ago, an' a sore way she was in, as you may have read in the paper. An' them there bank-notes belongs to Mrs. Caffyn, an' must have been stole when she was at The Towers, for I read the numbers in the paper an' cut 'em out jest for cur'osity like, an' they tallies ev'ry one, for I counted 'em the minit as I see them di'monds."

"Where is—Mr. Gillway?" Di asked. Oh, it was possible that he might be able to explain his possession of these inculpating things, she thought with a passionate fervour that would have surprised her had she been capable of analysing her emotions just then.

"Ah, that I couldn't tell; no, not if you was to drag me up hill an' down dale with wild horses, an' pay me in untold gold. All I knows is as he didn't come home las' night, an' me a-waitin' up till nigh on ten by the kitching clock for him, an' I ain't set eyes on him to-day, not as there's anythink surprisin' in that, seein' as he thinks nothin' of stoppin' out nearly ev'ry night in the week, as you may say, an' lets hisself in with one of them there lash keys, as I never did abide, an' never shan't, for if you drops off to sleep how can you tell when anybody as has one o' they things comes home, an' some folks 'ud take advantidge o' that an' swear as they come in early by the clock, an' not bein' what you'd call a light sleeper, havin' so many worrits in the day, I never did know when he come in, an' that's the Gospel truth, Miss Di, an' glad 'nough he must have felt that that Em'ly slep' so sound as well as me, an' I feels that thankful, too, for you may depend upon it he'd have thought nothin' o' murderin' that po'r gal an' me in our blessed beds if we'd a sin him comin' home with his pockets all stuffed out with gold and di'monds, an' his arms full of brick-brackt!" said Aunt Shales, delivering herself of the last word with an air of consequence, and inwardly proud of the memory which enabled her to add *bric-à-brac* to the various gleanings she had gathered from newspaper descriptions of robberies and weddings.

"Aunt Shales," said Di. "Have you shown these things to anyone but me, or spoken about them to anybody?"

Aunt Shales blinked at the ceiling, at the glowing fire, and the snowdrops upon the table. Her little twinkling eyes looked at everything but at Di.

"Lawks!" she answered. "As if I should. 'Tain't likely as I'd let on to folks about what I looks on as a personal disgrace."

"I am so glad you think like that. I wouldn't say anything. Mr. Gillway may be able to explain their presence in his desk, and if he can, it would be very unpleasant for you if he heard that you had shown them to people, and had talked about them, and that in consequence people regarded him as a—a thief," said Di, the ugly word sticking in her throat.

Aunt Shales looked serious, and wrinkled her grey eyebrows.

"You see," continued Di. "We have no proof that Mr. Gillway has stolen these things. He may have a proof that he has not."

"He'd have to give the p'lice a good big proof," said Aunt Shales with reviving energy. "Seein' as I found 'em in his very own desk; oh, I did, an' if I was put to tortures like any of them po'r marters I couldn't say no diff'rent, not if I tried till I was black in the face, never having had no practice in lyin'."

As Aunt Shales spoke of the police, a cold thrill ran down Di's back. What if they were already upon John Gillway's track? she thought, suddenly remembering the smooth-voiced little man who had questioned her about the tenant of Honeypots Farm.

"When I called at the farm this morning I went to see you. I found a gentleman in the yard. He spoke of being an old friend of Mr. Gillway's, and he wanted apartments"—Di began. Aunt Shales interrupted her in excitement:

"There! If our Poll didn't up an' tell me as she'd seen him a-hangin' about agin. Not as I dares speak after Poll, for if ever there was a twin sister to Sapphiry, it's our Poll! Wanted 'partments, did he? That's jest what he tried to make out as he wanted afore. Shortish and thinnish, an' with eyes like gimlets?" and as Di nodded, Aunt Shales added: "Oh, it's him, right 'nough. How I do wish as I'd seen him. I'd a 'partmented him! He didn't show you the photograph of Mr. Gillway, did he, Miss Di?" and upon Di answering in the negative, Aunt Shales proceeded to give a glowing account of the stranger's visit to the farm, relating with keen enjoyment how her master had taken down a horsewhip to the man, and had given him to understand that he was trying to "give up bein' a thief," and would brook with no interference; "which sounds as though at one time he didn't keep his fingers none too straight, as our Poll said to me then and there."

"You are quite sure that he said he was trying to give up being a thief?"

"As sure as eggs is eggs, an' I dunno who could be surer

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than *that*. What they said to each other out of my hearin', I can't answer for, an' wouldn't; but 'pend upon it, that there 'partment man knows some'ut dark about Mr. Gillway. Why!" exclaimed Aunt Shales, struck all at once with a brilliant idea, and opening her little eyes to their fullest extent. "He might have bin a detective in disguise!"

She was so overcome with the awfulness of this thought that her mouth remained open as she stared fixedly at Di.

"All clean-shaved, too!" she added jerkily. "The very picture of one in the P'lice News! An' to think as that Poll was right!"

"You don't know that she *is* right. The gentleman spoke of being a friend of Mr. Gillway's family."

"An' a friend as they'd be on'y too glad to do without!" declared Aunt Shales in evident pity for Di's seeming simplicity. "Friend, indeed! As much a friend as the hangman is to them as he puts the halter round their po'r necks, you may be sure of that. Oh, I see'd what *he* was, Miss Di, the d'rectly minute as I clapped eyes on him. *He* couldn't take me in an' do for *me*, an' Mr. Gillway, too! Many's the time as I've said to friends when they're dropped in for a cup of tea, as there was some'ut hid up about him. I never do trust people as locks up everythink. As I says, it don't look square an' open like, do it, now? An' him that gloomy! There, livin' right in front of a fillin' up fast cemet'ry, couldn't have bin no gloomier; an' knowed no more about farmin' than my best bonnet!" she said conclusively, as though this ignorance on the part of John Gillway was a proof of his wickedness.

Di opened the letter with trembling fingers.

As Di looked in deep distress at the bank-notes upon the table, Aunt Shales gave a quick jerk of her head over her shoulder, started, and cried:

"Lawk's! If I didn't think as I'd heard somethink, an' my heart right up in my mouth as you may say, with the fright of it, sir."

The cause of her fright was the Nabob; a very pale, dejected-looking Nabob, whose attempt at smiling was a sorry failure, though his pleasant voice had a cheerful ring as he said:

"I'm awfully sorry, Mrs. Shales, for alarming you. I only wonder that you didn't find me out before. I came into the room some time ago; I've heard nearly everything. Let me look at the things, may I?"

"'Course you may, sir. You can look at 'em till you're blind with starin,'" replied Aunt Shales very affably, and dropping a flurried curtesy, but eyeing the young man rather severely. She might be guilty of listening at keyholes herself, but that did not lessen her contempt for others who did the same.

"Oh, Bernard," cried Di, "I am so glad you have come. What are we to do? Ought Aunt Shales to replace these things in Mr. Gillway's desk?"

"For them p'lice to find 'em, an' me to lose my character, Miss Di! Not me! I brought 'em here, thinkin' as you'd take care of 'em. I couldn't get a wink of sleep if I know'd that they was in the house!" exclaimed Aunt Shales.

"But when Mr. Gillway returns he will miss them."

"Seein' as they don't belong to him he's got no right to cry over their loss," retorted Aunt Shales. "Have he now, sir?"

"No. I think," said the Nabob, after he had examined the pendant and the bank-notes, "that your best plan is to keep perfectly silent upon this matter, Mrs. Shales. If you talk of your discovery, you will certainly get into trouble. A man like your master will spare no means to clear himself. If he can throw his guilt upon you, he will. You wouldn't like to find yourself in a police cell?"

"Me in a p'lice cell! Goodness gracious, sir, you can't mean it?"

"I should be very sorry to see you there, but a great many innocent people do get placed there. If John Gillway finds that you have betrayed him, his first wish will be to injure you, out of revenge, you know. He will accuse you of being his accomplice, and how are you to prove that you are not?"

"But, Bernard, the fact of her bringing these things to me would clear her of any complicity in the robberies," said Di, as Aunt Shales gasped and remained speechless.

"He will say that she knew the police were after them, and that she pretended innocence, and acted the part of betrayer in order to clear herself. Didn't you say that you had seen a man who appeared to be a detective, at the farm? John Gillway may declare that the fact of that man being there induced Mrs. Shales to hurry here to Miss Strange with these proofs of his guilt."

"An' me more innocent than a' unborn lamb!" ejaculated Aunt Shales, quivering with indignation.

"That will have to be proved; anyhow, I'll stake all I have upon one thing: talk of your discovery and you'll get into prison, Mrs. Shales. You may come out cleared from the charge, but the stigma of having been implicated in the robberies will cling to you as long as you live. Your friends alone will believe in your innocence!"

Aunt Shales sank into a chair and clasped her hands together in dismay. The picture of her future, as the Nabob drew it, filled her with alarm. Mentally she began to review her friends, and picked out from the number those who would certainly rejoice in her downfall from the very high pedestal of respectability upon which she had stood herself. To appear in a "police case" as a criminal! She, Ann Shales! And no doubt, her portrait would be given in the weekly supplement of the papers! Her little fat hands grew quite moist with perspiration.

"The best thing to do," continued the Nabob, watching Aunt Shales with bright, watchful eyes, "is for all of us to act as if we had never heard nor seen these things. I'll return them to their owners anonymously. That can do no harm, and will deliver you and Miss Strange from a dilemma. Mrs. Caffyn and Mrs. Lealter will believe that the robbers have returned the bank-notes because they were valueless to the thieves, and the pendant through some chivalrous feeling for its pretty owner. If Mr. Gillway returns, he will ask you no questions about the disappearance of these things from his desk. He will be too clever for that, and you can leave his employ, Mrs. Shales."

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"An' on'y too thankful, sir!" said Aunt Shales, wiping her damp forehead with a very large cotton handkerchief. "To think as I——"

The entrance of Betty with the tea-tray caused her to pause, and to rise in a flutter. She refused to stay to tea, and departed in great haste, evidently with the intention of swearing those people to secrecy to whom she had shown the pendant and the bank-notes. Di heard her whispering to Betty in the kitchen.

"Why did you frighten her so, Bernard?" she asked.

The Nabob drew a letter from his pocket.

"Because I don't want the police to track that scoundrel down! Oh, not for his sake, don't think that, Di; it's for—Kitty's sake! I—I—read this—I found it in her desk."

Di opened the letter with trembling fingers. It contained few words:

I have gone away with the man I love. You never made me happy. KITTY.

CHAPTER XII.

DISHONOUR.

"I NEVER thought that Kitty would do *that*!" said the Nabob bitterly. "She didn't give me a long trial, did she, Di?"

He took the paper from her trembling fingers, folded it up, and made a movement to replace it in his breast pocket; but his face darkened as though some new idea had entered his brain with the touch of his fingers upon Kitty's letter. With a gesture that was full of disgust he crumpled it savagely in his hand, and tossed it into the glowing fire.

"There's the end of it for me," said he, when the letter had flared up and was reduced to black tinder. "But what will be the ending for Kitty? Shame and disgrace, and perhaps that scamp will leave her, the villain! Women like Kitty so soon lose their good looks. That man can never make her happy. She says I couldn't, did you read it, Di?—and how can he if I failed? I should have made her happy if he had given me a chance. Oh! Di, I daren't think about it, my brain feels on fire!"

He sank heavily into a seat, bowing his head, and hiding his face in his hands. Di saw his shoulders heave. She went to his side and very gently touched his hands with her cool, soft fingers.

"We must find her," she said. "Kitty must be brought back."

The Nabob sprang to his feet and laughed. It was the laugh of a man who felt himself to be impotent.

"Bring her back," he repeated. "You forget that she went away early last night. It was not nine when her maid bade her good-night. They went to London yesterday, be sure of that, and by this time they're on their way to America as man and wife. The scoundrel only waited to secure a good big haul before taking Kitty away." He walked to the window and returned to his seat. "Kitty will have her jewels again," said he in the same harsh, bitter tone. "The jewels that I gave her, and he stole! Do you remember Christmas Eve, Di, and his face at the conservatory window? I thought that he was after Kitty; I never dreamt he was after anything else. I wonder what he has done with your bracelet? Perhaps he'll give it to Kitty and she'll wear it."

Di's overcharged heart gave way. So much had happened in that long eventful day, that it seemed now as though she could bear no more. Her head drooped, and as the Nabob rose restlessly again from his seat, and turned to pace the room once more, perhaps with some bitter invective against Kitty or John Gillway upon his tongue, he saw the big tears slowly coursing down Di's pale cheeks.

"Don't cry," he said. "Don't. They're not worth it, Di."

She answered with a sob, so full of distress that the muscles of his set face twitched. As she put up one hand to her face, groping with the other for her pocket-handkerchief, the Nabob went quickly to her and took the hand that sought her pocket.

"I'll say no more about them, dear Di," he murmured in boyish contrition. "I'll only hope that *he* may make her happy."

"You must find them," she said through her tears.

"I'll try, but—I can't go about asking blunt questions at the station. I'll go to London and ask at the shipping offices. But if I *do* find them and Kitty refuses to come back to me, what am I to do? Sue for a divorce, and break the old dad's heart, Di?"

"No, no," she faltered, shaking her head.

"Let her go, and hope that some day she will return to me of her own free will."

"Would—would—you take her back?"

The Nabob dropped her hand, and resumed his uneasy walk from one end of the room to the other.

"No, by Jove, that I couldn't!" Di heard him mutter. "It would be an act of madness! People would laugh at me for a fool." The ornaments rattled upon the chiffonnier as he strode past it. "Put an advertisement in the leading dailies: 'To K. E.—Come back. All will be forgiven,' and feel in my heart that I could never kiss her lips or touch her hand, or look into her eyes without remembering. Would that be forgiveness? Or to start afresh, if she returned, to live separate lives beneath the same roof—that would feel to each of us that we were chained to a dead body. How could I take her back? Oh! my poor little Kitty! To think that I can speak like this of her. After all, she is that man's victim. He terrified her. Don't you remember how frightened she always was of him, Di? He has had a deadly revenge; it is upon her that it falls!"

Outside in the big yard they caught the sound of Farmer Strange's cheery voice as he gave directions to one of the farm hands. He had just returned from market. As Di heard the echo of his heavy boots in the kitchen, she rose to her feet, found her handkerchief, and hurriedly wiped her eyes.

"Dad mustn't know," she whispered, trembling from head to foot. "Help me to hide it from him. I am pale—I know I am. Is that better?"

She rubbed her cheeks violently with her hands, pinching them until two hectic spots burnt hotly beneath her eyes.

The Nabob nodded, picked up the roll of bank-notes and the jewel case, and thrust them into his coat pocket as Farmer Strange entered.

"I'm glad to see you, my boy," said he, stretching out a great cold hand to his son-in-law. "How's Kitty?"

"Jolly. She's gone away for a little while—on a visit to a friend's—she hadn't time to wish you good-bye, so I've come in her place."

"Ah, gone on a visit, is she?" said Farmer Strange, placing his broad back before the fire. "And why ain't you with her?"

There was nothing unusual in his tone; but the Nabob paled, and an uneasy expression flitted across his face.

"I am going to-morrow. Couldn't get off to-day. Wanted to send away all my valuables to the bank before going. Have you heard of the robbery at Mrs. Lealter's? Makes one feel a bit nervous. Kitty's grown no end timid since that affair at our own place, and now these other robberies have added to her fears. I'm afraid I shall have to give up The Towers. Luckily Lord Powers only let it to me for two years, so I shan't be much the loser."

"Where d'you think of going?"

"I hardly know. In fact, I haven't actually made up my mind about leaving The Towers, but I can see it will come to that."

"Kitty's looked poorly, of late," said Farmer Strange, rubbing his scrubby chin reflectively. "She wants the town air, does Kitty! Why don't you get a place at Leigh for her?"

"Too much of a town. I fancy she'd like a house near London, Richmond or Pangbourne," answered the Nabob.

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He smiled at Di, who had seated herself at the table. "Have you got a cup for me, Di? Lots of cream, please, and not much sugar."

As he took the cup from her shaking fingers, and while her father was building up the fire, he whispered under cover of the clatter of the fire-irons:

"If she comes back, I'll take her, Di."

When the day was ended—that dreadful day that stood out for ever in the memory of Diana Strange, distinct and separate from every other day of her life—and she could go

Huddled in a white dimity-covered chair.

to her room without fear of awaking suspicion in her father, Di sat by the fire and went over every detail that she could remember in the story of Kitty and John Gillway.

First, there had been the arrival of Gillway at Honeypots Farm, and the sensation that his white hands and gentlemanly appearance had caused. No one knew anything of his past; he had made no confidant, not even of Kitty, for Di had heard Kitty speak of the young farmer's reticence.

Poor Kitty! Did she know now what manner of man she had entrusted with her happiness? Then came the advent of the stranger, the man whom John Gillway had threatened with the whip. He must know the secret of Gillway's past.

And then Di thought of her first interview with Gillway after her return from Capri, and his bitter words about Kitty's faithlessness. He had told her that when he was struck, he returned the blow; harder if possible. That admission betrayed his revengeful disposition. Kitty's return followed, and her childish terror of the man she had deceived. Clearly Kitty had known that John Gillway did not easily forgive; her terror had not been unfounded.

But had not some better sentiment stirred in Gillway's heart when Di had asked him to see Kitty, and he had replied that he was afraid! She had shown him her contempt for this assertion. How wrong she had been. He had tried to draw back, and she had pushed him onward with her taunts. Perhaps he had gone to The Towers with the determination to be strong, and association with Kitty had stirred up his evil passions. He had questioned her about the people who would be at The Towers; of Kitty's jewels, and he had spoken of Lady Rivers' emeralds, wishing that some of them were in his possession. Why had he asked these questions unless it was with the idea of profiting by the information? She had seen him hiding about the grounds before the robbery had taken place.

There was the loss of the flour sacks from his granary, and his command to Aunt Shales to keep silence respecting that loss. The value of the sacks was slight; Di could think of no motive for his desire to keep the loss unknown except a fear that some connecting link might be formed to prove him the author of the robbery.

Then followed his gradual access of power over poor weak Kitty. Their stolen interviews culminating with her own last meeting with them, and Kitty's wish to confide some secret to her sister. Was that secret the arrangement that Gillway had made for taking Kitty away? It must have been, and Kitty, ever impulsive, volatile, and unthinking, would have told Di their plans for flight had not Gillway forbidden her to break silence.

"There is no need to make her unhappy yet; she must learn everything before long," he had said, speaking of Di; and again: "You will ruin us, Kitty, if you break silence until no harm can come of speech."

No other possible explanation of these words occurred to Di, and did not the subsequent event verify this theory? Kitty and John Gillway had gone away together; Di had read Kitty's admission to her husband, that she had thrown in her lot with the man she loved—*with the man who loved her;* with the man who was a thief! The pale moon, looking in at the window of Di's room, saw a crouching figure, huddled in a white dimity-covered chair staring into a dead fire, as long as it shed its light in that direction. There was only the moon to see, and only the stillness of night to hear the broken-hearted cry that fell once from Di's cold lips:

"Why are we punished so cruelly? Dear God, why?"

When the morning dawned she rose from her seat, stiff and aching with weariness and the uncomfortable position in which she had passed the long hours of the night, and bathed her face, and looked almost with a stranger's eyes at her pallid, haggard reflection in the glass. She had aged in the night. She would not have felt astonished had she discovered that her hair had turned grey.

Outdoors the birds were wishing each other good-morning in cheerful twitters, the ducks were already debating among themselves whether it was yet too early to walk to the pond, and the cocks had long warned all listening creatures that morning had come, and that it was time to throw off sloth and slumber and arise to the duties and pleasures and the cares that the day brings.

Then there came the rattling sound of pails, and the wheezy response of the yard-pump; the neighing of the horses as they recognised some familiar voice or step, and the plaintive "moo" of the cow, mingling with the "shur-shur" of the chaff-cutter.

Di went down the steep, narrow stairs, and opened the house door. It was still grey; but in the east a deep red flush, like a fog-veiled fire, told that the sun was rising.

"The sun will shine presently; it will be a fine day," she thought mechanically.

She closed the door, for the early air was cold, and with gentle courage and patient hope she began her morning duties. To herself she said once or twice, as she moved about the house:

"The sun will shine presently!" and there was comfort in the thought.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Mysterious Encounter.

The Nabob sent Di a letter from London two days later. His surmise that Kitty and John Gillway had left England immediately for America had been verified. he told her

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The fugitives had sailed early upon the morning that Kitty was missing from home. They had booked their passages in the names of Mr. and Mrs. John Dark; the booking-clerk who had answered the Nabob's inquiries concerning the passengers had given an unmistakably accurate description of Kitty and her companion. There could be no error in believing that Mr. and Mrs. John Dark were the people whom the Nabob sought.

"There is nothing to do," wrote the Nabob, "but to wait. I feel sure that Kitty will return to me. When she comes she shall find that, if she has lost her husband, I am still her friend."

The servants were dismissed at The Towers; the butler and housekeeper not being able to procure immediate

Di went to the piano.

situations, gladly fell in with their master's suggestion that they should remain as caretakers until a better chance of establishing themselves at the head of another household occurred.

The Nabob gave the same excuse to his friends in the neighbourhood for his abrupt departure that he had given to Farmer Strange. His wife had accepted a pressing invitation to spend a month in Rome with some friends, and he was joining her. There was no telling when they would return. In all probability they would travel in Italy after bidding good-bye to their friends at Rome.

About a fortnight after the departure of the Nabob, Di received a letter from Mrs. Caffyn, telling her that her lost bank-notes had been returned to her.

"I wish they had kept the bank-notes—for the bank would have made good my loss—and given me my dear diamonds and those lovely moonstones. But that is a little too much to expect, isn't it? Give my love to Kitty. Tell her I'm off to Spain with the Costellos, and will write to her when I am settled."

Di felt grateful for this last piece of news. She had dreaded Mrs. Caffyn's comments upon Kitty's silence, and her demand for Kitty's address. In Spain, where the postal regulations are so lax, and eleven out of every twelve men employed have the seemingly well-merited reputation of being thieves, Mrs. Caffyn might not feel deeply concerned at getting no letters from Kitty in response to her own.

About the same time that Di heard from Mrs. Caffyn, a paragraph in the local paper made known the startling fact that Mrs. Charles Lealter had had her diamond pendant returned to her anonymously through the post, and, while commenting upon the robber's gallantry, the writer stated that a warrant had been issued for the apprehension of a resident at Thorneydene, whose peculiar behaviour had long made an object of suspicion, and who there was every reason to believe was connected with the three large robberies that had taken place in the neighbourhood. The resident referred to was clearly John Gillway. Aunt Shales had long been sowing the seeds of mistrust in her master's honesty, and now those seeds had ripened into maturity.

But John Gillway did not return to be taken into custody, and when March came in with its cold winds and clear, keen sunshine, and its promise of green leaves and budding flowers, Aunt Shales cleared her few possessions out of the farm into a little cottage in the straggling village, and Emily departed to a neighbouring farmhouse. John Gillway's landlord locked up the farm; the men were dismissed, and a notice was inserted in the newspapers warning John Gillway that if he did not return by a stated time the farm implements would be sold by his landlord to defray the rent.

Oddly enough, Farmer Strange, who had never appeared to care greatly for the young man, raised the only dissenting voice in the bar parlour at the "Hare and Hounds" when local opinion declared in strong language that the missing tenant of "Honeypots" was a housebreaker. He would not agree to popular belief, and upon his return home from these gatherings he related the bar-parlour conversation to Di with his own observations upon it, watching her furtively from the corners of his grey eyes, to gather her impression as she listened.

He was not blind to her pallid cheeks and heavy-lidded eyes—the poor old father—nor so dense that he could not trace them to a certain cause. She might go bravely about her duties, never complaining, cheerfully accepting whatever the day might bring; but her voice was never raised in song, and she seldom laughed, and that was sad to observe, for Di had hitherto found so much at the farm to make merry over.

"Kitty ain't much of a correspondent," he remarked one day to Di when the postman had passed, bringing them no letters.

"She never cared for writing letters, daddy," answered Di, bending her head low.

"She likes it less than ever now, my gal! There must be a sight of things to see in Rome that she could write about."

"I've been to Rome, you know, with Aunt Caffyn. Kitty thinks there's no need to describe what I've seen, and—no news is always good news—dear."

Her father puffed at his clay pipe, looking at her beneath his over-hanging shaggy eyebrows.

"Like to go to Rome again, Di?" he asked after a pause.

"No, no," she answered hastily. "I am very happy here, daddy. I don't want to change; home is best."

"Home's all right for a place to come back to when you're tired of jogging about all over the world; but it's a good thing for young birds to stretch their wings, my dear, and if you'd like a change——" She rose from her seat, and threw herself at her father's knees, clasping her arms around them and looking up into his face.

"I *don't* want a change, daddy dear," she said with a quiver in her voice. "Is it because I'm so dull and quiet that you think I want to go away? I *am* dull, dad, not with weariness of this dear home and you, oh! no. I won't be dull any longer. I'll be so cheerful that you'll hardly recognise me," she declared with a piteous little laugh that had no mirth in it. "Shall I play you something? I haven't opened the piano since Kitty went—away."

Her father nodded, and Di went to the piano. She could

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It was Aunt Shales.

hardly see for the tears that blurred her vision; they fell upon the keys as she played a lively Irish jig, to which her father kept time with his foot.

Slowly, very slowly, the days passed into weeks, and then those weeks that had appeared so leaden-footed seemed to wake into life and skip into months, and spring made room for summer, and summer had to withdraw to give place to autumn, and, looking back, one sighed over the marvellous rapidity of Time.

One evening in October Di walked in the prim old garden with its broad flower borders where the sunflowers now drooped their heads, and the tall hollyhocks presented a drunken and woe-begone appearance. The bushes of blue starry Michaelmas daisies and pale yellow chrysanthemums sent out a strong perfume as she paced up and down the gravel path. The sky was very blue, with bright rosy streaks and dappled with fleecy white clouds. From the adjoining yard came the lowing of cows, and the whinnying of horses. An atmosphere of peace pervaded the garden, the beauty of the rose-flecked sky and the calm of the early evening seemed reflected in Di's face.

As she paced up and down she thought of Kitty, wondering where she was, and if she thought sometimes of her old home and its inmates. Only that morning her father had commented upon Kitty's silence with unusual bitterness.

"'Twas I that drove her from The Towers," he said. "Her pride couldn't bear to have me pointed out as Mrs. Eliot's father. She couldn't bear her smart friends to know that I was only a poor farmer. Bless you, my gal, I'm not blind. But there's no reason for her not writing to you. You're as much a lady as she is; but no doubt it's the butter-making that's set her against writing to you."

Di had faltered some feeble excuse for Kitty, but Farmer Strange refused to accept it. And Mrs. Caffyn, long back from Spain, had written again, peremptorily demanding Kitty's address and complaining of her odd silence.

Di was greatly perplexed to know what reason she was to give Mrs. Caffyn. She did not know where the Nabob was; a long time had elapsed since he had written to her.

The sharp click of the latch of the garden gate made Di raise her head. The shadows were falling, and at the first glance she could not recognise the person advancing towards her.

She knew who her visitor was the very next moment. It was Aunt Shales, not quite so rosy, and certainly more downcast of expression than Di had yet seen the worthy soul.

"Lawks, Miss Di!" she exclaimed, putting both hands to her breast. "What a startle you did give me with that there white gown of yours! I do declare as my heart stopped clean dead, I felt that frit." She looked round the garden and made a few flurried observations about the flowers and the weather in a manner that plainly betrayed the slight interest she took in them, and the anxiety to be thought polite that prompted the remarks. She carried a small basket upon one little plump arm. Di noticed that it was empty.

"I came to beg a few pot-herbs, Miss Di, if so be as you've any to spare," said Aunt Shales. "I allays did fancy my meals tasty-like, an' I was never one of them sort as chucks a bit of scraggy neck o' mutton into a pot full o' water an' leaves it to dish its own self up, with never a scrap o' onion or thyme to take away the taste of the pot. If I had bin one o' them sort I shouldn't ha bin alive now, seein' what a man Shales was for his stomach, and would have it dished reg'lar to the minute by the kitchen clock, or he'd know the reason why. Not as it's any use to cockle up one's appitite, Miss Di, seein' as we ain't here for long, an' many's the time I used to tell him so, but there, what I allays says is as men will be men, an' nothin' short of a miracle 'll ever make 'em anything else!"

Di had directed her steps towards a border of sweet herbs that grew beneath a south wall.

"Take as many as you like, Aunt Shales," said she kindly; "you must miss the farm garden very much."

Aunt Shales straightened her short back, looked steadily at Di for a moment, and then giving a queer gulping sound as though she was swallowing something disagreeable, she glanced behind and around her, and edging up to Di, she whispered:

"I've just come from Honeypots, an' if I'd on'y known what I was a-goin' to see there, the Lord Mayor and all his wile horses wouldn't have got my ten toes inside that kitching garding! Miss Di, as sure as eggs *is* eggs, an' never can't be nothin' else in this wicked, sinful world, I seed my master's sperit!"

Di raised her eyebrows, and looked so unimpressed by the statement that Aunt Shales hastened to add:

"I knows as some folks 'ull scream out at sight of haystacks an' cows an' other innocent animals, an' think if they on'y sees their own shadder as it's a ghost; but I never had nothin' to do with the likes of them. But I seed him, well, there, my own hand couldn't be plainer, an' he never said a word; he on'y jest looked at me so sad an' mournful like as if he'd jest got up from a deathbed, an' afore I could do so much as cry out, he was gone!"

"Where did you see him?"

"He was standin' by the little garding gate as opens from the farmyard. An' I was jest a-stoopin' down for a handful of thyme with never a blessed thought in my head but a wonder if the bit of scrag I was goin' to bile long with 'em was as fresh an' as sweet as it ought to be, for though I salted it the very day as I bought it, gettin' it cheap an' havin' my doubts about it, an' not bein' able to eat it through not having finished up my bit of roast pork, I didn't feel too sure about it. My heart was up in my mouth when I looked up an' saw him lookin' at me with eyes like yaller lamps jest a-goin' out! I didn't stay long after that. I was up an' out of that garding like a long dog, *an'* now," she added, with a gloomy shake of her head,

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"I knows what the sut meant by fallin' and puttin' out the fire, an' the meanin' of that great black dog as walked into the kitching las' night an' glared at me in a way as showed pretty plain where *he* come from. I'm sure my back felt jest as though I'd a iced worm a-sprawlin' all over it, an' as I said to our Poll, who was there at the time, *my* flesh never creeps for nothin'. But how I'm to lay him I don't know, an' till he *is* laid, there'll be no rest nor peace for me, Miss Di."

"*Laid!*" repeated Di, not understanding the allusion.

"That's what I've allays heard as sperits wanted when they come back; I never heard of one as wanted anything else, but, as I says, how I'm to lay him, bein' as innocent as the lamb unborn of what's happened to him, an' never doin' him a ha'porth of harm, seein' as I've never bin one to cackle 'bout what I seed and heard, beyond jest mentionin' it to a friend, or to you, Miss Di, an' allays feelin' as safe as a barn-door, as it 'ud go no further. It may be as

"An' I was jest a-stoopin' down for a handful of thyme."

it's the warrant bein' out for him," she said, wiping her eyes and sniffing, "an' he may hold me responsible for that, seein' as I've bin tole by many folks as it's all through me as it was done an' the rob'rys laid to his door. Not as I ever did feel proud of it, Miss Di! Oh, no, that I didn't, seein' more shame than glory in it, an' livin' in constant dread of bein' dragged into a witness box or a p'lice cell through it; but I never dreamt as I was goin' to be haunted through the dreams as I've had, 'nd make your hair stand on end on'y to hear tell on!"

"I don't believe in ghosts," said Di very quietly, but with firmness in her full, sweet tones. "You saw someone—a farm hand or a tramp very likely—and in your agitation you thought the man was your master. It is all a mistake, Aunt Shales, and if black dogs and falling soot were evil omens, I'm afraid everyone in the world would get a very big share of ill-fortune. The soot often falls in the kitchen."

Aunt Shales shook her head and sighed, evidently seeing evil in what Di intended for a comforting assurance.

"If I on'y knew what he wants!" said she. "Not as I wishes that *they* could speak, po'r souls! There, it never so much as entered my head when I've bin talkin' about him, as all the while he was dead and buried, no, that it didn't, or I'd never have said what I have, seein' how unlucky it is to speak ill of 'em!"

"Unkind, you mean. Oh, Aunt Shales, don't bother yourself about imaginary ghosts and omens! I thought you were too sensible to believe in such nonsense!"

Aunt Shales sighed and used her handkerchief again.

"Them ugly black dogs don't come into the houses for nothin', Miss Di, and if he ain't murdered an' his po'r body hid away, where is he?"

"That I cannot say! But it is foolish to think that Mr. Gillway is murdered. Why should you imagine that just because a stray dog happened to enter your kitchen?"

"But where can he be, Miss Di? The p'lice can't lay hands on him."

"It isn't likely that he would return to Thornydene, knowing that a warrant had been issued for him. No doubt he has gone abroad."

"I on'y wishes as I could think you was right, Miss Di, that I do. But if ever I seed anybody as plain as a pike-staff, it was Mr. Gillway this very night. I can see him now in my mind's eye. He'd a black coat on an' a little dark cap jest as he used to wear. An' his face was whiter than a lily—ah, Miss Di, when I puts two an' two together like that, they on'y makes four, no matter how I twistes 'em about, an' if you'd sin him, you'd say the very same thing!"

Farmer Strange came home before Aunt Shales had finished exclaiming over her story. He listened with unusual patience to her long account of the fright that she had received, saying very little himself, and rubbing his chin reflectively. When Aunt Shales had departed, and Di with her father sat alone at the tea-table, Farmer Strange stirred his tea slowly and in meditative silence.

"I had a queer turn to-night, Di," said he abruptly. "As I was passing Honeypots, the old mare shied at a man who was crossing the road right under her nose. If I hadn't felt so cock-sure that Gillway 'ud never run his nose into a trap, I should have sworn that it was the fellow himself. I never saw two faces so much alike!"

Di paled, staring at her father with wide startled eyes.

"Oh, daddy!" she said. "It couldn't have been him! Didn't you speak—or cry out to the man?"

"I sung out: 'Hulloa, Gillway!' but the chap didn't take any notice. He was off and out of sight as sharp as a ferret after a rat. Queer that Aunt Shales should have seen the same man. Looks as though he really is in the neighbourhood!"

Di said nothing. If Gillway had indeed returned from America, where was Kitty? Her mind was so occupied with this question that she started when her father said:

"Course it wasn't Gillway! He'd never come back unless 'twas to clear his character, and if 'twas to do that, he wouldn't turn tail and run at the sound of his own name when a friend called it. 'Twas but a chance resemblance, depend upon it." Di's heart grew big with compassion for her father as she tenderly waited upon him. She told herself that if he knew the secret that she and the Nabob had concealed from him, he would not have looked upon the man's running at the sound of his voice as a sure sign that the person who resembled John Gillway so greatly had not been John Gillway himself. To Di, that very circumstance pointed to the possibility that it was the missing tenant of Honeypots Farm, and no other, who had crossed her father's path that night.

(To be continued.)

NOTICE.

On account of the Jubilee Celebrations the next number of "Short Stories" will be published on Saturday, June 19th.

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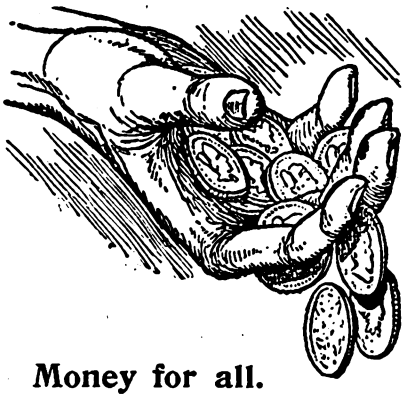

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Answers to Correspondents.

P. E. asks: "What is the height of the Queen? My chum and I have taken a wager upon it, and we intend to abide by your decision."——This question has already been answered several times before, but it still comes to this office with the regularity of the postman's knock. The height of Her Majesty is 4ft. 10in.

T. F.—Stand your boots in a dish of boiled linseed oil, allowing it to thoroughly saturate the soles. This will stop your boots from squeaking.

Pol.—Mr. Gladstone's longest speech took three hours and three-quarters to deliver. It was on the occasion of his first budget, and "held the House" to the last.

Liverpudlian.—Yes, although it is not a pleasant thing to say, there is no doubt that Hamburg has been disputing the supremacy of Liverpool very successfully of late years. The following figures will give you some idea of the progress shown by the two ports in the space of ten years:

	1885. Tons.	1895. Tons.
Liverpool	4,270,000 ...	5,966,000
Hamburg	3,700,000 ...	6,256,000

The Manchester Ship Canal can scarcely be blamed for this result; as a matter of fact, but for this undertaking, Liverpool trade might have progressed even less rapidly.

O. P. P.—The Chiltern Hundreds—Burnham, Desborough, and Stoke—is an estate of the British Crown on the chain of chalk hills that pass from east to west through the middle of Buckinghamshire. The stewardship is a nominal office with a salary of twenty shillings, conferred on members of Parliament when they wish to vacate their seats, as, by accepting an office under the Crown, a member becomes disqualified unless he be again returned by his constituents.

E. J.—A million pennies placed side by side would stretch 18 miles 1,653 yards 1 foot.

F. V. asks: "What becomes of all the smuggled tobacco?"——We have made inquiries and find that a large proportion is sent to Broadmoor for the use of the lunatic criminals. The officials there manage to restrain many a refractory lunatic by threatening to withhold the tobacco unless a more placid disposition is shown.

S.—The only country where a tax is laid on cats seems to be Saxony.

Brixton.—The oldest Board School in London is Old Castle Street, Whitechapel, which was opened on July 17th, 1873.

E.—St. Paul's Cathedral is the ninth church that has stood on the site. The first one was erected in the year 223.

J. T. asks: "At what age does a child give its parents the least trouble?"——This is rather a large order, for so much depends upon the nature, health, and disposition of children individually. On the whole, I should think the first three months of a child's life is the time when it gives the least trouble, for during that happy period it cannot run about and get into mischief by falling into the fire, tumbling down the stairs, or upsetting crockery to the distraction of its mother; neither can it talk, and thus worry its paternal relative with a multitude of questions upon every conceivable subject; and, moreover, unless it is of an exceptionally restless disposition, it will sleep most of the first three months of its life.

P. G. K.—Strange to say, there are only three words in the English language ending in "dous." These three are "hazardous," "tremendous," and "stupendous."

C.—Land is probably more valuable in London than anywhere else on the face of the Universe. Some years ago a site in Old Broad Street, City, measuring 42ft. by 30ft., was sold for £37,000, or at the rate of £1,260,000 per acre.

Player.—It has been estimated that there are something like 635,000,000 different hands in the game of whist.

H.—Jericho in the time of Henry VIII. was the slang word for prison. Hence the origin of the expressive saying "Go to Jericho."

A. H.—People are foolish to disfigure themselves by tattooing. There is no way of ridding yourself of the marks to our knowledge.

Reader, writing from Paris, tells us of a curious fact regarding the beggars who thrive within the gay city, which says much for their impertinent enterprise. They have, it appears, established a journal which, every week contains articles on the best methods of pursuing the calling to which they devote themselves. If this is really a fact, the Parisian beggars have certainly stolen a march over their London brethren.

Ethel.—It is not considered good form for a bride to wear any but a high-necked and long-sleeved dress unless she is a member of the Royal Family.

Alf wonders how he can obtain the freedom of the City of London, and thinks that probably we may be able to assist him on this point. We can. There are three ways: (1) By Patrimony, *i.e.*, a son of a freeman born after the father has acquired his freedom. (2) By servitude: that is, by serving an apprenticeship of seven years to a freeman. (3) By redemption by purchase.

Weekly Subscriber wishes to know which are the three most expensive head-dresses in the British army.—Presumably you mean those for which the country has to pay. In this case the reply is as follows: Staff-Sergeant, Grenadier Guards, £10 6s.; Scots Guards, £10 3s. 10d.; Scots Greys, £9 19s. 2d. Officers' head-dresses are much more expensive.

Smokers will no doubt be pleased to hear that during this time of general rejoicing they have not been forgotten. Messrs. Vuillard and Strauss have forwarded me a sample of the "Diamond Jubilee" pipe. This pipe is ornamented with the Queen's head stamped upon the face of the bowl by a new process; it may be obtained at all the leading tobacconists' at the by no means exorbitant price of 1s.

Free Sampler.—I cannot agree with you in your opinion that the giving of free samples by post is an advertiser's dodge, and that only a few of the general public who apply for samples receive them; no respectable firm would be guilty of such a practice, and, as a rule, business houses are only too pleased to have the public answer their advertisements by the thousand. Nowadays it is hard to get a new article introduced on the market, and to push the same many smart ideas have lately been introduced. You are perfectly correct in assuming that articles when given free as samples are of good quality—it is scarcely to be expected that any person would be foolish enough to foist a worthless article on the public in this manner. If you care to apply to the following named houses I think your request for samples will be attended to in a manner that will lead you to alter your opinion on this subject: Dr. Tibble's Vi-Cocoa Ltd., Laurence Pountney Lane, E. C.; The Herbuline Co., 54, Bow Lane, E.C. (samples of their cure for Toothache, Neuralgia, Rheumatism etc.); and the Glebe Sugar Co., 86, Wilson Street, Glasgow., who tell me they will be glad to send you samples of their syrups and sugars.

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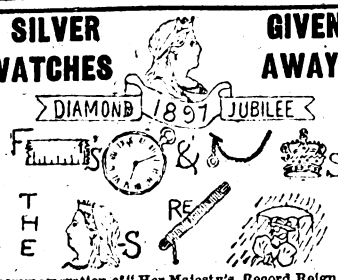

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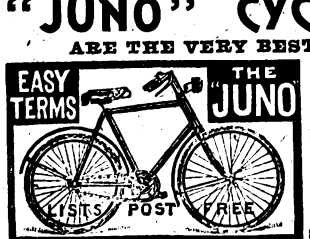

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JUBILEE WEEK NUMBER.

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EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 443. FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 26TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 443.] For the Week ending June 26th, 1897. [1D.

Men Who Have Made the Empire.

By GEORGE GRIFFITH.

V.—WILLIAM OF ORANGE.

IT is perhaps one of the most curious facts of our history that the Empire-Maker who, as it were, finally completed the work begun by his namesake, William the Norman, should, like him, have been a foreigner, should have sprung from similar ancestry, and should have been his exact reverse in every mental and physical quality save one—an inflexible determination to do the work which he was appointed to do in spite of every conceivable kind of obstacle.

It is noteworthy also that this man should have come from those same Low Countries from whose shores our Saxon ancestors had first come on their plundering forays to do their share of the work of making the English people. The ancestry of the great-grandson of William the Silent stretched far back, probably even into those remote and turbulent times, and it is within the limits of possibility that some stalwart ancestor of the ancient House of Nassau may himself have had something to do in the early making of that Realm, over which, a thousand years later, his descendant was to rule during one of the most critical and perilous periods of its existence.

Be this, however, as it may, the central fact which stands out in the story of William III. is this: Whatever his country or ancestry, he was, so far as we have any means of judging, the one man in the world just then who could have accomplished

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the difficult and, as it must often have seemed even to him, almost impossible task which had to be performed if the work of the other Empire-Makers who had gone before him was not to be sadly marred, if not altogether undone.

William of Orange may perhaps be most truthfully described as an overcomer of difficulties. Probably no other man ever had so many difficulties to conquer as he had, and his triumph over them is one of the finest examples of irresistible will-power and purely intellectual force that all History has to show. Mentally he was a giant, and as such he acquitted himself in what was undoubtedly a battle of giants fighting for the spoils of Europe. Physically he was a miserable weakling, shattered by disease, seldom free from bodily pain, and foredoomed from his youth by an exhausting and incurable malady.

Yet even his sports and pastimes were those, not only of a healthy, but even of a robust constitution. His pale, sickly, small-pox-pitted face never flushed save under the stimulus of battle or the chase. He fought his fight with Fate and won it by sheer intellectual force, yet none of the pleasures of intellect were his. He knew nothing of science, little of literature, and less of art.

Fitted, apparently, by Nature only for the pursuits of the study, he found his rare moments of real happiness when riding down a stag or a boar in the forests of Windsor or the woods of Flanders, or, sword in hand, leading his men wherever the battle was hottest or the danger the greatest. A creature of contradictions, in short, determined to make himself that which Nature had seemingly *not* made him, and to do that which he appeared least fitted to do.

No one possessing an intelligent grasp of the deplorable state of affairs which obtained in England, and the threatening aspect of matters on the Continent during the last decade but one of the 17th century, would have guessed for a moment that this "asthmatic skeleton," as Macaulay somewhat roughly describes his hero, was the man to turn England's weakness into strength, and even in defeat to grapple successfully with the colossal Power which was threatening the liberties of Europe.

In England the weakness and baseness of the two last Stuart kings had more than undone the work of the great Oliver. He had, as has been shown, made England one of the first Powers in the world, strong at home and respected and even courted abroad. Charles II. had sold his country, or at any rate his independence and what should have been his royal honour, to France. He had, in fact, exhibited to the world the disgraceful spectacle of an English king who was the pensioner of a foreign monarch.

The for-ever infamous Treaty of Dover had brought the prestige of England to its lowest ebb. For the first time in nearly seven hundred years the Isle Inviolate had been seriously threatened with invasion, and for the only time in their history the citizens of London had heard the sound of hostile guns. Now this of itself, taking the whole history of these islands into consideration, is a fact of absolutely unparalleled infamy, and yet if such infamy could have been equalled, the brother and successor of Charles II. would have done so. Indeed, from one point of view it may be said that he excelled it.

The guns of William's countrymen were heard in the Thames because Charles II., having his brother James for Lord High Admiral, had so scandalously wasted the funds which should have been devoted to the maintenance of the Navy that no adequate defence was really possible; but it was left for James II., the last and most contemptible, if not in all respects the worst king of the royal and miserable House of Stuart, to be the only British monarch who ever brought a foreign army on to British soil for the purpose of coercing by force the will of the British people. More than this, too, it must be remembered that these foreign troops were Frenchmen supported by regenade English, Irish, or Scotchmen, who had deliberately deserted their own country to serve under the standard of a man who was to the 17th century what Phillip II. of Spain had been to the 16th.

So low, then, had Britain sunk in the scale of nations when William of Orange made his entry upon the stage of British history. The fact which made his entry possible is hardly of the sort that would commend itself to people of a romantic turn of mind, although few romances have been really more romantic than his own life-story.

He could never have become King of England, nor is it likely that he could even have been offered the *rôle* of the protector of English liberties, had it not been for the fact that he was married to the daughter of James II., and of this marriage Lord Macaulay truly says: "His choice had been determined chiefly by political considerations, nor did it seem likely that any strong affection would grow up between a handsome girl of sixteen, well-disposed, indeed, and naturally intelligent, but ignorant and simple, and a bridegroom who, though he had not completed his twenty-eighth year, was in constitution older than her father; whose manner was chilling, and whose head was constantly occupied by public business or by field sports."

His marriage was, in short, "a marriage of convenience," and yet, in defiance of all the rules that are supposed to govern the most intimate of all human relationships, it was one of the best and, in the end, most devoted unions that History has to record. It is hardly possible to doubt that William of Orange married Mary Stuart because he saw with that keenly penetrating foresight of his that such a union would strengthen him in his life-long combat with the arch-enemy of his faith, his family, and his nation; and this enemy was that same Louis of France who had made Charles II. his pensioner, and was soon to make James II. his dependent.

To quote Lord Macaulay again: "He saved England, it is true, but he never loved her, and he never obtained her love. . . . Whatever patriotic feeling he had was for Holland . . . yet even his affection for the land of his birth was subordinate to another feeling which early became supreme in his soul, which mixed itself with all his passions and compelled him to marvellous enterprises, which supported him when sinking under mortification, pain, sickness, and sorrow . . . and continued to animate him even while the prayer for the departing was read at his bedside."

It was this hatred of France and her king which nerved him to do for the liberties of Europe and Great Britain what Francis Drake had done for England against Phillip of Spain, and in the doing of this he won the conspicuous glory of forcing the paymaster of the two English sovereigns whom he succeeded to make peace with him on equal terms, and this, too, although he lost more battles than he won, and had to surrender more strong cities than he took.

It is comparatively easy for a conqueror to take triumph out of victory, but it is a higher quality which patiently endures defeat and confronts disaster, and by

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sheer genius wins triumph in the end. This is what William of Orange did, and it is from this fact that he deserves his title to be ranked among the Makers of that Empire to whose throne he came as an alien, and whose honour he restored and upheld, as one might say, in spite of herself.

So far as England is concerned, the male line of Stuart came in with a fool and went out with a coward. One does not even care to imagine what would have happened if James II. had remained on the throne; or if William of Orange, with his hereditary and deep-rooted hatred of Louis XIV. and his policy, had not

Made him reel in his saddle.

come to take his most miserably vacated place in the nick of time.

The sentimentality which makes such a fuss about loyalty to persons as distinguished from loyalty to country, and the lawyer-quibbles which occupied men's minds in the dispute as to whether James II. was King *de facto* or *de jure*, or both, of the country from which he had run away like an absconding debtor, may be dismissed, just as Harold the Saxon's claims had been some six hundred years before. It is merely a question of the Fit and the Unfit, and James was Unfit.

James deserted his post as ruler of these realms because he found himself assailed by difficulties which the most ordinary ability ought to have overcome. William assumed the same position in the face of difficulties which only the highest qualities of kingcraft and statesmanship could have enabled him to successfully grapple with. In a word, James possessed no ideal that qualified him to be a king, much less an Empire-Maker. William *did* possess such an ideal, and that is the only reason why he became King of England, *vice* James Stuart, absconded.

Next, perhaps, to Henry VII., William was the most business-like sovereign who has occupied the British throne. With him all men and things, all beliefs and sentiments were subordinated to the achievement of the one great end—the curbing of the power of France, and consequently the furtherance of political and theological liberty in Europe. He was, in fact, only incidentally an Empire-Maker, although without him and without the broad and firm basis of popular liberty and national strength which he laid down, as it were, in the doing of his greater work, the building up of the Imperial fabric would undoubtedly have been long delayed and seriously impeded.

He got himself made King of Great Britain and Ireland, not because he wanted to occupy the throne, but because from that eminence he would be able to look the Grand Monarch more equally in the face. We get a luminous insight into the character of the man in his reply to the Convention or conference of the two Houses of Parliament which had proposed that his wife as actual and lawful heir to the throne which James had forsaken, should occupy it as queen, and that he should reign by her authority as a sort of Royal Executive.

"My lords and gentlemen," he said, "no man can esteem a woman more than I do the Princess, but I am so made that I cannot think of holding anything by apron-strings, nor can I think it reasonable to have any share in the government unless it be put in my own person and that for the term of my life. If you think fit to settle it otherwise I will not oppose you, but will go back to Holland and meddle no more in your affairs."

That was the kind of man William of Orange was. He had come to be a king, and a king he would be or nothing. And so king he was, and it was not very long

before he was to show how well his self-confidence was justified. He had scarcely seated himself on the throne before the Parliament, recognising the fact that his work was something other than merely filling James's place, deliberately suggested that he should resume as King of England the hostilities which he had begun against Louis as Stadtholder of the Netherlands, and he on his part showed how ready he was to take up the task by exclaiming, in one of his rare bursts of exultation, after reading the address:

"This is the first day of my reign!"

This address, however welcome as it was, was somewhat belated. For more than a month before it was presented, Louis, under the pretence of helping the runaway, whom for his own purposes he affected to believe still lawful King of England, had committed the gravest of all acts of war, and James had crowned the disgrace of his flight by the infamy of heading an invasion of British territory by foreign mercenaries. On the 12th of March, 1689, he landed at Kinsale as enemy and invader of his own country, convoyed by

Making the best of his way to Dublin.

fifteen French men-of-war, and supported by 2,500 French troops.

The story of this Irish war needs no re-telling here, save in so far as it brings out the contrast between William and James as the Fit and the Unfit for the doing of that work which had just then got to be done if England was not to sink back to the degrading position of a French dependency, and if the way of future progress and Imperial expansion was to be left open. William no sooner saw that the scene of the fight for constitutional liberty and religious freedom had shifted for the time being from the Low Countries to Ireland than he sent Marshal Schomberg, who was then one of the most skilful soldiers in Europe, with an army of sixteen thousand men to the scene of action.

Meanwhile the heroically stubborn resistance which has won immortal fame for the men of Londonderry had proved, not only to James and his foreign mercenaries, but to Louis himself and all Europe, that the struggle which was just renewed was no mere war of dynasties, and that something very much greater than the mere question as to who should be King of England had got to be decided before the trouble was over.

James in Ireland and Louis in France stood for the already discredited and exploded doctrine of the divine right of kings to rule as they pleased because they were the sons of their fathers; for the dark tyranny of Rome, now almost equally discredited; and for the domination of Europe by the French autocracy. In Holland and England and Germany William and his allies stood for the very reverse of all this, so that it was not only the destinies of the United Kingdom, but those of the greater part of the civilised world that had to be decided, and it was by procuring through mingled victory and defeat, confronted by powerful enemies abroad and by conspiracy and threatened assassination at home, that the worthy descendant of William the Silent proved his real right divine as king of these realms and champion of those principles of which the British Empire of to-day is the concrete expression.

It was really on the shores of an insignificant Irish stream that William fought and won the battle of European liberty. But before he did this he had another battle to fight, as it were, in front of his newly-given throne.

His reign, unhappily, saw the commencement of that system of government which an intelligent Chinese Minister to the Court of St. James once described as "the election of one party to do the business of the nation, and of another to stop them doing it." In other words, it was William's fate, among all his other difficulties, to have to contend with the bitter and usually dishonest strife of Parliamentary parties, and so keen did this strife become after the foreign enemy had actually landed on British soil, that he was even then on the point of throwing up the whole business in disgust, and going back to Holland to fight his battles out there

What would have happened if he had done so is anything but a pleasant subject for speculation. Happily, at the eleventh hour he refused to acknowledge himself beaten. Sick of the strife of words, and longing for the reality of deeds, he announced his intention to place himself at the head of the English forces in Ireland, "and with the blessing of God Almighty endeavour to reduce that kingdom that it may no longer be a charge to this." In this we may see more than the expression of a pious hope. As statesman and soldier William had seen that Ireland was the back-door of Great Britain, and that so long as it remained open, so long would the whole kingdom be vulnerable to foreign invasion, and so he went to close it.

It was a strange position for any man to be placed in. He was going to fight for everything that he held dear. He knew that if he lost in Ireland he must lose also in England and the Netherlands, but he was also going to fight against the father of the woman whom he had now come to love so dearly that her death, when it happened, came nearer to wrecking his imperial intellect than all the other trials and troubles of his laborious and almost joyless life. He had no feeling of personal enmity against James as he had against Louis, and it was duty and duty alone which took him to the Irish War. Almost the last words that he said to his wife concerning the enemy that he was about to meet on the battlefield were:

"God send that no harm may come to him!"

Mr. Traill has thus tersely summed up the condition of affairs at the moment: "Ireland in the hands of a hostile army, the shores of England threatened by a hostile fleet, a dangerous conspiracy only detected on the eve of success, a formidable insurrection imminent in the country he was leaving behind him . . . ." And yet, gloomy as the outlook seemed, his spirits rose as they ever did when he saw the moment for doing instead of talking draw near, and Bishop Burnett tells us that he said to him on the eve of his departure: "As for me,

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but for one thing, I should enjoy the prospect of being on horseback and under canvas again, for I am sure that I am fitter to direct a campaign than to manage your Houses of Lords and Commons."

These were words well worthy of the man who, not many days later, quietly sat down to breakfast in the open air beside Boyne Water, within full sight of the enemy and within easy range of their guns. Breakfast over, he mounted his horse and was promptly fired at. The first shot from two field pieces which had been trained on him and his staff killed a man and two horses. The second grazed his shoulder, and made him reel in his saddle.

"There was no need for any bullet to come nearer than that," was his remark on the occurrence. Certainly not many bullets have ever come nearer to changing the history of Britain, and therefore of the British Empire, than that one.

After the wound had been dressed, instead of taking the rest which a good many strong men would have taken, this consumptive and asthmatic invalid remounted his horse and remained until nightfall in the saddle, making his dispositions for the battle of the morrow, and attending to every detail himself. His prudent uncle and father-in-law, apparently bent on fulfilling William's pious wish, was meanwhile taking very good care to keep himself out of harm's way.

On the day of the battle, which, as everyone knows, was the 1st of July, brought out with startling clearness the contrast between the man who was king in his own right and the man who called himself king because his name was James Stuart.

"Men of Enniskillen, what will you do for me?" he cried at the critical moment of the fight, when Caillemot and Schomberg, his two best captains, had been killed, and he, drawing his sword and swinging it aloft with his wounded arm, led his trusty Dutch guards and Ulstermen against the Irish centre. James, meanwhile, having watched the first part of the fight on which all his fortunes depended from the safe eminence of the Hill of Donore, had already given up for lost the day which he had done nothing to win, and was making the best of his way to Dublin, whence, in due course, leaving the beaten and demoralised rabble that had once been his army to its fate, he fled to the congenial ignominy of his safe retreat at St. Germains and the fostering care of his country's worst enemy.

The Battle of the Boyne not only settled the fate of the Stuart dynasty for good; it decided the question whether this country was to be ruled by a feeble despotism under the patronage of France, or by that constitutional monarchy under which Great Britain has so worthily proved her title to be called the Mother of Free Nations, and in winning this battle and deciding this all-important question, William of Orange won the right to be counted among the wisest and strongest of our Empire-Makers. The disgusted Irishmen, too, had some reason on their side when they said to the victors after the battle: "Change leaders and we'll fight you again!"

The story of his wars in those countries which have been aptly termed the cockpit of Europe is the story of the continuation of that work which he came to England to do; not, as has already been pointed out, for England as a country, but for the establishment of those principles for which the British constitution, of which he was one of the makers, stands. Ignorant or prejudiced critics have accused him of sacrificing English blood and treasure to the furtherance of his own ambition. The fact is that he employed them upon the best and most necessary work that there was for them to do just then.

"Look at my brave English!" he said to the Elector of Bavaria one day during the siege of Namur, while a British regiment was carrying the outworks on one side of the city. But they were doing more than carrying earthworks. They were fighting for the principles which their descendants crowned with everlasting glory at Trafalgar and Waterloo. They were showing the soldiers and generals of France, then held to be the best in the world, the sort of stuff that they were made of, and giving promise of future prowess that was soon to be splendidly redeemed at Blenheim and Ramillies, Oudenarde and Malplaquet.

It was a singular war, and by all the rules of warfare the issue should have been the reverse of what it was. But again and again William's wonderful genius and indomitable persistence snatched victory out of defeat, and turned disaster into advantage, until at last the Grand Monarch himself had to confess the power of the enemy whom he had once thought so insignificant, and the signing of the Treaty of Ryswick left William triumphant if somewhat dissatisfied.

The results would no doubt have been much greater if William could have had his own way, and if the strife of parties in the British Parliament had not so sorely crippled him. But at least he had the satisfaction of knowing before he died that, whereas a few months before the French men-of-war had with impunity insulted and threatened the English coasts, and landed a small army on Irish soil, a few months afterwards every invader had been driven from British ground, and the French fleet almost destroyed, while the Mediterranean, on which British ships had sailed only by sufferance, was now well on the way to becoming a British lake.

And yet, in spite of all the triumphs that he had won over so many difficulties and so many dangers, and in spite of the consciousness of work well and nobly, if quietly and unostentatiously done, William's last days, like those of many another man who has deserved well of the world, were full of sorrow and suffering.

The death of his now adored queen had so shaken his mighty nature that for some days his reason was despaired of, and there can be no doubt but that it hastened his own end. And yet, weak and far advanced in disease as he was when he went out for that fatal ride from Kensington to Hampton Court, he was even then going a-hunting. The brutal Jacobite toast: "To the little gentleman in black velvet who works underground!" still serves to remind us of the mole-hill over which his horse stumbled and fell, breaking his rider's collar-bone, and inflicting the death-wound which he had escaped on a score of battle-fields.

His death was worthy of his life, for it was the death of a brave, patient man and a Christian gentleman. No doubt he himself would have preferred to have died at the head of a charge, or in the thick of an assault on a French fortress, but his destiny ordered it otherwise, and the man who had a hundred times faced death in the most reckless fashion for the purpose of inspiring his followers with his own courage and enthusiasm, died quietly in his bed, leaving behind him the greatest work ever done by an individual British sovereign and a fame which, but for the one dark and inexplicable blot of Glencoe, is as fairly entitled to be called spotless as that of any man who ever sat upon a throne and accomplished great things with such means as came to his hand.

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TOWARDS the close of the reign of Victor Emanuel, the number of poachers in the Aosto, Cogne, and Soana Valleys had increased to such an extent, that the King adopted the expedient of enrolling some of them in his corps of gamekeepers—*guardaboschi*, as they were called. This gave them an opportunity of getting some game from time to time without the risk—for the King found it advisable to wink at such offences.

These converts, knowing the tricks of the poachers, made it difficult for their former friends to carry on the old trade.

A deadly feud existed, therefore, between the keepers and poachers, and many a fight took place on the heights above. Frequently a cry of pain, which re-echoed faintly in the valley, and made the women's hearts beat more quickly, came from a human throat.

Those who were acquainted with this state of things would naturally have been surprised had they seen, early one morning in the summer of 1877, a notorious poacher in earnest and confidential conversation with one of the keepers. They were speaking for about ten minutes, the result of their talk being evidently satisfactory to both.

"What about the game, Luvoni?"

"You shall have time to get it. I shall shoot all the game I want for one day!" replied the keeper with a meaning smile. "I owe both Amoretti and his Caterina a grudge. She was partial to me till *he* came. We'll see who'll get the best of the bargain! Twelve o'clock, you say?"

"Yes, we shall up above at twelve," replied Bettini.

And they parted.

At eleven o'clock that same morning, Vicenzo Amoretti was bidding his sweetheart good-bye in the street of the little village in the Cogne Valley. Caterina had endeavoured to persuade him to give up this expedition; there had been a sharp fight between keepers and poachers on the preceding day, and she had gloomy forebodings of danger for her lover; but Amoretti only laughed at her fears and kissed her.

"You are nervous, little one!" he said gently. "If we leave it till to-morrow the offer will not hold good. It is a good price to pay for three or four animals, and it's worth risking a little for."

He left her trying to keep back the tears which rushed to her eyes, and hurried forward to join his comrade, Bettini, who was waiting for him.

The two men ascended the mountain leisurely, keeping a sharp look-out for keepers. There was one place where there was always good shooting; that was on the Cogne side of the Gran Paradiso, an awkward spot to get at. In form it resembled a great horseshoe, looking down on a path known as the Pass. Neither huntsmen nor poachers often ventured so far, and the deer fed practically in safety. But Amoretti and his companion were the most daring poachers of the district and they were bound for that spot—the Nuova ridge.

As they drew near the ridge, the fresh tracks in the thin layer of snow (which always cover the mountain except on the very hottest summer day) gave promise of good sport. They cocked their guns and trod silently and cautiously forward. They had barely set foot on the Nuova when a startled cry rang out in the morning air, and about a dozen chamois, scared at the appearance of the men, ran hither and thither on the ridge in vain search for some way of escape.

Four shots from two double-barrelled guns. Four of the animals tumbled over the edge of the Nuova into the Pass beneath; three were hit and one tumbled over from fright. The others, mad with fear, made a desperate rush past the two men and escaped. It was a splendid haul! They were spared the trouble of getting the creatures down the mountain! No wonder the men smiled contentedly!

Amoretti walked to the edge, and resting on his gun, looked over into the Pass. A second later a shot resounded on the heights, and with a cry of pain he sank down on the very edge of the Nuova. He half raised himself with a groan, and clutched fiercely at his gun.

He saw his companion scrambling down the uneven ground, leaving him to his fate; then he fell back again, insensible.

It was two hours later when Amoretti came to himself. A bullet had struck him in the leg, and he had lost a quantity of blood; but the intense cold had congealed the blood around the wound and so saved him from bleeding to death. He was benumbed with cold and could hardly move his limbs, but he managed to grope in his pocket for a small flask of brandy, a draught of

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which sent the blood tingling in his veins. He dragged himself, not without considerable pain, to a piece of rock and propped himself against it.

He tried to realise his position. Where was Bettini? Surely he had not left a comrade in such a plight—to die from exposure and exhaustion on the snow-tipped mountain? No! He would not be so black-hearted! The keepers had left him, too, which was not usual; they generally tried to capture the poachers, and more than one of the *guardaboschi* would have been glad to catch Amoretti red-handed. But Bettini would come back! He had gone for help, of course!

He began to feel cold; his leg was throbbing and causing him great pain. He chafed his limbs and did what he could to keep warm, but every movement seemed to make his wound more painful. Why was Bettini so long? Hark! Someone was coming behind him! He tried to twist round to welcome Bettini, and to his surprise the keeper, Luvoni, stepped in front of him.

The two men looked at each other for a second, intense hatred plainly visible on each face.

"So I've brought you down at last!" said Luvoni, with a triumphant smile.

"Well?" asked Amoretti, assuming an indifferent air.

"I swore to have revenge on you for taking Caterina from me," said the keeper, "and at last my opportunity has come."

"I did not take Caterina from you," returned the wounded man. "She acted of her own free will. Do you think that sweet creature would mate with *you?*"

"I could have killed you," hissed Luvoni, stung by his rival's words, "but I had a better plan. Death in that way was too easy. I want you to suffer, to die by inches! And you will! You are helpless here; Bettini will not come back! You will die by inches, I say—do you hear? And to-morrow Caterina can have her lover if she wants him!"

And with an oath he left the wounded man to his fate.

Left to die like a dog! He could see it all now; it had been planned between Bettini and his rival! Oh, the treacherous hound! Oh, for one grip at his throat, just one minute! Was there no help for him? Where was it to come from? His heart sank within him at his utter helplessness. Caterina's forebodings were realised. He writhed in rage and agony. Could he do nothing—*nothing?*

In his desperation he dragged himself again to the edge of the Nuova and screamed aloud for help, in the hopes that someone might hear him in the Pass. He saw a man's form with a load on his shoulder. The man stopped abruptly and looked upwards; then he began to run off. At first Amoretti's heart leapt for joy, but the next instant it sank like lead. The form was that of Bettini; he was sure of it—and he was carrying away the game! Lost! lost!

For hours Amoretti lay on the icy-cold Nuova, alternately imploring the help of Heaven and reviling the two men who had plotted against his life. Night came on, his body was benumbed, the pain of his wound was almost unbearable. He became delirious and raved aloud. His sufferings culminated in the early hours of the morning when, in a frantic attempt to descend the ridge, the mental and physical agony drew from him a horrible, inhuman cry, and he fell senseless.

* * * * *

It was nearly midnight when Caterina retired to her room. She made no attempt to undress; rest and sleep were out of the question. Amoretti had not returned! He had promised to meet her in the evening, but he had not come, and she could gain no news of her lover or his companion. Had they been caught she would have heard. Had her presentiment come true? Had anything happened to her lover?

Luvoni, the keeper, who lived in the next village, had met her in the street and had begun a conversation with her, but she had quickly closed it. She now remembered, with a pang, that as she had left him she had noticed something like an expression of glee—of triumph even—in his eyes. Something *had* happened to her lover.

She sat by the window, staring into the darkness, conjuring up all kinds of horrors, her eyes blurred with tears, her brain on fire, unconscious of the flight of time.

What was that? A faint wail struck her ear. Was it fancy? No! She sprang up, her whole frame trembling. It was her lover in distress—she was sure of it—up there on the Nuova! She would save him! She did not stop to consider the difficulty of the task; she quickly put on her hat and cloak, seized a stick and a small flask of brandy, and ran out of the house.

The ascent of the mountain was rough work for a woman, but this was no ordinary occasion. Fear and devotion gave her strength. Several times she had to stop, but she went on again in the grey light of dawn, keeping ever on the watch for some trace of Amoretti. At length, after many slips and narrow escapes, she caught sight of a prostrate figure, and with a mingled cry of joy and terror she hurried to the side of her unconscious lover.

* * * * *

Bettini felt very uncomfortable as he made his way home on the following afternoon. The Pass, reputed to be haunted, was now doubly so for him, and he hurried onwards to get through the dread place while the light lasted. His superstitious fears increased as he neared the spot where he had seen Amoretti's head as the deserted man had peered over the top. He quickened his steps almost to a run. He had traversed half the length of the Pass, his head bent lest he should see something, when a rustling sound caused him to look up. He dropped his gun, his hair stood on end, and his blood seemed to freeze in his veins; for there in front of him stood the ghost of the man he had betrayed. For one moment he stood paralysed with horror; then with an indescribable yell he turned and fled.

Amoretti smiled in ferocious glee. He was sitting on a piece of rock, where Caterina had left him to go forward for help. All day long they had toiled at the descent, a few steps at a time, taking the longest way because it was the easiest. Caterina would get him to the bottom before going for help.

She had brought him to consciousness, bound up his wound, and given him food which she had found in his wallet; then, when he felt able to move a few steps, the wearying descent had been commenced. Neither could ever properly describe what they had gone through, but it was sufficient for them that they had accomplished the task.

It was two months before Amoretti was able to get about, and then Caterina persuaded him to join the *guardaboschi*. Luvoni disappeared from Cogne; Bettini lost his reason after that meeting in the Pass, and is now in an asylum.

George Day.

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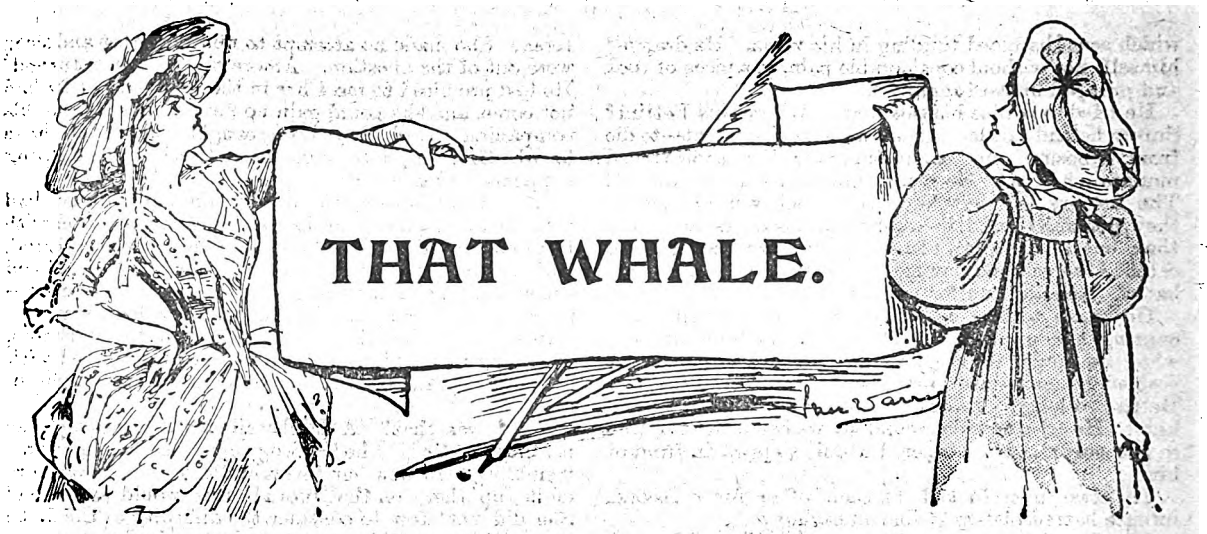

THAT WHALE.

"No, sir," he said, "I was not always so low down in the world as this. There was a time when I conducted the orchestra in a menagerie! Ah! To think that I should come to this! But it was all through that whale!"

He was a poor wretch, who came to the café from time to time and scraped his violin until the customers, in self defence, gave him a few coppers to get rid of him. I had been extra liberal on that occasion, for the reason that I was in a thoroughly bad temper; but instead of going as usual, he ordered some absinthe and seated himself opposite me.

I uttered a growl in reply to his observation. He evidently regarded it as a sign of approval, for he continued in the following terms:

"Yes, it is all through that whale. When I finished my studies at the Conservatoire, where I won three first prizes for music, I set out to look for a first-class position. There was not one vacant; but after waiting and trying for a time, I succeeded in obtaining the post of conductor—h'm—at Mesuron's menagerie. You should have seen me there playing the 'Indian March' whi'e Mesuron—he was a lion tamer—put his head into the lion's mouth! It was grand! It was my music that drew the people! And Mesuron, who was a go-ahead man, knew how to make the most of my genius. I was starred on the bills as an Italian first of all; then he turned me into a German when the fashion changed; and no doubt he would have Russianised my name in time if he had lived. But he died!"

He heaved a big sigh and took a sip of absinthe. I let him go on; I wanted to hear about the whale.

"One day Mesuron bought a whale; not a large one—a medium whale, so to speak—as an extra attraction for the menagerie. He was always on the look-out for novelties. The creature was a great nuisance whenever we shifted our quarters, but there is no denying that it proved an attraction.

"Soon after this, Mesuron caught a chill which carried him off, and the menagerie became the property of his brother, who had been a partner in the concern. Alfredi—his name was Alfred, but that did not sound so well—had never been favourably disposed towards the whale; in fact, the two had nearly quarrelled about it, but the elder man had had his way. The whale had remained Mesuron's own property; he paid for its keep and took an extra share of the profits, which he regarded as additional takings due to the attracton of the 'cetacean,' as he was fond of calling it.

"When Mesuron's will was read, it was found that he had left the whale to *me*. Alfredi was furious; he had expected to have it, no doubt because he knew that it brought money to the business. He tried to persuade me to give it up to him, but I refused unless he took me as a partner. He would not agree to this, and gave me notice to go—with my whale. It was not a written notice; it was in very bad language."

He stopped and took another sip at his absinthe. He began to feel more at ease presumably; he dived his hand into his pocket and drew out a cigarette, which he lighted and smoked with an air of enjoyment.

"I hired a shed on a piece of waste ground and had my legacy removed to this structure, while I made arrangements to dispose of it. I did not want it myself; if I could get someone to give me a lump sum for it, I thought that I should do better than trying to run a show on my own account. I used to go every day about twelve or one o'clock to feed it.

"About a week after it had been removed to the shed, I went as usual to feed the animal—I suppose it's an animal?—I found the doors broken in and the whale gone, tank and all.

"When I recovered from my surprise, I rushed off to the police station as fast as my legs would carry me and stated what had occurred.

"'Mr. Inspector,' I said, out of breath, 'I've been robbed.'

"He took his pen from behind his ear wearily, and said: 'What have you lost?'

"'A whale,' I answered.

"'A what? You mean whalebone,' he exclaimed.

"'No, I don't!' I replied angrily. 'It's a real whale.'

"'Stuffed?'

"'No, a live one! At least it was alive yesterday.'

"The intelligent officer opened his book and prepared to make notes.

"'Stolen from your bedroom, eh?' he observed.

"'From its own bedroom,' I cried. 'From a big shed where I had put it.'

"The officer made a note and continued:

"'I must have a full detailed description of the stolen object.'

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"That upset me entirely. I know a whale when I see one, but to give a full description of a creature which you have only glanced at as it played about in the water is an entirely different thing. I said so.

"'That complicates matters very much,' said the inspector; 'we really must have a full description or I'm afraid we can do nothing. There are such a lot of whales about; and if we take up the wrong one, the newspapers will make no end of a fuss—they always do. Well, well! At what time was the robbery committed?'

"'I left the shed at one o'clock yesterday,' I replied, 'and when I went there to-day at twelve, the whale was gone.'

"'Twenty-three hours start!' grumbled the inspector. 'Why they may be out of the country by this time! You can get a long way in a day.'

"I tried to point out that the robbers could not make much progress when encumbered with a whale in a tank, but the intelligent inspector interrupted me by a wave of his hand.

"'I think it highly probable,' he continued, looking thoughtfully in front of him, 'that your whale strayed away of its own accord.'

"'What! A whale?' I asked. 'That's very improbable.'

"'Not at all!' answered the inspector sharply. 'People do all kinds of wild and improbable things.'

"I ventured to suggest that the tank might embarrass it, but he took no notice.

"'Is it the whale or the robber that you wish to get hold of?' he asked.

"'The whale, of course; but it seems to me that if you find one you must find the other.'

"'Oh, dear, no!' he exclaimed. 'In murder cases, for instance, we find the bodies, but not the assassins.'

"I agreed with him that they did not find the culprits in such cases, but I thought it better not to say so. I left him after a few more words, feeling very much grieved! for I was convinced that the police would never discover my treasure.

"That evening I strolled instinctively towards the old show. As I drew near, I saw a large poster. I read it and gasped for breath. It was an announcement that the whale was being exhibited! It was *my* whale, I was sure of it! What was I to do? At first I felt that I must rush in and claim it, but I reflected that I might get into trouble for making a disturbance. Finally I resolved to wait until the morning and go to the police.

"I went to the station in good time on the following morning and saw the inspector. But before I could say a word, he growled out:

"'You're a nice one! Coming here and talking about having a whale stolen from you. Why, *you* stole it from somebody else! You had better be off or you may find yourself in a tight place!'

"And in spite of of my protestations, I was obliged to get out of the station or he would have run me in for stealing my own whale! Alfredi had been at work, that was clear. In my rage I committed a foolish act; I went to a lawyer. The end of it was that I began a civil suit against Alfredi to recover possession of my whale."

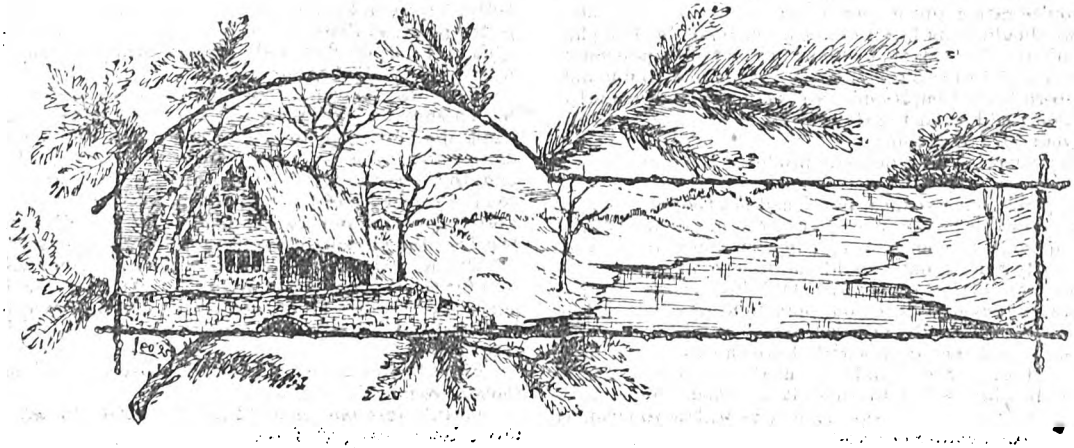
The narrator stopped, and I said "Well?" for want of something better. He gently pushed his glass towards me, but I affected not to notice it.

"The suit came on about a month afterwards. The judge listened to my side of the case with evident disbelief. When the defence began, the solicitor produced a sworn document to the effect that the whale had died on the previous afternoon. The judge said he thought that the best way to settle the dispute now was to dismiss the case and make each pay his own costs. That decision apparently suited Alfredi, and I had no money to appeal.

"So the result was that I was ruined by the payment of the costs. And that is why you see me playing in this café. I cannot get a situation; all the impresarios are down on me on account of my suit against Alfredi—I know it is so, although they pretend that they won't employ me because I can't play. I, the one who held the audience spell-bound with my 'Indian March' in Mesuron's menagerie! And it's all through that whale. I thought it was to make my fortune, and it ruined me."

I waited to hear no more. As I left the café I heard a big sigh, and something that sounded like "that whale."

G. D.



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THE EYE OF THE SUN

By FRED WHISHAW, *Author of "A Boyar of the 'Terrible.'"*

SUMMARY.

THE story is told by a 'Varsity man, who, seeking adventure, joins Jameson in his raid against the Matabeles. During a brush with the enemy, Joe Wright, a fellow trooper, meets with his death-wound, and, before expiring, bequeaths a satchel containing his life history and the revelation of a wonderful secret to the narrator, who continues the story in the words of the written confession of his dead comrade. Some years previously, Wright had been a private in a Royal Rifle regiment, stationed in Rajpore, India. He and three companions made a midnight raid on a Hindoo temple, in order to steal a diamond of exceptional value and beauty, situated in the forehead of an idol.

In the attempt the soldiers kill one of the guardian priests. A trap-door in front of the idol opens under the feet of Johnny Phelps, who disappears, and the party return to the barracks without having obtained the gem.

Later on, they buy a *fac-simile* of the "Eye of the Sun" from a merchant in a bazaar. With this they return to the temple and substitute the dummy for the genuine jewel.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FOX OUTFOXED.

THE following day friend Jake began to talk to me after parade.

"We did that business pretty cleverly t'other night!" he said; "you and I."

"And Alf!" I added.

"Alf!" repeated Jake scornfully; "it was a rotten day for us, my son, when we took *that* idiot into partnership; *he's* no good to us—only a danger! I wish to Heaven he was out of it! Let's chuck the fool altogether; there's enough to make two men rich, fair and square, in this little lot. We don't want a third hand in it! What's he ever done to share it with us?—Nothing!"

"No, no, Jake; none of that!" I said. "I don't like Alf, and I think him a poor spirited creature, but, dash it all, man, a share of the profits is his own and he has as much right to his as we to ours!"

"I was only joking," said Jake forcing a laugh.

"What about keeping the Glory?" I asked presently; "you see, you've rather given yourself away, Jake, by suggesting that we should swindle Alf out of his share of our find; how am I to know after this that you and he won't plot against *me?*"

"What, I!" exclaimed Jake in accents most indignant; "I'd scorn the action, Joseph; you ought to know me better than that; and as for the Glory, why here it is, and you may have your turn at keeping it!"

To my surprise, Jake actually produced the diamond and placed it in my hand.

I say I was surprised, because I had not thought that the fellow would make this move, and I did not understand it. I never made the mistake of supposing him to be even temporarily honest, but I could not discern his game.

"I've been talking it over with Alf," Jake continued, "and we have agreed, subject to your opinion as an equal partner with ourselves, that the fair and square way with this here diamond is that each of us should have the keeping of it for three days at a stretch, taking turn about, and bound to produce it when asked to show it, *if* asked," added Jake with a leer, "though I hope none of us will be so mean as to suspect one another of fraud."

"It wouldn't be much good, would it?" I said with a laugh, "suspecting one another of parting with the thing here, where it's known; the only chance would be to get clean away with the diamond, and that would not be so easy."

"Pretty nigh impossible, I take it!" he said.

"Well, Jake, I should certainly keep a goodish look out on *you*, you know, or on Alf, while either of you had the jewel; and I dare say you'd do the same while I had it! Hang it, man, let's be natural, you're not so blooming high above suspicion as all that; I know you pretty well, Jake Daws, and I'm going to keep my eye on you and Alf, too, for I wouldn't trust either of you into the next street!"

"Right," said Jake, smiling very disagreeably; "then that's it, is it, and we arn't to be friendly and trusting, as partners should be, but suspicious and unpleasant? So be it then, sonny; and as it is to be so I'll just tell you this: Alf and I are afraid that you are one of those pious, white-livered idiots that do the devil's work with a prayer on their lips and a mouse's heart underneath, that makes them afraid of what they've done the moment they *have* done it; it's men like you that turn Queen's evidence and hang their friends, and Alf and I are not sure about you, because, as I say, we consider you a darned fool. But we have you, sonny, on toast; for since you murdered that priest——"

"*I*—I murdered the priest?" I stammered. "You infernal liar, Jake! What are you driving at now?"

"Where's the lie?" he said; "if anyone's the liar it's yourself, and you know it! You murdered that Josser, and you know it well enough, and so does Alf, and so do I; and what I say is this, that we don't stand no nonsense, Alf and me, and though we want to live on good terms with you, the first time you show yourself nasty or dangerous—well, we have you in hand and we shan't spare you."

"I see," I said; "all right, Jake, you needn't be afraid; I should gain nothing by giving you and Alf away; you'd better see I don't run away with the diamond, that's more to the point, as I've got it in my pocket. I'm not going to split if I did, we should all hang for that priest, my friend, whether you killed him or I."

"That may be or may not," said Jake; "meanwhile you can be sure we shall take care you don't give us the slip while it's your turn to keep the swag. You are such a darned fool, you see, that there's no knowing what you mightn't try to do. To-day's Sunday, and on Tuesday coming your keep of the jewel's over and Alf's turn begins. Lord help you if you try any games with us! I'd chuck the jewel for the pleasure of seeing you hang, any day!"

"Oh, no, you wouldn't, Jake!" I said. "You'd sell your soul for the thing, and you know it. Well, you shall see it again on Tuesday night, don't fret; I'm a partner in this business and I'm not going to wreck the ship while the cargo's in it."

"Right," said Jake; "we shall have an eye on you, though we mayn't seem to."

"There's just one more thing I wanted to say, Jake Daws, before you go," I said.

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As I turned a corner in the road, two men rushed at me.

"Well, what is it?" he growled.

"*I* wish to say that of all the infernal liars and blackguardly scamps I ever saw, you're the worse by a big bit!" I said.

Jake did not reply, but turned and marched away in the middle of my sentence as soon as he gathered the drift of it.

In thinking over this conversation—a true interchange of civilities from start to finish—I have since come to the conclusion that Jake must have had a motive in giving me the charge of the diamond, and I think it was a double one.

I believe he wished, in the first place, to disarm any suspicion I might entertain as to the purity of his intentions, in order that he might afterwards carry out something he had in view and to the success of which a too keen watch on his actions, by me, would be prejudicial; and, in the second place, that it had struck him there was danger, during the first few days, of our theft being discovered and a hue and cry raised; in which case it would be as well that the stolen jewel, if traced at all, should be found in my possession rather than in his.

However this may have been, it was exceedingly convenient for me that Jake decided to give me the keeping of the diamond just at this crisis, for—suspecting Jake as I did to be ready for every conceivable villainy that opportunity might offer him to commit—I made sure that next time the jewel came into his hands it would remain there, and that he and Alf, or he without Alf, would disappear with it before the day fixed for our departure to Bombay.

Therefore I had no hesitation in substituting my imitation jewel for the real Eye of the Sun; and when the time came to deliver it up to Alf, the next holder, I gave that pallid and foxy individual the dummy, while I kept the real article locked up in my desk.

Alf leered as I gave him the packet; he looked into the envelope and grinned:

"Lord," he said, "don't it make you feel funny to put a thing like that in your pocket—fifty thousand pounds, I dare say it's worth; what do you think?"

"I dare say it is," I said, "quite that, and perhaps more; take care what you do with it—and see Jake doesn't get hold of it before Friday night!"

I don't know why I said that, unless it was to draw Alf out. He instantly assumed his most foxy expression, half looking round suspiciously, and listening before he replied, which he did in a whisper.

"Ah!" he said; "I see you suspect him; well, so do I, and I wish to Heaven we were clear of the scamp, you and I. Couldn't you think of any way of getting rid of him? What if you and I were to desert, now, to-day or to-morrow—with the swag, of course. I don't know how it is, Joe Wright, but dash it—I'm *afraid* of this devil Jake; there's no other word!"

I laughed aloud.

"Upon my soul, Alf, I'm not in the least surprised," I said, "for you know you're a most infernal coward, my man, and there's no mistake about it. And what's more, you're quite right; beware of Jake, Alf, as you would of the devil, for he's just as bad; don't you cross him, as you value your life!"

"What d'you mean? You don't think I'm in any danger, do you?" said Alf, looking desperately white.

"Not so long as you don't cross him!" I said. "Now, if I

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was to skoot with you and the diamond, as you suggested just now, he'd be after us in a jiff and wouldn't be standing on any ceremony, once he found us!"

"Lord help us, he's a desperate chap, I know!" said Alf, shuddering.

"Well, keep in with him, if you're afraid of him!" I said. "I don't care a hang for the fellow one way or another, myself, and I intend to have my rights. I'm not a quarrelsome man, but anyone who wrongs me had best keep a long way out of my sight, that's all I know."

Alf went away rather scared, as I meant him to be. I was dealing with a fox, so I had put on a fox's dress myself. What I wanted out of Alf Hitchins was that when Jake proposed to him to skoot with the Eye of the Sun he should consent to go, and should go a long way; I wanted them both cleared out of the place, and the sooner the better.

I succeeded admirably.

Jake and Alf deserted on the Wednesday night, carrying the diamond with them, as they thought; but as a matter of fact the Eye of the Sun was safe enough in a hiding-place that I knew of, and none else in the wide world.

We were to leave on the Saturday, but before we went I took the precaution to buy another model of the Glory in case of emergencies which I could not at present foresee, but which might of course supervene at any moment.

CHAPTER VIII.

On the Rack.

My regiment duly reached home and I with it, and in the course of time I was allowed leave to visit my old mother down in South Wales, near Fishguard in Pembrokeshire. There I spent a pleasant time, during which I never parted from my treasure, which I carried with me wherever I went.

It makes me laugh to think how few of those I met ever suspected that here was a man lugging about with him a king's ransom, and literally treading it under foot as he walked!

For the Glory of Rajpore lay hidden securely in the heel of my left shoe, and that shoe I wore night and day, sleeping and waking. I had myself hollowed out a place for it in my heel, placing it most carefully within, tightly fixed in a hole smaller than itself, well wedged into the tough leather and securely plugged in afterwards.

I had not yet made up my mind how to dispose of the gem, or laid satisfactory plans as to the story I should tell to account for my possession of it. These things required plenty of thought, and very cautious moving, and a false step might bring me into great trouble.

After all, there was no particular hurry; I was well enough off just at present, with no work to do, and plenty of time to amuse myself and to pay court to my best girl, who lived in the neighbourhood some five miles away inland, at a farm-house near Trefgarn, on the road between us and Haverfordwest.

My girl, Nest, was a bonnie young woman of about eighteen, and I was fond enough of her at that time, and she—as I thoroughly believe—of me. I used to walk over of an afternoon, take tea with her and her folks, and walk back at night—ah! what nights those were, and what scenery she lived in! I admired it all then beyond everything; I should hate the sight of it now!

Well, one night I had been up as usual. Nest was frolicsome, and when I met her and offered to kiss her she said:

"Ah, you're not the first, my man, that's offered to kiss me to-day!"

"I'm the first that's done it, I'll lay!" I said. "Who are you talking of, Nest?"

"And a handsome man, too, and offered to walk out with me!" continued Nest, laughing.

I laughed too, for I knew there was nothing to fear: Nest could take care of herself as well as another.

"You went, of course!" I said.

"I said I had a lover," she continued, "and as for the kiss he might take it if he could."

I laughed and kissed the girl, and was about to speak of something else, but Nest held me to the subject.

"You've not heard the best of it yet!" she said.

"Go on, then," I said, "you fetched him one in the chops and ran home, I'll be sworn!"

"No, I didn't," laughed Nest, "for he was very polite and didn't offer to touch me. 'He's a lucky chap any way, that other one!' he said, 'and if ever you should want to make a little change, why, you've only to let me know; a young farmer, no doubt, belonging to these parts, and a Welshman your lover is, and I'll bet half-a-crown I'll guess his name in three shots—if he's a Welshman he's an Evans, or a Jones, or a Williams, come now?'

"'Well, you've lost your money this time,' I said, 'for he isn't a farmer, and he isn't a Welshman, but a soldier of the Queen's and an Englishman, and his name isn't one of the three you said.'

"'Why, lord! then I've lost my money!' he laughed. 'I'll owe it you, and that'll give me another opportunity of seeing your pretty face; why, I am a soldier myself and so is my friend here'—he had another man with him, I forgot to say—'and maybe I've met your bloke out in the world; now what may his name be if it isn't Evans, nor Jones, nor yet Williams?'

"Well, I told him your name, since he was so polite and pleasant about it all, and you'd have laughed to see the effect! 'Oh Lord!' said the other man, and *my* man immediately hit him in the mouth.

"'My friend's astonished,' he said laughing, 'and so am I, to speak truth, for this is a kind of coincidence—we know your man well, we're in the same regiment—you'd hardly believe it, but it's true; and we've lived together in India five years, and are now living together at the regimental depôt; we were, at least, till we separated for leave. You can tell him you saw Tom Weston and Bill Hanley; we're living at Goodwick, near Fishguard, where my people are staying; so shake hands, miss, if you will, and may we be better acquainted soon—shall you be seeing your man to-day?'

"'This evening,' I said, 'for sure—he comes every other night.'

"'Then you tell him you saw Tom Weston!' said my friend, and with that they both set off walking fast towards Goodwick along the Fishguard Road."

"Well," I said, when Nest had finished, "that certainly was a bit of a coincidence, just as Tom said, and I'll look up him and Billy to-morrow at Goodwick, and I don't know but what we'll have a drink together; they ain't bad chaps, either of them, and they're as thick as soup. I didn't know Tom had friends down here, though, and how it is I never heard of it is what beats me!"

"Come down to the seaside for a bit of change, like enough!" said Nest, and there the conversation ended.

Well, that night, after saying good-night to my girl and watching her back along the road, I started to walk homewards to Fishguard, and I had not gone half a mile when suddenly as I turned a corner in the road, two men rushed at me and bore me to the ground before I could raise a finger in my own defence; it was so dark that I could not see their faces, and it was not until they began to speak that I recognised the rascals.

One of them had fetched me such a whack on the head with some hard stick or knuckle-duster, that I hardly resisted as they bound me hand and foot; and it was only after this had been performed that either of them spoke.

"There," said one, at last, "that has the joker safe, I think, blast him; now then, Joe, you thieving, lying rascal, what have you to say for yourself? Tighten that thong round his ankles, Alf, and see that the sneak don't kick you in the mug."

There was no doubt as to the identity of the speaker. It was Jake, of course; Jake, whom I fondly imagined to be

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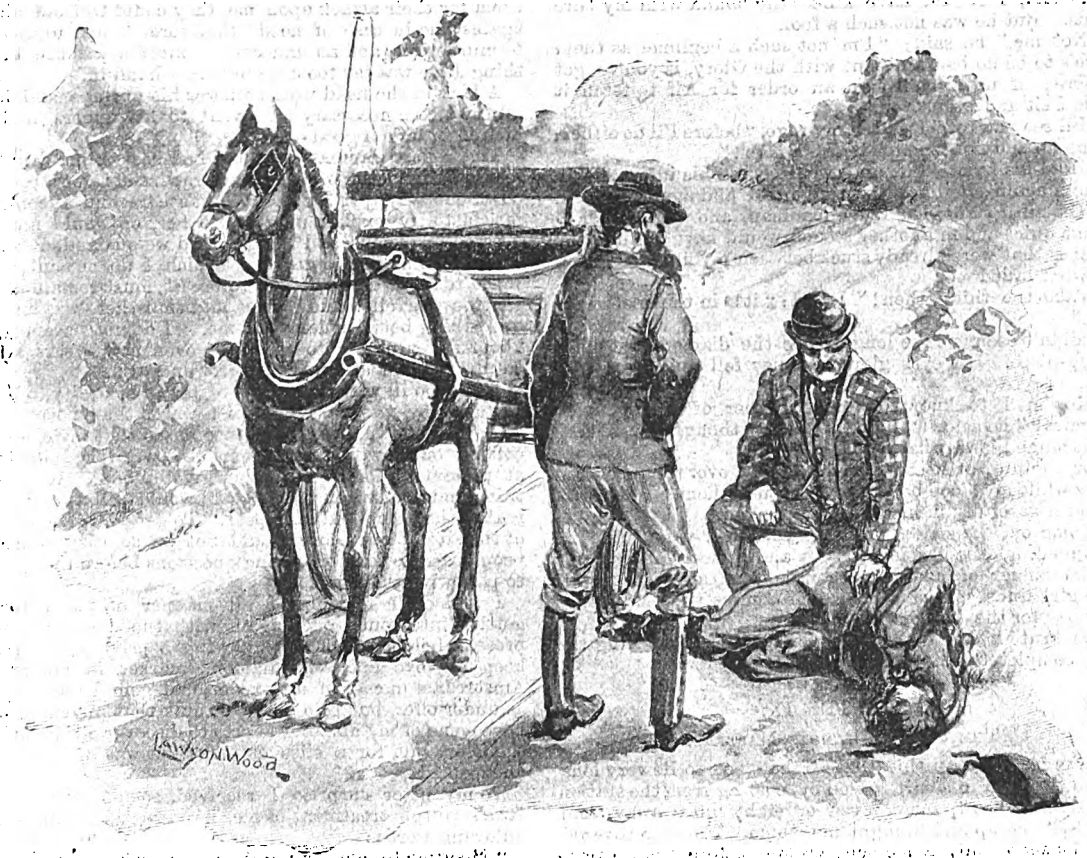
far away in India, raging—together with Alf—over their dummy diamond, or still rejoicing in fancied possession of the real article; the very last two persons I should have expected to meet in Pembrokeshire this night!

"So you thought you were a bit too clever for us, you rascal, did you?" he said, kicking me with his foot as I lay; "you infernal, swindling, thieving blackguard—robbing honest men of their share of the swag, and putting them off with a dummy thing that any fool would know to be a fraud at the first glance—a pretty sort of partner you are!

"Then where is it?"

"Find out, if you're smart enough!" I said, laughing aloud in bravado, though, as a matter of fact, I didn't feel greatly amused by the turn events had taken.

"Oh, we're not to know, aren't we?" said Jake; "right you are, sonny. Hand us over the matches, Alf, and don't stand shivering there like a blooming telegraph wire!" Jake turned me over on my face—I could not imagine what he intended to do with me, but if I had known I could have done nothing to prevent him, for my hands were bound so



Two men in a cart passed by, coming from the station.

Come, hand over the Glory and be hanged, and we'll see what's to be done with your infernal carcase afterwards!"

"The honest men cleared off pretty sharp with the false diamond," I laughed, "and thought it was the real one, even though *any* fool would know it! None of your infernal hypocrisy, Jake; speak up straight, like a man, and let's know what you want of me; I *was* a bit too sharp for you, and you know it well enough; you thought to have me and I had you instead."

"That may be," said Jake, "but *we've* got *you* now, and we're going to score the King, my son; we've been on your track for a fortnight, and now we've got you we don't intend to let you go till the account's squared, and perhaps not then; skulking, swindling rascals like you aren't fit to live, and are better under the sod than above it. Now, what about this yere diamond; is it sold? You'd better tell the truth, you know, for we intend to put the screw on till you do; we have you fair, and you know it. Now then, is it sold or not?"

"No, it isn't," I said.

tightly behind my back that I was as helpless as a babe. He turned me over, as I say, on my face, using his foot to do it, and doing it roughly, too; I swore and abused him, but he only laughed.

"Hold his wrists tightly, Alf, you lubber," continued Jake.

Alf caught hold of my wrists to keep my arms motionless, and I then discovered what the hound Jake intended to do with me.

He lit matches and stuck them between my fingers. I have since learnt that this was a favourite practice, in the old days of inquisition and torture, among those who desired to obtain a confession or some secret from their victims.

"Now we shall soon know all about it, sonny!" said Jake.

In less time than it takes to describe it, the matches set burning between my fingers had burnt down and began to cause me the most excruciating agony. I dug my toes into the ground and bit the earth under my nose for a second or two, resolved to bear the pain and utter no sound; I felt that I would give worlds, if I had them, to be able to defy

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this unspeakable rascal, and Heaven itself—if I had it—to get the better of him. But I could not stand the pain; I twisted and yelled and shouted to Jake for the love of God to blow out the matches.

Jake instantly did so.

"Aha!" he said, "so you're going to be wise in time, are you? that's being a sensible man instead of an 'idiot. Let go his wrists, Alf. Now then, what about this Glory—where is it?"

"Loosen my hands and legs and I'll tell you!" I said. If he had, I should have killed the hound with my bare hands. But he was not such a fool.

"Not me," he said; "I'm not such a beginner as that; there's to be no bargain; out with the Glory, if you've got it here; if not, you'll sign an order for Alf to fetch it while I sit and watch you."

"I'll see you rot," I said in my rage, "before I'll do either; let me up and fight me for it like a man!"

Hold his wrists, Alf, and we'll scorch his infernal skin for him again; he likes it!" said Jake; and again Alf held me, though I struggled like a madman, and together they got me quiet and in another second would have lighted the matches that were already stuck between my fingers. Then my heart failed me.

"Take the thing, then!" I said; "it's in the heel of my boot."

It didn't occupy Jake long to dig the diamond out of its hiding-place. His eyes glared as they fell upon it, so did Alf's.

"How'm I to know it's not another of those cursed dummies?" he said. "Lord! it can't be though, can it, Alf! See it shine! lord, what a gem it is!"

For a minute or so the two men gloated over the recovered Glory while my blood boiled as I watched them. Then Jake placed it carefully in his waistcoat pocket.

"Come on," he said; "I'd kill you, Joe, you thief," he continued, addressing me as I lay and fumed, "if it wasn't for the danger of hanging; as it is you can lie there till your girl finds you, or someone else, curse you, and here's your pay for the diamond!"

The brute kicked me violently on the head, knocking the sense completely out of me, and made off.

CHAPTER IX.

The Glory Changes Masters.

I was fortunate in this that: I had not to lie very long before two men in a cart passed by, coming from the station at Haverfordwest, some seven or eight miles away, and they took me up and brought me home. I had recovered consciousness only a moment or two before they came; perhaps the rattle of their wheels had roused me, but I was silly, so to speak, all the way home, and unable to answer satisfactorily the questions they put to me.

As a matter of fact I could not at the time recall very clearly what had happened to me. I said I had been robbed, but I had the sense to remember I must remain silent about the diamond. The necessity to be silent on that topic had become a law of nature to me. I fancy my friends imagined that I was drunk; but the fact that I was bound hand and foot and with but one boot on (for Jake had pitched the other away after cutting the gem out of it) puzzled them immensely.

"Why, where's the other boot, lad?" they asked me.

"I had all my money in it," I had the sense to reply, "and the blackguards found it and took the whole boot."

"Who were they?" I was asked a dozen times.

"Lord knows!" said I.

"Yes, and you too!" one of the fellows laughed; "you've been drinking, sonny, with a friend or two, that's what's the matter, and you ain't going to give 'em away; well that's your affair, not ours!"

No, I was not going to give them away, nor myself either; and though the pain in my head from Jake's savage kick was bad enough, and kept me pretty silly all through that drive, I'm glad to say I had the sense to keep my own counsel.

Why did not Jake murder me right out?

Well, he wasn't such a fool; that's the plain English of it. He had the whip-hand of me and he knew it; he had the Glory safe in his pocket; he had evidence against me, he and Alf together—that is, they could manufacture evidence between them—that I had murdered a Hindoo priest, and in the remote contingency of my denouncing them for their attack upon me, they could trot out all this against me in case of need; therefore it was unnecessary to murder me, and an unnecessary murder was the kind of thing Jake was far too cute to take a hand in.

A kick in the head would answer his purpose and let off all the steam necessary for a vent to his anger; and that kick I got, and a good one too!

The report circulated that I had been found drunk and mauled, the victim of a drunken brawl, and I got a bad name down our way. It came to Nest's ears and I could not satisfactorily explain matters to her, or would not. She became suspicious, and I angry, and we quarrelled over it.

This is a part of my history which I do not intend the world to know details of, therefore it must remain at this, that we quarrelled and parted, and that there was an end of everything between Nest and me. I do not care to write about it for others to read, for even now, years after, I think of the break-up with regret and pain.

I was too ill with the effects of Jake's brutality to be able to take any very active steps towards the recovery of the "Glory," but though I now recognised that my chances of coming out a winner in this matter were very faint indeed at present, I did not altogether give up hope. A thousand things might happen before Jake would sell the gem and realise the value and disappear. To get rid of a diamond of the size of our Glory would not be so easy a matter; people are so fond of asking questions before they consent to part with their money.

I had half formulated all manner of plans towards getting into touch once again with the diamond and its present holders, such as employing a private detective to keep an eye upon the diamond market in London and Amsterdam in case of an exceptional gem being reported as under offer, but I do not now think that anything would have come of my amateur efforts to discover either Jake or the Glory but for a slice of luck that was as welcome as unexpected.

To my utter surprise I received, some few days after Jake's savage treatment of me, a post-card containing the following words:

"Meet me to-morrow night at nine where you saw me and Jake; have a most important communication to make; don't fail.—Alf."

Needless to say I kept the appointment.

I took the precaution however to take with me, loaded, a huge clumsy revolver that my mother kept in the house, a treasured possession of my dead father's; this was a weapon that carried a bullet of the size of a crow's egg, or near it, and the drum contained four chambers; a wonderful pistol, indeed, and I cannot imagine where my father could have picked it up. However, it was just as well that my mother had it in the house, for I did not relish meeting either of these two rascals—and likely enough both—unarmed.

I also took with me my second dummy diamond, which I still had by me in case of emergency. I did not anticipate that I should get a chance of successfully substituting the sham for the real a second time, but something prompted me to take it on the chance, and I carried it in my pocket.

I had not to wait long for Alf. He came down the road towards our rendezvous, and I could see, even in the dusk, that he was alone. The sight of him made me very angry, for I could not forget that he had assisted Jake in the

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villainy of the other evening. If I had done as my fingers itched to do, I should have run out at the fellow and administered to him the very finest thrashing he ever had in his life; but I was curious to learn the object of his coming.

"Well, Alf, you infernal rascal," was my greeting to him; "what villainy's on hand now?"

"Lord, Joe, how you frightened me!" he muttered, starting violently back at my first words; "my nerves have

I shook the wretch as a terrier would a kitten.

all gone to the eternal dogs through living with that arch-devil Jake."

"Oh, so Jake's an arch-devil is he?" I said; "yet you seemed quite content to be his partner and help him in his cowardly villainies. What d'you mean by abetting him in his attack upon me in the dark, and aiding him to torture and rob me, you rascal you! D'you know what I've a mind to do? I've a mind to take and give you the soundest thrashing a man can get without needing to be buried. Now, what have you brought me here for?"

"Not to quarrel, Joe," said Alf. "On my life I'd have taken your side t'other night, if I could; but Jake carries the arms, he'd have shot or stabbed me in a minute, and you too. I'd rather be on your side than on his, and you know it. I told you so in India, but you wouldn't take me on."

"Well, what is it now?" I said coldly.

"I was going to tell you," he replied; "I've come to consult you. I'd as soon be below as living with Jake, and that's the truth; no one knows what a devil he is, but I. I'd kill the hound if I dared, for the things he says to me, and the things he threatens. Now would you, for half the Glory, which we'd share, join me in an attack on him? it would be easy enough to get him out here any night; I could lead him by one of these rocks just as you passed by us t'other night; but this time you'd be the one to pounce out and he'd be the one to drop; with you to help I wouldn't mind risking the rest. I tell you neither you nor I will ever touch a pennyworth of our diamond while that chap's upside of the sod!"

"Come, stow that, Alf!" I said; "I don't go in for murder, you know that well enough. I'd go as far as partnering you to get back the gem, and of sharing the proceeds with you if we can sell the infernal thing, but when you begin to talk about putting this chap Jake away after your own particular cowardly and generally blackguardly fashion, I tell you straight that you're an infernal villain, Alf, and I'm not on. You bring me the Glory and we'll give Jake the slip together, if you like; but mind you, once we've sold the big diamond and shared the money you'll go and live in one hemisphere and I in another, for I'll never look at your infernal face again."

"You're polite to-night, I must say," said Alf.

"Well, what about the Glory?" I continued. "Can you get hold of it and bring it? I'll protect you from Jake afterwards. Lord! he isn't likely to catch me napping a second time. Where is Jake now?"

"Down at the farm house talking to the girl Nest," said Alf, "he sent me out to walk about a bit while he went in; he sees her every day; it's for her sake we stayed down here; he said Haverfordwest would be the last place you'd look for us; he's going it with your girl, I can tell you, Joe; that's one of the reasons why I thought you wouldn't mind stretching a point—you're so bloomin' conscientious, you are—and helping to get him out of the way; that, and the kick on the head, and the matches, and so on!"

I sat down a moment to think. If murder was ever justifiable, I should surely be justified in aiding Alf to get rid of this hound of a Jake! Did ever barefaced effrontery equal this of his?

"Where's the Glory at this moment?" I said presently, speaking hoarsely from pass on.

"I've got it here," said Alf most unexpectedly.

"What?" I shouted, springing upon him in an instant, "you have it here? Hand it over before I throttle you—quick!" I shook the wretch as a terrier would a kitten. His teeth chattered in his head.

"Oh, I can't," Alf blubbered, "not till I know what you're going to do about it, I daren't!"

"Hand it over, I tell you, before I murder you right out; don't you see I'm desperate, you fool? Hand it over before I count three!" I took my revolver from my pocket.

"Here, take it, take it—don't shoot," cried Alf; "take it and come away off the road and consult. I'm afraid of Jake here—I want you to have the Glory, I swear I do, you and me together!" Alf drew me up the hill at the side of the road; we scrambled along for a hundred yards or more. I had the Glory safe in my waistcoat pocket. Then we sat down, breathless with our hurried move.

"Now, what's to be done?" panted Alf. "What do you propose? This cursed diamond will be the death of me in the end, I feel it!"

I could see the wretched man's face shining in the dusk with the sweat of terror; but the Glory was in my pocket, and I was going to triumph over Jake, and my anger was consequently evaporating fast.

"Here's my plan, Alf," I said; "you're such an infernal coward that you're not worth helping out of this mess, properly speaking, but I'm going to help you all the same. Lord knows why, unless it is that I loathe Jake even more than you. See this?" I placed the sham stone in his hand.

"It's the Glory," said Alf; "aren't you——"

"No it isn't," I laughed; "you don't touch the Glory again, my beauty. Here she is, look at her!" I now produced the real gem. "That other's another dummy like the first. I bought two. The other took Jake in nicely: this one will deceive him also until he tries to sell it."

"Lord!" was all that Alf could say.

"Now you take this dummy back," I continued, "and put it where you took the other from; Jake won't suspect—why should he? And to-morrow night meet me here, *exactly* here, at nine. Is it business?"

"Lord bless you for this, Joe!" he said, "I shall be saved yet. I'll come to-morrow—without fail; he's sure to want to see the girl to-morrow, the same as to-night—lord! to think you had a second of these things—talk of plans! You're a genius, Joe, and you're going to save me out of the devil's hands. I'll never forget it—I swear it!"

At this moment a whistle came from down in the glen and Alf hurried away; it was Jake signalling for him.

(To be continued.)

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A Learned Turkey.

The oatfields were cropped bare as a convict's head. The corn was in the shock and there was a touch of winter in the winds which blew over the hill pasture. The months had gone by since the thoughtful turkey had been brought in squawking from the lane. He had grown large and portly and carried himself with dignity.

Fortune, which had appeared to him in the guise of Hilda, had been very kind to him. He had been permitted to share the lawn with an aged peacock of great personal beauty, from whom he had learnt gentle manners and deportment. He had dined daily at the kitchen door. In the evenings he had stood near the doorstep, where Hilda and John—John is the farm servant—sat and talked.

Their conversation was not instructive. They talked chiefly about themselves and a cottage and love and other foolish topics, but it afforded the turkey food for thought. He would stand soberly on one leg, as the shadows deepened and the stars came out, and watch the working of their minds.

"It is plain," he said one evening, "that they are thoughtlessly optimistic."

He was watching them closely, John had taken one of Hilda's red hands in his brown hand and was looking particularly and fatuously happy.

"When the corn's in, Hilda," John was saying, "I'll ask the old man if we can have the little wooden house."

"He'll be only too glad," said Hilda.

"I fancy he's expecting it," said John.

"It'll be big enough for us," said Hilda.

"For the present," said John, and looked so particularly foolishly happy that the turkey turned away in disgust. He strolled across the lawn in deep thought.

Like all those who are solitary or have the society only of inferiors, he had fallen into the habit of talking to himself.

"It is evident," he said, speaking his thoughts aloud, "that these two people will marry. They will move into the little wooden house. They will live there. They are such poor, dull creatures, they will not even know they are unhappy. They will have children and in their simple way be happier still. Poor things! It is bad enough to be unhappy and know it. How much worse is the state of those who are unhappy and think they are happy! Poor things!"

He stood on one leg and thought.

The moonlight streamed down and made a silhouette of him in black shadow on the whitening lawn. He stood there for an hour, immovable; only his brain kept turning, turning and evolving thoughts.

"It is really very ridiculous," he said, "but I can't think of any way of putting an end to this wretched state of affairs. I am not at my best to-night."

"What seems to be the matter?" asked the peacock, who came up, trailing a yard of rainbow plumage behind him.

"I am thinking," said the turkey rather disdainfully. "It is an operation which will not interest you."

"Ah, perhaps not," said the peacock. "What were you thinking about? And why were you doing it?"

"I was thinking," the turkey replied—for he was always willing to talk—"I was thinking, or, to be more accurate, I was trying to think, of some way of stopping this silly habit people have of coming into the world, eating, and going out of the world again, leaving behind them a certain number of 'understudies'—to use a phrase taken from the slang of the theatre—to repeat the ridiculous operation."

"So you've begun to think about that, have you?" said the peacock laughing. "Well, I should think you would."

"What are you laughing at?" the thoughtful turkey asked sharply.

"Oh, nothing," said the peacock; "of course you are interested in the question. I am not, you see."

"Well, I don't see."

"You don't see? Well, you're particularly slow-witted even for a turkey," said the peacock.

"Perhaps you'll explain," the turkey rejoined sarcastically.

"Certainly," said the peacock; "why not?"

"Go on," said the turkey.

"Well, they come into the world, don't they?"

"They do," said the thoughtful turkey, "though I've never yet thought to think where they come from. I'll do it to-morrow. Go on—people come into the world."

"What do they do?" asked the peacock, with growing triumph.

"What do they do? Eat," said the philosophical turkey.

"Eat what?"

"Oh, all sorts of——"

"You!" screamed the peacock in a burst of triumph, "you. They eat you. They pick your bones. They suck the marrow out of your thigh bones. Some of 'em prefer white meat, and some of 'em dark, and some of 'em say, 'It's immaterial, thank you.' So it is to them. But it's not to you. Oh, no, it's you they are eating, and——"

"Stop! stop!" cried the thoughtful turkey. "This is too horrible. It is some ghastly, grim, and fearful jest. Eat me?"

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"Eat you," said the peacock more calmly! "They eat you, my learned friend, after you have been roasted to a beautiful brown."

The thoughtful turkey groaned aloud.

"You seem to be in earnest," he said after a pause.

"I am," the peacock replied. "Why are you here? Have you thought of that?"

"I have often pondered upon it—why am I here, where did I come from, and why did I come?"

"Well, I'll tell you. You were brought here to be fattened. The maid supplied the food, and your reckless gluttony did the rest. You are fat."

"I'm no fatter than you," retorted the turkey.

"Ah, that's a different matter," the peacock chuckled. "I am not food; I am beauty. No, my poor friend, we shall have to part—you to the table and I shall remain here. It is your fate to be done brown and eaten; I walk here fancy free. I have seen ten generations of you eaten. You are the eleventh, my young fellow."

"It is impossible," groaned the thoughtful turkey.

"Time will tell," said the peacock.

For a long time the turkey was plunged in thought. He strode to and fro, and at last paused in his walk in front of the peacock.

"It must be done," he said grimly. "Listen, my friend. I have no desire to be eaten. I have an instinctive feeling that it would be unpleasant. Therefore I refuse. But I can see only one way to escape this fate. I must do as you have done."

"What?" asked the peacock breathlessly, for he had forgotten his own remark.

"I must be beautiful," said the turkey.

The peacock looked dubious.

"Yes," said the turkey firmly. "I must be beautiful, very beautiful, far too beautiful to be eaten. Leave me! I would think."

* * * * *

Haggard and pale from his long night vigil the thoughtful turkey lifted his eyes to the east. Already a band of greyish light lay close against the earth, and above it the darkness was thinning. Slowly the sun pushed up a red and inflamed shoulder and the light spread. The birds began to twitter, for it was day. The turkey bathed his burning brow in the dew and shook himself once or twice.

"Courage!" he muttered, "courage!"

He walked briskly across the barnyard, through the gate and on down the lane. At first he met no one. Tears came to his eyes. He was very lonely, and his nervous system was shattered. The sun was higher by this time, and the light was dancing and shimmering on the fields and breaking in curious refractions of pale purple and pink among the poplar trees. Although he knew that the admiration of crude and natural nature was bourgeois, and even a trifle vulgar, he could not help being touched with a sense of satisfaction at the beauty of the scene.

It was, he felt, a crude imitation of Monet, but, after all, there was in it a hint of Monet's genius. He was in a mood of æsthetic satisfaction; the moment was one of those which lay one open to new impressions. Then he saw her. She was young and slim and walked with grace and dignity. Her eyes were on the ground, and her wings trailed indolently as she sauntered towards him in the pale multicoloured sunlight. The thoughtful turkey had an impression of æsthetic delight in her sensuous beauty, and then two thoughts passed through his mind. The first was:

"How much more beautiful she is than the peacock!"

and the second was: "I hope she is not my sister!" He went up to her boldly and gave her the salute of the morning. She started as though she had not seen him—perhaps she had not.

"You are very beautiful," he said.

She held down her head.

"I have heard so much about you," she said, when the ice was broken. "You live up at the house, and are very learned."

"Yes, I think a great deal," he said.

"I am your cousin twice removed," she explained later in the conversation.

"You are very beautiful," he replied.

They walked on. Much later in the morning she said; "You, too, are beautiful, dear one, very beautiful!" She sighed. The thoughtful turkey started, as though for a moment he had hardly taken the measure of her words.

"I am beautiful?"

"Very beautiful, my own," she whispered.

He cried aloud in his joy and flapped his wings and pawed the turf.

"It is because I love you," she added.

He became thoughtful.

* * * * *

The snow was on the ground; the snow hung on the trees; the snow sifted through the air and fell softly everywhere. The thoughtful turkey, with a firm tread and a look of resolution on his intelligent features, walked rapidly down a narrow turning that led to a little wooden house set in one corner of the farm. As he came near the door he paused. He crept closer and listened. He could hear them talking.

"I've always said," one of them was remarking (that was John), "that there's nothing better for a Christmas dinner——"

"In your own house," put in Hilda.

"In your own house," said John, "nothing better than a cut of nice pork out of the side——"

"Cooked by your own wife," said Hilda.

"Of course," said John, "with the crackling on and apple sauce."

"Next year," said Hilda, "we'll have a turkey. I'll set the eggs under the speckled hen."

"Yes, next year," said John, "but not that I don't like pork."

"Oh, dear, no!" said Hilda. "The idea of not liking pork!"

Outside in the snow the thoughtful turkey smiled sadly.

"Poor fools," he said, "even now, I dare say, they imagine they are happy—and they have been married a month. Poor things!" And when the door was opened he stalked in and stood in the middle of the floor.

"Good gracious!" cried Hilda. "It's my turkey."

"The one the farmer gave you?" asked John.

"Yes, the one that ran away."

"We'll have him for dinner to-morrow."

"Of course," said Hilda. "Isn't it lucky?"

"Of course," said John. "Whoever heard of eating pork on Christmas day?"

"It's ridiculous," said Hilda. "And won't he be beautiful when he's browned?"

"He's rather thin," said John; "but he'll be beautiful when he's cooked."

The thoughtful turkey smiled sadly; he knew much better. He was only beautiful while she loved him.

PERCY S. RIESS.

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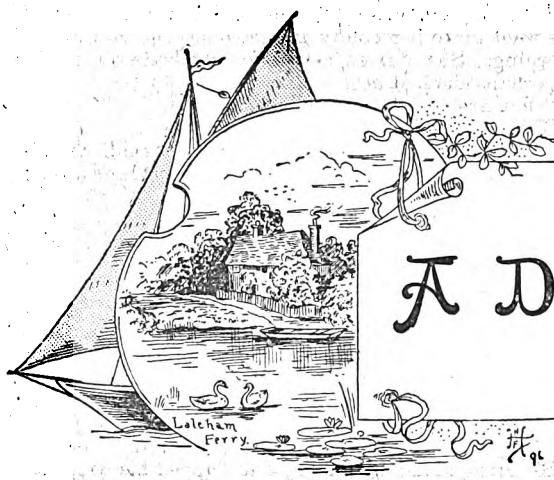

A Desert Magician.

THE little party about Calkins' camp fire consisted of the theosophist, a dried-up little man with pinched features and a waxy complexion, the old lady with the black mits, and myself. The theosophist had been discoursing on occult matters in general, as was usual with him when a patient audience was available, and had but just concluded a little dissertation on the nature of elementals, "those strange, almost unknown, creatures of the astral light," as he expressed it.

Calkins had been listening with apparently the deepest interest, and shook his head impressively as the theosophist concluded. Then, as though framing an unalterable conclusion, derived from dire experience, he remarked confidentially to the old lady with the black mits: "The less you and me, ma'am, and these here gen'lemen or anyone has to do with them there slippery bein's, the better for 'em," and he sighed profoundly as at some sad retrospect.

"You don't really mean to say, Mr. Calkins, that you have personally had any knowledge of those marvellous beings of whom my brother has just spoken?" exclaimed the old lady, pausing in her knitting, with open-mouthed astonishment.

"P'raps not, ma'am; maybe I've mistook the kind of bein's the gen'leman was referrin' to; p'raps I'm all wrong," responded Calkins. "Like enough. I'm no scholar, and don't pretend to it. But the ones he described just now is so near like them as I once run against that it looked like they must naturally be of the same breed, anyhow. It's perhaps best just to give you the story of my singular meetin' with 'em, and then you can judge about the whole thing for yourself, ma'am." And without waiting for further invitation, with an air of dreamy reminiscence, Calkins began:

"Ten years ago come July, I was workin' in off the desert from a prospectin' trip south and east of the Carga Muchacha country, where I'd been stumpin' about chippin' rock all the spring without strikin' anything that'd anyways do to tie to. My provisions had about given out; it was growin' too hot to work, and the water was gettin' low in the tanks, so I thought I'd give it up for that year, and was comin' in to potter around about a little dry ranch I owned near the 'Duatre.'

"I was travellin' by peaks and a little pocket compass, by night mostly, on account of the heat, and the country I was goin' through was new to me. I'd been five days makin' seventy mile, and had that many more to get over before ever I'd strike 'French Joe's,' the nearest place where there was any white man reg'larly livin' so far as I then knew. This was why I was kind o' surprised when we was windin' up the sixth night's travellin', it bein' just before sunrise, to see smoke risin' from a little granite butte about a mile ahead, and a figure movin' round a camp fire. When I was a few hundred yards away the tall, thin man by the fire looked up for the first time, and seein' me comin' he hailed, and the sound of his voice brought it right back to me who he was. I'd met him some years before down about Tucson, where he'd set himself up for a 'bad man' and went by the name of Dutch Pete.

"He was as ugly to look at as ever I've seen a man. He had small black eyes, close together, a thin, waxy, big-boned face, and thick, straight black hair, just grizzlin'. He'd had considerable schoolin' so 'twas generally reported, havin' been something like a doctor in his own country, and he could speak a dozen languages like he was born to 'em, and when he was in camp he was always experimentin' with herbs and minerals, boilin' and mixin' and monkeyin' with 'em generally, so folks said.

"He looked at me without speaking at first, when once I'd got up to the fire, but he didn't no ways seem to recollect meetin' me before, and I didn't let on that I'd ever seen him. Then, when he'd looked me over, he was no end obligin' and told me where to get water for my burros from a big tank just by camp, and suggested I'd better settle down with him for a day or two and rest up and look over the claims he was developin' over on the next butte about a mile away. There was plenty of fry cohete grass all about the camp, and havin' a long way yet to go, I concluded to fall in with his idea and stop awhile before tacklin' the rest of the trip.

"That same morning, I went over with him to the other butte to look at his claims, and they all showed up very promisin', bein' every way the best prospects I'd seen in some years; and when in the evenin' after we'd got back to camp, he proposed my holdin' on where I was and workin' in with him for grub and a third interest in everything after I'd put in a year's time, it ended by my comin' to terms. I didn't much care for such a partner as Pete, but the idea of gettin' an interest in them claims stood off all such

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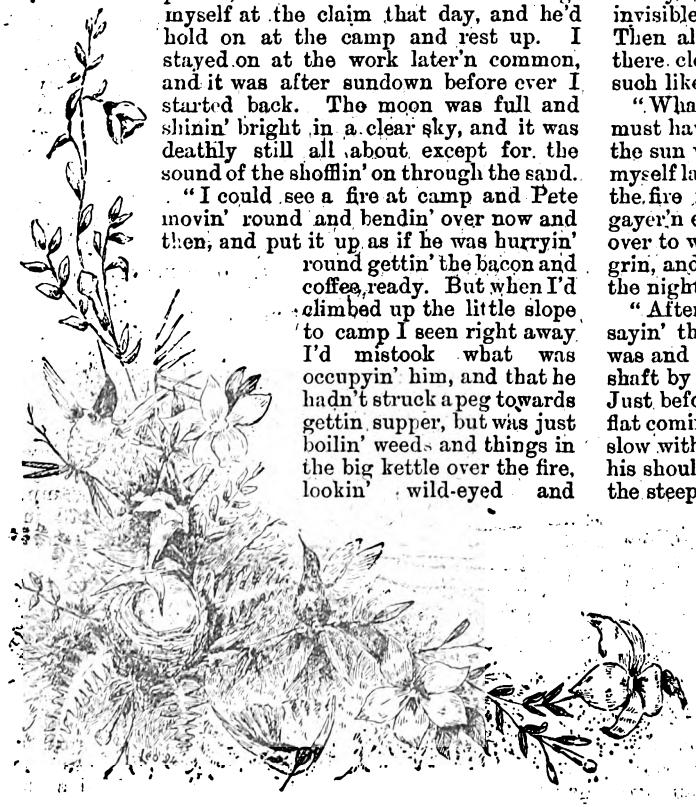
like objections, and I started in to work next day braced up and cheerful at the prospect ahead of me.

"Pete was a sullen, notional kind of man, and his goin's on was generally so altogether out of the common that I'd begun to put him up as being just a little 'loco,' and while the idea didn't make me noways comfortable when we was together, it brought me somehow to make allowances, as you might say, for some of his singular behaviour. Sometimes after supper he'd set for hours not replyin' to things I'd ask him, but talkin' in a low tone to himself, lookin' off over the desert like he was gazing at something miles and miles away.

"Then, gen'rally, about the full of the moon, he'd cook up messes of desert herbs and bottle up the juices from 'em, and when I'd inquire what he was tryin' to get at he'd just give a low chuckle way down in his throat and stare at me without saying nothin'—and that was all I'd ever get out of him. He had a dirty lookin' old book, bound in spotted, black leather, with curious lookin' writin' on the yaller pages, like I'd never seen before, that he set a heap by.

"He'd get this old book out and read it by the fire of an evenin' for an hour at a time, and then he'd take a stick and draw queer figures on the sand-triangles, circles, and sech like, lookin' at the book now and then, like he was follerin' some partic'lar directions, and mumblin' to himself in a sort of sing-song way all the time. I felt sure from all this business that it was a clear case of him being crack-headed, and I never felt noways easy when them queer spells was on him.

"One mornin' when I was startin' out for the shaft Pete made excuse about him not feelin' up to work, sayin' he'd slept bad, and that I'd have to run things myself at the claim that day, and he'd hold on at the camp and rest up. I stayed on at the work later'n common, and it was after sundown before ever I started back. The moon was full and shinin' bright in a clear sky, and it was deathly still all about except for the sound of the shofflin' on through the sand.



"I could see a fire at camp and Pete movin' round and bendin' over now and then, and put it up as if he was hurryin' round gettin' the bacon and coffee ready. But when I'd climbed up the little slope to camp I seen right away I'd mistook what was occupyin' him, and that he hadn't struck a peg towards gettin supper, but was just boilin' weeds and things in the big kettle over the fire, lookin' wild-eyed and mutterin' to himself like he always did when he had one of them spells on.

"His black book was lyin' open on a flat rock by the fire, and every now and then he'd look at it and then drop a pinch of somethin' into the kettle. He was so took up with his work that he didn't seem to know that I'd got back to camp, and didn't make no answer when I asked what was up.

"Seein' how he was occupied I reckoned I'd best not disturb him, and so lighted a fire for myself a little ways off from where he was doin' his boilin' and experimentin'. I was turnin' away to fetch the coffee pot and fryin' pan when Pete screeched out: 'I've got it. *Mein Gott!*' He was dancin' round the fire like a wild man, wavin' his arms in the air, snappin' his fingers, and all the time half singin' to himself. 'You have got it,' thinks I, 'and terrible bad this time sure.'

"I'm comin' now, ma'am," continued Calkins with an impressive air of frankness, addressing the old lady with black mits, who had paused in her knitting and regarded him with an expression of mingled perplexity, interest, and irritation, "to a statement of them partic lar facts as made me sort of hesitate to give you this here sing'lar experience, and I'm free to allow that what I've got to tell comes pretty nigh passin' all belief. I felt right away that somethin' strange and startlin' was comin' off just then and there.

"The stuff in the kettle was hissin' and snappin' and sendin' up silvery sparkles, and a thin blue column-like mist rose up from the top, wavin' into the air and growin' all the time higher and bigger, and kind of takin' form as it rose. Then came a sound like a swishin' of great wings through the air all about us, and you could feel the cold draught they made as the invisible bein's, they belonged to swung round the fire. Then all of a sudden it grew ice cold, though I stood there close to the blaze, and, bein' naturally rattled by such like goin's on, I just toppled over like.

"What happened next of course I don't know, but I must have been as good as stone dead all that night, for the sun was well up when I looked about, and found myself layin' on my blankets with Pete potterin' round the fire fryin' bacon. He was powerful cheerful and gayer'n ever I'd seen him; but when I got up and went over to where he was cookin'; he just looked up with a grin, and made no kind of allusion to what had gone on the night before.

"After breakfast he surprised me considerable by sayin' that, bein' as I looked done up, I'd stay where I was and hold down the camp, and he'd go on up to the shaft by himself. Then he went off hummin' a tune. Just before sundown he showed up again way out on the flat comin' in from the claim, and I seen he was travellin' slow with some heavy weight in the ore sack slung over his shoulder. When he got his wind after climbin' up the steep slope to camp he told me to fetch out the canvas layin' under my beddin' and he'd show me somethin' worth seein'. When I'd laid it out near the fire he emptied the ore sack into it, and laughed when he seen my eyes widen out. There was at least two dozen clean gold nuggets of all shapes and sizes, from as big as a plum to the size of my fist. I was that took aback at this showin' that I just couldn't speak for a minute.

"Then at last says I: 'Where did them come from?' And he says, still laughing: 'Them comes from the claims!' 'Whose claims?' then says I. 'Whose but my

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own?' replies he, kind of short like; and then I quit askin' questions and got right away down to thinkin' what a third of them nuggets and the claims they come from was worth, that bein' the share I was to have, under our contract, as you'll recollect, ma'am.

"Ever since the night I'd been knocked out, Pete had gone off on a new lead altogether. He'd leave camp first thing after sun-up, and would never allow of me goin' with him up to the claims, givin' out some reason or other for wantin' to go up alone.

"This had gone on for three days runnin', each night Pete comin' back, like he had the first time, with a sack full of nuggets; and naturally I begun gettin' riled at bein' laid on the shelf that way, and my curiosity got to workin'. I more'n half suspicioned that Pete's big luck was some way related to them queer goin's on that night by the fire.

"Then I made up my mind that I wasn't goin' to get wiser by just mopin' round camp, and concluded to rustle about on the quiet and inquire into things. So next morning, Pete havin' gone off as usual, I hung round a couple of hours after doin' my chores, and then filled my canteen, and takin' along a snack of my noonin', started out on the trail to the claim.

"The sand was hot and the air stifflin', and I had an uncomfortable feelin' somehow that I was out on a dangerous errand, and that I'd be up to my neck in trouble before ever I'd make the round trip. I'd shuffled along through the sand not more'n quarter way to the butte, when on a sudden I heard what seemed like a hurricane blowin' high up in the air, but though I looked up in the sky I couldn't see nothin' to account for the sound, and I just stopped short where I was, wonderin'. Then, off towards the butte towards which I was headin', I could see at first tens and then right away hundreds of little wavin' columns of sand, each one in a whirl, growin' all the time higher and higher, and bigger and ruslin' on towar's me.

"Then the sand whirls, which first along jostled each other, all joined together and came sweepin' on in a swayin' wall like waves on a beach. Blasts of hot, with-rin' wind parched the air, and deep clouds of dust spread over the sky like a curtain and blurred out the sun. Then it grew dusk, and close all round me I could hear the same sound of flappin' and rustlin' I had heard that night by the fire, and low chucklin' sounds, like lunatics laughin', and strange blammering voices, and mixed in with them all the shrill sound of Pete's, like he was there flyin' round in the air with them other invisible jays and enjoyin' the circus.

"All this had come on in less time than it takes me tell it—and talk about stampedin' and panics! I was that panic-struck and scared clean through and through that I just tore back to camp like Old Nick was let loose behind me—askin' your pardon, ma'am, for that manner of speakin'. My burros was there standin' close side by side with their noses together and tremblin'. Half blind with the sand and my heart bumpin' hard, my breath about gone, and my head in a whirl, I had just one idea left, which was that the sooner I got out of that there part of the country, away from Pete and his invisible pards with the wings, the safer I'd be.

"I felt, as you might say, out of my el'ment somehow with such like surroundin's. I bridles a burro, threw on and clinched up my saddle in less'n a minute, snatched up a canteen, and was off with a short pitchin' lope, not much knowin' or carin' which way I was travellin'. The wind and the sand and the gen'ral whoop-up I've spoke of followed me up for a little time, but died out at last when I'd got clean away, and the sun showed up bright once again in a clear, cloudless sky. I had a rough time gettin' in, but worked on to French Joe's, and after restin' there for a day went on in by slow stages.

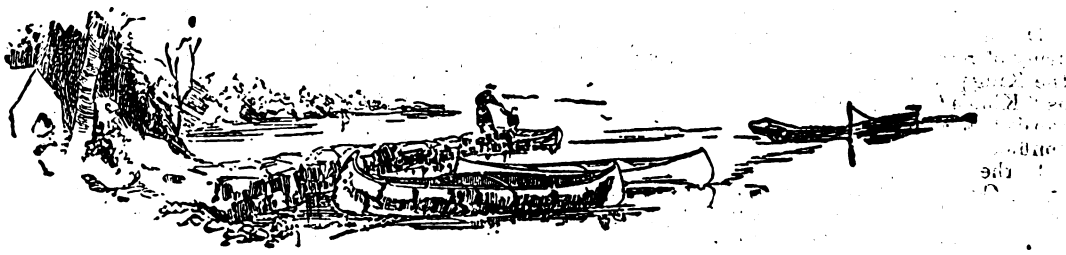
"I consulted my lawyer, Colonel McVey, as to what my rights were under my contract with Pete, and gave him, the best way I could, the queer facts in the case; but he wouldn't take no pay for consultin' and wouldn't give me no advice.

"I've never seen Dutch Pete again, but I heard of him in less'n a year as rollin' in coin and gamblin' and breakin' all the games wherever he travelled. Then next I was told he'd been killed down in Texas.

"Now, I leave to you to judge, ma'am," concluded Calkins solemnly, "whether I wan't right in suggestin' that I'd run against some of those mysterious, shadowy bein's the gen'leman was referrin' to, and that it wan't noways desirable to be mixed up in any kind of dealin's with 'em. There's them burros broke out of the corral again," and Calkins left us on what seemed to me quite an imaginary alarm.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed the lady with the black mits, after drawing a long breath as Calkins departed. I echoed this indefinite sentiment. The theosophist was serious and silent.

EDMUNDE STUART ROCHE.



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THE TRAITOR OF STUTTGART.

A Story of the Siege of 1286.

"This is the last night of peace, Mechild," said her lover, as he tenderly pressed her hand. "To-morrow King Rudolph and his army will encamp before Stuttgart."

"What will be the end of this struggle against the King?" asked Mechild Berge, the armourer's daughter, with a sigh.

"We shall win, and teach the King that Eberhard of Würtemburg is not to be frightened!" said Martin enthusiastically.

He kissed her tenderly, and was about to depart when she detained him.

"Martin——"

"What is it, sweet?"

"Oh, Martin, do be careful! I fear that Junker Anselm will seek every opportunity of injuring you for——"

"For interrupting him when he had entered your father's house while you were alone, and tried to force his suit on you!" broke in Martin. "Luckily, I saw him enter, and was in time to spoil his plan. It was well for him that you thought it best not to tell Master Berge! Never fear for me, dearest!"

And with a kiss he left her.

On the following day, the 23rd of September, 1286, the army of King Rudolph encamped in front of Stuttgart, the King pitching his tent under an old oak, since known as "King's Oak." It will be useful here to state in a few words how the King and his powerful vassal came into a conflict.

In the year 1273 there came to an end, by the election of the Count of Habsburg as the monarch of the Petty States of Central Europe, that turbulent time known as the interregnum. When the Count of Habsburg found himself fairly settled in his new position and greeted as King Rudolph, he set to work to introduce order into his kingdom, and to undo, as far as possible, the mischief done during the preceding lawless period; and in pursuit of this object—and, it may be, in his own personal interest—he issued a decree that all Crown land and property which had been appropriated by the nobles during the interregnum should be surrendered to the King.

The proclamation of this decree naturally angered some of the German Princes and Counts who had been busy in that direction, and they refused to comply. The Count of Würtemberg, Eberhard's predecessor, was among the number. The King was soon able to bring them to reason, and peace was patched up. Not many years afterwards the King was again in conflict with the house of Würtemberg (in the person of the young Count Eberhard) and others, and again peace was concluded.

But the King had scarcely returned to the seat of Government when hostilities again broke out, and this time Rudolph decided to act decisively by besieging Stuttgart, and crushing his most powerful opponent, the Count Eberhard. A few of the citizens of Stuttgart had at first thought it advisable not to uphold the Count in his defiance of the King, but these doubtful ones had been won over, and Eberhard believed he could reckon on the assistance of his burghers.

Every possible preparation had been made by the people of Stuttgart. Walls, towers, and moats had been carefully overhauled and repaired where necessary; on the walls and towers the slings were placed in position and stones and logs heaped up near them; and all the gates of the city were barricaded except one. Large stores of provisions were available in the city, and the burghers awaited the attack with confidence.

Early next morning the King began the siege in earnest. The besieged defended themselves vigorously, and at each attack the King's troops were repulsed with heavy losses.

The primitive weapons of the period were manipulated with great skill by both sides. The King's warriors, under the cover of a shed-like protection on wheels, filled in a part of the moat and plied the

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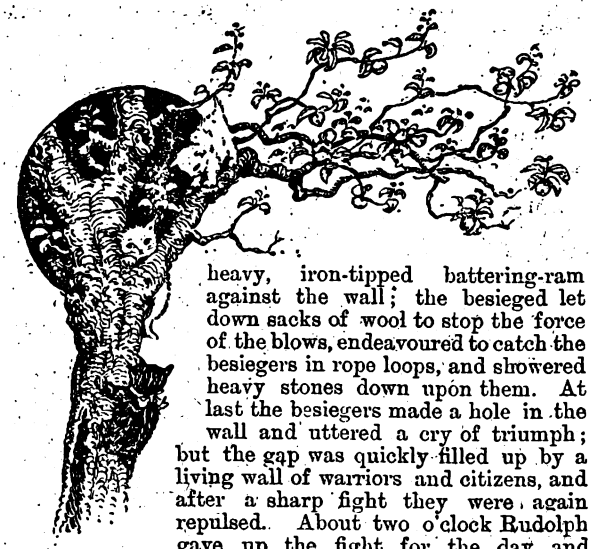

heavy, iron-tipped battering-ram against the wall; the besieged let down sacks of wool to stop the force of the blows, endeavoured to catch the besiegers in rope loops, and showered heavy stones down upon them. At last the besiegers made a hole in the wall and uttered a cry of triumph; but the gap was quickly filled up by a living wall of warriors and citizens, and after a sharp fight they were again repulsed. About two o'clock Rudolph gave up the fight for the day and retired amidst the triumphant shouts of the defenders of Stuttgart.

Martin Bahaim, although he had been foremost in the defence and had formed one stone of the living wall to fill the gap, had escaped uninjured, to the great joy of Mechild. He had dragged a banner from one of the besiegers in that hand to hand encounter, which he afterwards presented to his sweetheart. His bravery gained for him the admiration of his fellow-craftsmen, who had chosen him as the leader of the detachment formed by the Smith's guild, and it won words of praise from the Count.

The gap in the wall was barricaded with heavy beams, and preparations made for a renewed onslaught by the Royal troops. It came on the following day, with the same result; and then the King decided to wait for a few days till reinforcements arrived.

A week had elapsed since the beginning of the investment of the city, and Martin was on duty near the gate. As he paced to and fro, his thoughts wandered to Mechild and then to the scene between Junker Anselm and himself in Master Berge's parlour; he recalled the look of hatred in the young man's face, and Mechild's words of caution. He felt certain that Anselm would take any opportunity to avenge himself, but that opportunity would be difficult to find.

Stopping at one end of his walk, his attention was arrested by an arrow sticking in a beam which had been placed there ready for emergencies. It had the appearance of having been shot there from outside; this must have been done quite recently; it could not possibly be one of those used in the attempt to storm the stronghold.

Martin looked from the wall over the ground to the tents in the distance; no one was to be seen. He jerked the arrow out of the wood and examined it mechanically at first, but his interest was suddenly awakened when he noticed a strip of parchment wrapped around the shaft. He unwound it; something was written on it. What mystery was this? He gazed at the parchment, and read these words: "Martin Bahaim, remember your oath. At midnight we shall be ready."

Martin stared at the characters as if he could not believe his eyes. He had received some education and could read well; there was no deception. What devilry was this? So intent was he that he heard nothing; he was aroused from his reverie by a harsh voice behind him:

"So, ho, Martin Bahaim! This is the way you keep watch, and receive messages from our enemies!"

Ere he could turn, the parchment was snatched from his fingers by Count Eberhard, with whom were Anselm and two other nobles.

Martin stood before them, bewildered at the turn of affairs, unable to utter a word, while the Count read the message aloud.

"What ho! guards!" shouted the Count, his face distorted with rage. "What ho! Seize this traitor!"

"I am no traitor!" cried Martin, now alive to the position. "I am a true citizen and have fought for Stuttgart!"

"And the only one in the front rank who did not get wounded at the breach in the wall!" said Anselm sneeringly.

"By Heaven! The stratagem was cleverly done!" cried the Count. "A trick to gain our confidence. But you are outwitted! Seize this traitor!" he added, turning to half-a-dozen men who had arrived.

The men looked in amazement, but at a second order from the Count they surrounded Martin and hurried him away in spite of his struggles and vehement protests.

The news soon spread that Martin Bahaim had been caught in the very act of communicating with the enemy and had been cast into a dungeon to await a fitting punishment. It was soon conveyed to Mechild, who was utterly cast down at the success of what she felt to be a vile plot against her lover, and gave way to a paroxysm of grief which her mother was quite unable to calm. Gradually she became calmer and tried to think how she could best assist in proving Martin's innocence. That it was a conspiracy on the part of Junker Anselm she had no doubt; but how to prove it?

It was nearly dusk when Master Berge returned home. His honest face wore an expression of anxiety.

"Father," cried Mechild before he could speak, "what have they done with Martin? It is not true! It *cannot* be true!"

"Nothing as yet, my child," replied the armourer, answering her question. "It looks black against him, but I can't believe the boy would do that. He never sided with the malcontents."

"Father, he would not do such a vile thing; he is too noble! What can I do to save him! It is a plot against him!"

"The Count is furious," continued Berge, sinking into a chair. "He was nearly giving orders for Martin to be executed."—Mechild uttered a cry of despair—"but we spoke for the lad, and Count Eberhard agreed to wait and see whether any attack is made to-night. I spoke up so boldly for the lad that it somewhat angered Eberhard; and I was obliged to hold my tongue or suspicion might have fallen on me too. They all know that I looked upon the lad almost as a son."

Mechild buried her face in her hands.

"We are all to be ready for an attack to-night," continued Master Berge. "If none is made, we may induce the Count to let the lad go, but he will have to quit Stuttgart. If an attempt is made to-night to capture the city, the Count will be convinced of Martin's guilt, and he has sworn to hang him by his neck from

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the wall, so that his 'friends' may see the fate of the man who would betray us into their hands."

Every soldier and citizen in Stuttgart was ready for battle that night. It was a time of fearful anxiety for Mechild Berge, for if by any chance the King should make a night attack, Martin's life would be forfeited. She could not rest indoors, but wandered about as near the walls as women were allowed to be. Slowly—oh! so slowly!—the hours crept round, and Mechild's anxiety increased until the pain at her heart became almost intolerable.

At length the midnight hour arrived. Master Berge, who was on guard, fancied that he detected some noise in the King's camp, and his heart seemed to stand still. Was there to be an attempt? Was Martin Babaim really a traitor? He peered into the darkness and strained his ears, but nothing further was heard. And so the night wore away and the dawn came.

Martin's life was safe yet, but the Count would not release him nor allow any of his friends to see him.

"I think," said Master Berge, when he brought this information to his daughter, "that Martin is lucky in having a friend in Junker Anselm, who is in high favour with the Count and has said a good word for him. Heaven grant that it may all come right," added the armourer, not noticing the expression on the child's countenance. "I must get some rest now—and you, too, my dear."

"Do you expect any attack to-night, father?"

"We do not *expect* one, but it is impossible to be certain. Anselm will undertake the charge of the watch to-night on the eastern side, and will himself be at the gate, which is the only one not barricaded—a most important post. The Count is well pleased with his willing service. The other walls will also be well watched."

Mechild tried to follow her father's example and get some sleep. There was nothing to be done at present for her lover, and she might want all her strength ere long for his sake. But she lay wakeful on her bed, pondering over her father's remarks about Anselm. He was high in favour, and Martin was in a dungeon—the victim of Anselm's plot. Could she do nothing for him? She racked her brain for some plan until, completely exhausted, she fell into an uneasy slumber.

Fantastic dreams came to disturb her rest; all the events of the twenty-four hours, distorted and exaggerated, presented themselves to her. Junker Anselm had been arrested, Martin was guarding him, and she was trying to induce the latter to leave his post that she might release Anselm. Then she saw the two men struggling together. Anselm had led a storming party against Stuttgart and Martin was at the head of the defenders; the air was thick with arrows and missles, and resounded with the shouts of the combatants. All the visions were indistinct; but the scene changed with the rapidity of a dream and another scene was presented to her mind with startling vividness.

It was the eastern wall of the city with the unbarricaded gate; the time was night. She saw the form of Junker Anselm; he was looking cautiously around as though to make sure that he was not observed. He took from his tunic a strip of parchment on which was written in letters of fire the word "Midnight," and twisted it round the shaft of an arrow, which he fitted into a bow and shot towards the distant camp. She could see the word of fire as it sped along, and at the same time there appeared above Anselm's head a tongue of flame which resolved itself into the word "*Traitor*." It was all so vivid that Mechild awoke with a start.

She was surprised to find that she had slept so long; the day was waning, so it was about five o'clock. The dream troubled her. What did it mean?

"There can be no meaning in it," she told herself. "It is merely the vain imagining of a troubled mind. Yet——"

Might it not be some warning? In those ages such dreams were commonly regarded as premonitions; and although Mechild was not without a small share of culture, nevertheless the superstitions of the times had a great hold upon her. She felt that the dream or vision was intended in some way to benefit her if she paid heed to it, and she resolved to do so.

Her mind was quickly made up as to her course of action. She sought her father, explained to him the vision and her plan, and asked for his assistance. The armourer looked aghast, but the dream, intensified by Mechild's earnestness, made an impression upon him, and he finally consented with some reluctance.

"Have your wish, Mechild," he said gravely; "but I cannot see what good can come of it, and the risk is great for you."

After dark, father and daughter made their way to the house of Konrad Strohm, a friend of Martin, who was now acting as leader of the guild.

"You cannot take the place of one of the sentinels," said Strohm, when Mechild had ex lained, "because Junker Anselm has chosen them specially. If you are determined to carry out your idea of watching him, you can only do it by hiding. It is dangerous, and also foolish, because there is no reason for what you have in your mind. But since you say it is for Martin's sake, I will do my part. We cannot be near you; that would arouse suspicion."

"I thank you, Konrad. I will take the risk," replied Mechild quietly.

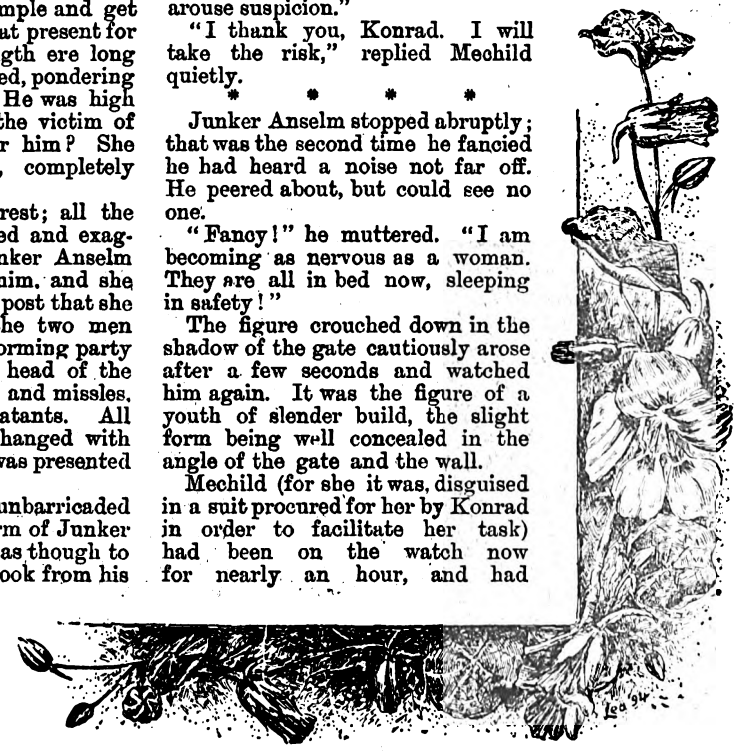
* * * *

Junker Anselm stopped abruptly; that was the second time he fancied he had heard a noise not far off. He peered about, but could see no one.

"Fancy!" he muttered. "I am becoming as nervous as a woman. They are all in bed now, sleeping in safety!"

The figure crouched down in the shadow of the gate cautiously arose after a few seconds and watched him again. It was the figure of a youth of slender build, the slight form being well concealed in the angle of the gate and the wall.

Mechild (for she it was, disguised in a suit procured for her by Konrad in order to facilitate her task) had been on the watch now for nearly an hour, and had



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twice nearly betrayed her whereabouts in shifting her position for a better one. The movements of Anselm during the past few minutes had left her in breathless expectation. What was he doing? Where was the sentinel who should have met him at a certain distance?

His back was turned to her, and she crept cautiously from her corner to get a better view. She saw him lift a lantern and lower it over the wall, then he drew it up and laid it down by his feet.

Heavens! Was her dream really a warning? Had she been sent by a protecting Providence to thwart the schemes of a double-dyed traitor? Her brain reeled and she sank down in the angle. She could do nothing yet; there might be some mistake; she must wait.

Anselm did not move; he was intently watching. Minute after minute passed slowly, each one seeming an hour to the armourer's daughter. Not a sound could be heard; all was as quiet as the grave.

A movement on the part of Anselm made her shrink back into her corner; at the same time she thought she detected something like a dull murmur. Anselm descended and came towards the gate. Would he detect her? She held her breath as she crouched down and grasped her dagger. Nearer and nearer he approached her and she involuntarily tried to crouch lower at each step. Had he seen her? What was he about to do? She answered the last question in her own mind, but she scarcely dared believe it. But all doubt was set at rest when Anselm strode to the gate and lifted the beam out of the socket—the bolts had been already undone—and began to pull open the heavy gate.

The city was betrayed! Roused to action by the thought, Mechild sprang to her feet, and blew as loud a blast as she could on the little horn which Konrad had given her.

With an oath, Anselm rushed upon the supposed youth and grappled with him.

"Help! Oh, help!" cried Mechild, as she struggled desperately with the baffled Junker. The thought of Martin and the betrayed city gave her extra strength, but it was of little use against the powerful young noble. She heard the shouts of men streaming through the gate, the rush of men, and Konrad's voice in answer to her signal, the clash of arms, and the cries of the wounded, and she lost consciousness.

* * * * *

When Mechild came to herself she was in her own bed, and around her were Martin, her parents, and the doctor. She was too weak for an explanation, and it was nearly a week before she could relate her experiences and hear what had taken place afterwards. The enemy had been beaten back after a sanguinary encounter, and with heavy losses. Junker Anselm had been killed, and thus had escaped a traitor's doom. She had been rescued by her father and Konrad at the head of the smiths; only just in time, for she had fallen with a wound in her shoulder from Anselm's dagger.

The smiths kept the enemy at bay till help came, and the King's troops were driven back with heavy loss. Martin had been released and the Count had endeavoured to make amends by giving him an appointment. Anselm had been found in a dying state and had confessed. The disloyal citizens who had helped him were either dead or gone with the enemy.

The King finally raised the siege and thought it prudent to forget about the Crown property, for others were preparing for hostilities.

From that day the eastern gate was known as the Dream Gate, and the memory of Anselm has been prepetuated in the story of the "Traitor of Stuttgart."

G. D.

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A BROKEN MASK

BY JOAN BARRETT.

CHAPTER XIV.

A STRANGE DISCOVERY.

Di resolved to go to the Towers the following afternoon and ask the caretakers for their master's address. It was quite impossible that Mrs. Caffyn would continue to accept the only excuse that Di had hitherto been able to give her as an explanation of Kitty's silence. Kitty could not be always supposed to be flitting from one Italian village to another, nor could the supposition of her having no settled address for any length of time be given as a good reason for her negligence in writing to the woman who had taken her mother's place, and loved Kitty so devotedly during her childhood and happy girlhood.

Would the Nabob suggest that Di should take Mrs. Caffyn into their confidence, and tell her the truth? Or would he prefer to leave Mrs. Caffyn in suspense, forcing her to believe in Kitty's chilled affection for her? One course or the other must be taken. When Di ordered the pony carriage she was told that the pony had a shoe loose.

The farrier lived at the extreme end of the village, between two cross roads, in a position that was certainly calculated to bring him custom from outsiders, but that was decidedly inconvenient for the farmers of Thorneydene. Luckily a carrier was returning to Leigh that afternoon, and Di took a seat in the low, tent-covered cart with a promise from Betty to send the pony trap after her to bring her home.

The carrier was a long time in reaching The Towers. It had been a bright afternoon when Di started, but before she got to her journey's end the sky was covered with grey clouds, and the shadows cast by a coming storm mingled with the dusk of the November evening.

The lodge at the entrance gates was empty when she passed through them into the grounds. There was a neglected look about the garden, and the house with yellow blinds shrouding all the windows had a dismal, cheerless appearance. The great brass knocker was dull and tarnished; a few weeds had pushed their inquisitive heads between the stones of the terrace steps, and a blue clematis trailed its long branches untidily from the columns of the verandah.

Di pulled the bell and caught its tinkle. It sounded strangely loud in the dead stillness. No reply came. She gave a longer and a harder pull, with the same result. Absolute stillness pervaded the great house. Thinking that the Marshalls must live in the servants' quarters right at the back of the house, Di made her way through a shrub over-grown path, dank with weeds, through a small green gate round to the back door. No answer succeeded her knock. With growing impatience she opened the door and stepped into the wide passage. Upon her left hand were the housekeeper's room and the servants' hall, that she knew; and upon the opposite side of the corridor were the kitchen, pantries and sculleries. She knocked upon the door of the housekeeper's room, and receiving no reply she went in. The cosy room showed signs of recent occupation. A bright fire was burning, and a kettle stood on the round trivet. A half-knitted sock laid upon the table, gay with a crimson cloth. Raising her voice she called, "Mrs. Marshall!" Outside she saw that a fine snow was beginning to fall, the grey shadows were stretching their mistiness over the ground, and among the almost barren branches of a tree the wind was sighing, and fluttering down some of the few remaining yellow leaves.

Di crossed to the kitchen. That was also empty, and there were no signs of recent occupation. The great room, with its high cupboards, big empty fireplace, and chilly-looking stone floor, felt like a vault. There was no one in the servants' hall. The long forms had been left around the dining-table that stretched its unpolished length from one end of the room to the other, bare and unlovely, and suggested a schoolroom, minus maps and globe.

Di went up a short flight of stairs, where a green baize-covered door shut away all sounds and opened into a corridor, where began the living rooms. She peeped into the dark, shrouded dining-room, then the drawing and morning rooms. The grey-white holland covers upon the chairs gleamed white, like grotesque ghostly apparitions in the silent, dusk filled rooms. Clearly no living creature was in the lower rooms. Di lingered a moment at the foot of the servants' staircase, and then, gathering her courage together, she sped quickly up the stairs. She paused at the head of the last step, impressed unpleasantly with the cheerless look of the dark, uninhabited house, and again she called: "Mrs. Marshall!"

She heard a mouse scamper away terrified at the sound of her voice. It gave the only sign that her voice had been heard.

With a shiver Di hastened to the far end of the corridor. The best bedrooms were in this part; she hoped that Mrs. Marshall might be found in one of them. Right at the end of the passage she came to an abrupt halt before a door—the door of Kitty's bedroom. The handle had been removed, but the key was in the lock, and its appearance suggested that someone had recently been in the apartment. Di wondered softly with that gnawing pain deepening at her heart, if Kitty's room was just as its late occupant had left it when she had abandoned all in her love for John Gillway. And that morbid pleasure that most women take in hoarding love letters that have been penned by fingers long stiffened in

death; of peeping with tear-blinded eyes at wee garments, whose tiny owners once beautified and invested with a loveliness that can never be blotted from a mother's memory; of treasuring relics that revive pain and sweet-bitter recollections, made Di turn the key and enter Kitty's room. Her step was very slow, almost reverential, as it crossed the thick pile of the carpet to the window. The blind was not drawn at one of the windows, and a pale grey shadowy light filtered through the panes. It was as though Kitty lay dead upon the large satin and lace-covered bed, and Di had come to weep over her cold, beautiful body.

There were no holland covers in this room. The pretty gold and white furniture seemed to have been untouched by housemaid's hand. Their mouldings were dust-filled; a delicate tracery of silken cobweb stretched from ceiling to chairs, and around the window-frames and over the door others hung. Upon the low mantel-board, Kitty's face, fresh and radiant in its youth and smiling beauty, looked across at a portrait of the Nabob, whose frank, laughter-filled eyes met his wife's pictured regard from the wall. On the dressing-table a dead bouquet of brown flowers spoke mutely to Di of the hand that had once held them.

There were bonnet pins, a brooch of Kitty's, and a little

She threw herself upon her knees by a couch.

pair of enamelled scissors resting on the broad frilled pincushion.

Di passed into the dressing-room. Here everything was prim and neat, but a hundred trifles recalled Kitty. Photographs, fans that the girls had bought together, a gay tambourine from Capri, shells, little souvenirs of birthdays, all stared at Di, and spoke to her of Kitty.

"Oh, Kitty," said Di aloud in her pain; and because she felt so miserable, and her heart yearned towards her sister, she threw herself upon her knees by a couch, and burst into futile tears.

Bang! It was the bedroom door. A gust of wind had slammed it. Di sprang to her feet, rushed into the bedroom and found that her fear had been realised. The door was shut, and there was no handle to open it!

Her first impulse was to shake it violently, then she kicked the lower panels, and shouted for aid at the very top of her voice. The wind had gathered in strength and fury. She heard it hissing through the corridor and moaning around the house like a lost soul sighing and lamenting for its dead past. The room was growing darker, the grey shadows seemed to have huddled together in the corners and behind the bed. An inexplicable terror seized Di. She who had ridiculed the visionary fears of other people felt herself growing cold. She renewed her attack upon the door, she screamed and shouted for assistance, and the wind mocked her efforts, and drowned them with its own shrill complaint.

"Hoo—hoo—hoo—hooh" it went, and then it laughed as only the wind can laugh.

Di went to a window, opened it, and put her head outside. The chill air almost took away her breath, the wind darted in, rustling the curtains and raising the pictures from the walls.

"Mrs. Mar—shall!" shouted Di.

A fan fell behind her, a fold of the lace curtains blew roughly in her face, and made her turn with a beating heart. Her voice sounded impotent and weak, but she called again and again. The sleet had turned to rain. It came in at the open window, beating rudely upon Di's hands and head, pattering upon the carpet with malicious pleasure. She could see the dim outlines of shrubs and trees through the sheet of driving rain and gathering darkness. Night had fallen, the night that she must pass alone in Kitty's abandoned bedroom.

"Oh, they must hear me! They *shall* hear me!" she cried aloud, and pulled down the window with an angry jerk.

She grew tired at last of shaking the door and of calling. Her arms ached with the violence of her exertions; her throat felt sore. But at the thought of her father's distress at her disappearance, new courage and strength filled her veins. Again she opened the window, and again the wind mocked with long drawn sobbing wails at her efforts to attract attention. The shadows deepened. Through the open window the rain drifted in. Kitty's portrait seemed to be the only white blot in the darkness. Di knew its exact position upon the mantel-board, and by some strange fascination her eyes obstinately riveted themselves upon that white-grey smudge.

Again she thrust her head from the window and shouted. Her voice wandered away and lost itself in the storm. If the caretakers at the back of the house heard it, they might well be pardoned for attributing it to the wind.

Something swift and cold and light touched Di's forehead as she drew her head into the room. It was like the touch of ghostly fingers, an eerie touch that made her shiver with nervous dread. Bah, it was only the curtain! How foolish she was! And yet, that growing terror kept her feet glued to the floor. She could not move them. In the surrounding shadows she heard the rapid throbbing of a heart. *Was she not alone?* Over her head she felt a cold wave pass; it ran from the nape of her neck down her back. She shrank nearer to the open window, cold with inanition and fear. There were candles upon the dressing-table, plenty of them; but she could not move a finger to light one and dispel the murkiness that made the room so ghostly.

"*Di!*"

What whisper was that? Did it pass her, or was it only the sob of the wind? And could the wind chill the warm blood in her veins, and send those awful tremours over her body? She was not superstitious. She tried to tell herself so.

"*Di!*"

The whisper came again, infinitely sad and soft. Oh for the courage to creep to the dressing-table and to light one of those candles! Strange faces seemed to leer at her in the darkness, hurrying footsteps raced through the corridor, the curtains rustled at her back and touched her as though they were endowed with life. She was vaguely aware that the back of her dress was wet, and that the rain had turned to snow.

Did something glide past her then? And why did Kitty's portrait gleam so white when other objects were only shapeless forms in the rooms? How foolish she was! Yes, that was the right name for her conduct—foolish, but not superstitious; she, Di, who was considered to be so practical and sensible, could *not* be superstitious. Yet, if that were indeed so, why did she crouch there upon the floor, palpitating with nameless terror? Of what was she afraid?

She was waiting for something. She did not know

what that something was; but a strange new instinct that appeared to have taken the place of reason in her bade her wait.

Gruesome churchyard stories flitted like ghosts themselves through her brain. Old Betty's narratives of weird dogs that crept stealthily from yawning graves to revisit the world, of haunted chambers where no man or woman dared sleep, of visions more wild and awful even than these unfolded their shadowy forms to Di.

"I ought to pray," she said to the heart whose loud throbs seemed to fill the room. "I am not superstitious, but I ought to pray."

"*Di!*"

A great wind wave, more rude and boisterous than any that had yet swept into the room, rushed in. Di's scream mingled itself with the crash of fallen china and the peevish rustling of the stiff silken bed hangings.

"Help! help! help!" screamed Di frantically from the window. She did not remember springing to her feet, but the spell was broken with the movement that she had made.

There followed a faint lull in the storm. It was as though Nature had ceased sobbing from very weariness, and in the hush Di caught the far-away sounds of church bells. The ringers were practising for Christmas.

A great calm came over the girl as she listened. She felt as though she had been out in the black night and the storm, and had just entered a warm haven of refuge.

"Ding-ding-dong-dell. Ding-ding-dong-dell!" went the bells, gladly and merrily, as they rose and fell upon the wintry air.

Di groped for the matches. She found a box in the tray that held a candle-stick, and with shaking fingers she struck one. She had not closed the window, dreading to lose the cheery voices of the bells. A puff of air extinguished the flickering light in a second.

It needed all her courage to close the window. But she was proud of the action, and now the match burnt readily and communicated its yellow-red flame to the many candles about the apartment.

Di lit them all. The light might attract attention, and through it her release might come. She drew up the blinds at the second window. The room looked cheerful and pretty in the soft candle light. She had not worn a watch, and the clock on the chimney-piece was not going. Mentally, she began to count the time that had elapsed since she had left home. The carrier had left Thorneydene at half-past one. He could not have reached The Towers earlier than half-past four. How long had she been in the room, half-an-hour, an hour, or more? Judging by her sensations she might have been a prisoner for ten. What would her father do when Alec returned with the empty pony carriage? He would perhaps think that Alec had not made proper inquiries at The Towers, and he might return to ask himself if she had not called. Mrs. Marshall would answer that she had not been there, and then Farmer Strange would go systematically from one friend's house to the other, asking for her, unless, in coming to The Towers, he saw the blaze of light in the upper storey and commented upon it to Mrs. Marshall.

Di rattled and kicked the door, and screamed until she had no strength left. Then recognising the utter futility of her exertions, she looked about the room for a book.

Kitty had always been a great devourer of novels. But the books that delighted Kitty did not interest Di, still she went into the dressing-room in the hope of finding something to pass the time.

In all the old rooms at The Towers great wardrobes were built into the walls. There were two in the dressing-room. Di opened one of them and closed it hurriedly. The collection of garments looked like headless ghosts suspended from the pegs.

No books were to be seen upon the tables. Thinking that they had been packed into a trunk that stood between the wardrobes, Di opened it. Like the wardrobe it was filled

Di lit them all.

with clothes. As she slid her fingers between the garments, they came in contact with some soft, furry object. Kitty had bought a fur-lined cloak not long before her disappearance, and Di's chilled condition induced her to pull out the intervening garments to get possession of it. So warm a wrap was not to be despised upon such a cold night.

The garment was twisted into a rough bundle. It felt very heavy. Di unrolled it, and gave a little exclamation. *It was a sealskin jacket.* Kitty had but one seal jacket, and in that jacket she had gone away! Yet this was clearly the same jacket. Had her maid made a mistake in telling the Nabob that her mistress had gone away in her new furs? Had Kitty worn the cloak?

At the bottom of the trunk Di saw a second rudely-twisted bundle. She took it out and opened it. A little seal toque, a muff to match, a thick pair of long gloves with seal cuffs, a green cloth gown, and a little pair of walking shoes fell upon the carpet, forming a complete costume. They were creased and crumpled, the dress was torn in one or two places, and all the garments looked as though they had been hastily rolled together and thrust out of sight.

Di examined each article separately, marvelling at her odd discovery. She opened the nearest wardrobe; it was quite empty. In the second one she found the new fur cloak. How had the maid committed such a strange error in describing the costume that Kitty had worn? But had she described it? She had not seen her mistress upon the day that she was missing. Evidently she had failed to discover the clothes in their usual places and so had jumped to the conclusion that her mistress had gone out in them. What had Kitty worn? And how came these garments to be rolled in these unsightly bundles when there was ample room in the second wardrobe to suspend them?

Di shook out the dress. The gathers at the back had been torn from the band, and the pocket hung by a thin shred of silk lining. It had been roughly used, and yet it was quite new!

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That she felt frightened was evident.

The jacket bore no marks of ill-usage, and the cap and muff were in a similar condition. Who had hidden these things, and why? What had been the motive? The answer came as suddenly into Di's brain that it was almost as though a voice in the room had uttered it aloud!

"To lead people to believe that Kitty had gone away in them."

In her perplexity Di stared around the room. A strange thing met her eyes. The bell-pull near the dressing-table had been cut right away at the top.

She had not thought of ringing the bells, and now in this fresh access of alarm that chilled her, she ran eagerly into the bedroom, only to pause, with sharp terror and suspicion coursing through her mind. There was no cord. Like the pull in the dressing-room, it had been destroyed. *Why?*

CHAPTER XV.

Di has Suspicions.

Early upon the following morning the man who came to do an occasional job in the garden saw a white face at an upper window in the big house, and heard a girl's voice calling passionately for aid.

The man went to the housekeeper, who slept in a former pantry adjoining her room. She stared at him in mute, wild-eyed amazement when he related what he had seen and heard.

"It's rather early in the day to see sights like that, Reuben," she said sharply. "A girl at the window, indeed! You must be either drunk or daft, man, to say that to me."

"A man wi' good eyesight ain't obliged to be drunk or daft, Mrs. Marshall, to see things. I tell you there's a gal upstairs in one o' the rooms by the old wing, an' I heard her call, jest as plain as I sees you now, to be let out, an' what's more, she was wavin' a handerkercher, an' you'll see if you goes up."

The housekeeper's florid face paled. She caught her breath sharply, so that it hissed between her teeth. Such a terrified look came into her staring eyes that Reuben, being of a forgiving nature, suggested going upstairs with her. She waved him roughly aside.

"Upstairs! with them shoes all caked up with snow and slush! I wonder what next you'll want to do! Do you think carpets were meant to be walked on by the likes of you? Just go about your work, and don't let me hear another word of your nonsense!" she cried indignantly, and as Reuben declared that it was not such nonsense as she supposed, and that he knew what he had seen, she deliberately closed the big door in his face.

"He's as mad as a March hare!" she muttered, hurrying hastily up the stairs. She went straight to the door of her late mistress's room; the key laid upon the floor. Picking it up, she inserted it in the lock, and pushed the door open. The next moment she fell back with a shrill, terrified scream, as Di advanced towards her, pale and heavy-eyed with the long sleepless hours that she had passed.

"Good Heavens! Miss Strange, how did you come here?" the woman exclaimed in shaking tones.

Di explained, and asked if her father had not sent to inquire after her.

"A man did come about five o'clock last night, and wanted to know if you'd been here, and I told him that I hadn't seen you. He said that you'd perhaps taken a short cut across the fields home, and that he might overtake you where the field path ended! To think that you've been here all night! How frightened you must have been, Miss Strange. I never heard tell of such a thing, never! It's very odd that you didn't see me, considering that I never left my room from the time Marshall went away to see a sick friend at Leigh till Reuben came just now and told me that he'd seen you," said Mrs. Marshall very resentfully.

She had sunk helplessly into a chair, and she now looked at Di with the expression of one who felt aggrieved and injured. Perhaps she was blaming Di for the terror that her appearance had occasioned her. That she still felt frightened was evident; her lips twitched nervously, and her hands were shaking upon her lap.

"I looked in your room, and it was empty. I called your name a great many times, both down and upstairs. I should have rung a bell had there been one in Mrs. Eliot's rooms. Why have they been taken away?"

Mrs. Marshall glanced at the small remnant of cord hanging quite close to the ceiling, and the pallor of her cheeks deepened.

"I'm sure I don't know, Miss Strange," she answered sharply. "No doubt, Mr. or Mrs. Eliot could tell you; it's beyond me."

"It seems such an extraordinary action to cut off both bell-pulls."

"Some folks are apt to do extraordinary actions, Miss Strange," retorted Mrs. Marshall, with a glance that hinted plainly to whom she referred.

"If you will give me Mr. Eliot's address I shall feel greatly obliged," said Di, in her quiet voice. "I am anxious to return home; my father must feel very anxious about me."

Something in the girl's calm manner seemed to soothe the housekeeper's agitation. She glanced sharply at Di and then around the room. A broken vase upon the floor caught her attention.

"It fell down last night. I had the window open and was calling for help when the wind blew it from the table," said Di, reading the question in Mrs. Marshall's eyes.

"The wind was rough, Miss Strange. No wonder I didn't hear you, being so far off, too, and such a stormy night as it was! You must have heard a lot of queer sounds with the old wing so near this room, and I'm sure it must be full of rats and mice and bats, for it's never been opened in my time."

"I heard no noises."

"And you weren't frightened, miss?"

"Well, yes, I was at first," Di admitted. "But I soon got over that."

"You didn't sleep in the bed, miss? Why, how cold you must be! Didn't you wrap yourself up in nothing?"

"I got a cloak from the wardrobe."

"Well, I'm glad you weren't cold and frightened, that I am!" said Mrs. Marshall, with increasing composure and kindness. "It feels enough to freeze one up here. If you'll come down to my room, I'll give you some breakfast and find you Mr. Eliot's address. He wrote to me a few days ago asking if we'd got a situation to suit us, as if so, he'd put another couple in. But good places are hard to get, especially when you're two, and a bit particular about the family being all it should be, and Marshall and me have never been separated since we married, Miss Strange, and we don't want to take separate places if we can help it."

As she rose from her seat, Di saw her deliberately slip her handkerchief upon the floor. The action was done with intention, and although Di immediately averted her eyes, she knew that the woman was watching her.

"If it hadn't been for the wind slamming the door and cracking the handle, you wouldn't have been shut in here all night, miss," said Mrs. Marshall. "Mr. Eliot told me not to have any little repairs done until he'd been over the house himself with a man to give an estimate. There's a lot wants doing considering the short time we've been here. The men and girls are *so* careless!"

She followed Di from the room and down the stairs; at the foot she paused and thrust her hand in her pocket.

"Bless me!" she exclaimed. "I've dropped my handkerchief. Do you mind going on to my room, Miss Strange? There's a good fire, and I'll soon have a plate of buttered toast ready. I was getting my breakfast when Reuben came with his tale of seeing you and scared me out of my wits. Ugh, how chilly it is; don't stand still, miss, you will catch your death of cold."

"I'll go on," said Di. "It is awfully cold."

The baize-covered door closed noiselessly behind her tall figure. Mrs. Marshall waited a moment, listening with bated breath, and then, turning, she hastily retraced her steps to Kitty's room. She had barely disappeared when the baize door opened cautiously, and Di's head appeared. Having satisfied herself that the housekeeper was out of sight and hearing, Di ran rapidly and silently back to the corridor. The door of Kitty's room was open. With the courage of determination Di entered. It was empty. She passed into the dressing-room, not pausing to think of the excuse that she must necessarily make to the housekeeper if she were there. No one was in the room, but the doors of the empty wardrobe were wide open. As Di stared wonderingly in, she caught the sound of a far away click, and a rumble that seemed to be much nearer. It sounded like the rolling of a piece of furniture over bare boards, and it appeared to issue from the back of the old wardrobe.

But the next moment Di saw the back of the wardrobe move an inch or so; four broad red fingers peeped around the aperture clutching it. Di turned and raced down the stairs, through the green-covered door, helter-skelter into the housekeeper's room, where she threw herself upon her knees before the ruddy fire, and tried to tell herself that the baize door had made no noise, and that it never swung backwards and forwards after one had passed hurriedly through.

Mrs. Marshall coming into her snug little apartment a few minutes later with her handkerchief held ostentatiously in her hand, found Miss Strange in the same position. The heat from the fire had put a fine colour into the girl's cheeks, and one long coil of chestnut hair had escaped from its pins. Beyond that, there were no outward signs of flurry about Di, and Mrs. Marshall never suspected how hard it was for Di to say in a natural manner that she was dying of hunger, and longing for a cup of tea. Still less did the housekeeper guess with what difficulty Di sat quietly facing her, and ate and drank as though her sole idea was to satisfy her hunger and thirst.

Mrs. Marshall called Reuben and explained matters to him while Di was breakfasting. She ordered him to prepare a trap to take Miss Strange home to Greyhouse, and about half-an-hour later Di left by Reuben's side with the Nabob's address in her pocket, and her brain whirling with wild thoughts whose seeming madness and improbability terrified and bewildered her.

It was not yet nine o'clock. The sharp keenness of the frosty air retained the roses in Di's cheeks; the horse's hoofs rang out cheerily over the hard road, where little drifts of snow had frozen, and the hedges were white and glistening.

"Are you the only man at The Towers, Reuben?" Di asked.

The man shook his head, lightly flicking the horse with the whip. "There's Marshall, miss," he answered, "and there's Clayton, the groom. I only comes now an' then to do a turn in the garden. The Towers is altered to what it was. Mr. Eliot don't seem to be spendin' any money on nothing"—he broke off as though suddenly remembering that Di was Mr. Eliot's sister-in-law. "The garden's a reg'lar wilderness," he added dejectedly. "An' in usual they keeps five men on day by day, an' then there wasn't none too many hands for the size of the place. Lord Powers, he won't know it when he *do* come home!"

"Perhaps it will be put in order before his return, Reuben," said Di, nestling among her furs and trying to think collectedly.

Why had the door-handle and the bell-pulls been removed from Kitty's rooms? And what was concealed at the back of the wardrobe? Clearly there was something hidden away there, and Mrs. Marshall had feared that Di had discovered it. Then those bundles of Kitty's clothing? Di's head began to ache with thinking over so many problems.

"I'll write to Bernard," she told herself, "and tell him everything. He knows little about those Marshalls; he had them from a servants' registry; I remember his saying so at the time of the robbery. And the police suspected Mrs. Marshall—and she cried when she was afraid that

Di saw the back of the wardrobe move an inch or so.

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Barnard thought she was connected with it. I always liked her until this morning. I never saw her so agitated, or so rude before. She was afraid that I had found out something in the room. I wonder what there is to find?"

She turned to see who had startled her.

Old Betty was waiting at the garden gate with a face all puckered up with concern. She broke out into joyful ejaculations at sight of her young mistress.

"And dad; is he dreadfully upset, Betty?" Di asked eagerly, when she was at the old servant's side.

"It's a good thing as he didn't know anything about you stayin' out all night like this. One of the cows was took ill, and he's watchin' her all night long. The vet. thinks she'll die," answered Betty, "so I didn't say nothin' about you to him, an' I tole that Alec to bide his own business an' keep a still tongue; one worry's 'bout enough for the po'r man at a time, but wherever have you bin, Miss Di?"

Di told her, and then left her to seek her father. She found him in the yard looking so worried and anxious that her heart ached in sympathy with his trouble.

"Clover's dying, Di," he said; "no hope for her. There goes twenty-five pounds out of our pockets!"

"We'll sell the pony carriage and the pony too, and buy another Clover, daddy," whispered Di, laying her cold cheeks against his. "I never hardly use them."

"Kitty'll scold, my girl, if we do that," said her father.

"No, she gave them to me; I can do as I like with them."

Di returned to the house and exchanged her dress for a morning gown, before beginning her duties. It was Friday, and the bedrooms had to be turned out for red-armed Sally to scrub under Betty's superintendence, and every pot and pan and candlestick that could be polished had to be cleaned by Betty herself, while Di brushed the old silver, and dusted the rooms, and rubbed the oak furniture in the parlour until her arms ached with the energetic movement. And all the while those same puzzling questions kept tormenting her as she worked. Why had the bell pulls been cut and Kitty's clothes torn and hidden, and what was concealed at the back of the wardrobe?

Her duties were not ended until late in the afternoon. She wrote a long letter then to the Nabob and went out to post it. The post-office was quite half a mile from the house. It was the largest general shop in the village, and Di had to wait some time before she was served with her one penny stamp. As she came outside, thoughtfully putting the stamp in the corner of the envelope, a man, very much bent, and wrapped in a faded Inverness cloak, passed the open door, stared swiftly at Di, and followed her to the box in the wall. She was in the act of dropping the letter in the slit when the man coughed. Di started, the letter slipped and fell into the box with a faint, hollow rattle. She turned to see who had startled her, and as she turned the man drew himself up and pushed back the broad brim of his rusty felt hat. A faint cry of surprise and aversion fell from Di's lips. The man was John Gillway.

(To be continued.)

LOST!

ON Saturday, June 19th, a young man, wearing a suit of clothes and a straw hat, set out for a bicycle ride, and has not been heard of since. It is feared that, not being provided with a reliable road map, he lost his way and perished in the wilds of Hampstead.

Take warning, therefore, and provide yourself with one of the *Athletic Record* County Road Maps. One is given away free with each copy.

FOUND!

A GRAND new idea has been found for providing readers of *Pearson's Weekly* against General Accident on Jubilee Day to the extent of £100, guaranteed by the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Corporation, Limited. The coupon will be found in the current issue. Even if you are not going to see the procession on that day, somebody you know and respect will be doing so. In which case, do them a good turn by showing them the coupon. £100 is not to be sneezed at.

HAVE YOU SEEN IT?

NEWSAGENT: "Excuse me smiling, miss, but THE BIG BUDGET is just out. It is screamingly funny. It contains THREE PAPERS for a Penny, and may well be called the record paper of a record age."

A SHILLING FOR THE ASKING.

A Genuine Offer.

1/= We being of opinion that **HERBULINE** is not so universally known as its merits deserve, are prepared, as an advertisement, to give **TO EVERY APPLICANT** who observes the following conditions, the sum of **ONE SHILLING.** All you have to do is to get at Chemist or Stores a bottle of **HERBULINE.** Wrapped round the bottle you will find the **DIRECTIONS.** Take care of this, and write thereon the name of Chemist from whom bought, and date of purchase. With this enclose the **GOVERNMENT STAMP** taken from the neck of the bottle, and send to us with a stamped addressed envelope for the return of the 1/-. In this way you have **FREE** a bottle of **HERBULINE** to put to the test, and to learn that it can do what many thousands recommend it for. Do not think this other than a genuine business offer. As an advertisement it suits us better than having a distribution of **FREE SAMPLES.** If **HERBULINE** cannot be had in your neighbourhood we will send you a bottle by post on receipt of 1/4½. 1/=

HERBULINE COMPLETELY CURES FOR 1/1½.

What Is It?

HERBULINE is a herb composition which does not injure the skin and is for external use only; it is the only remedy which attacks the disease as soon as it is applied.

HERBULINE

Is the only proprietary article able to print a list of rapid results such as fellows:

TOOTHACHE	cured in	30 Seconds.
NEURALGIA and TIC	,,	20 Minutes.
EARACHE	,,	10 Minutes.
CHILBLAINS	,,	8 Hours.
RHEUMATISM	,,	24 Hours.
INFLUENZA	,,	24 Hours.

TESTIMONY.

"Best cure I have had for Toothache."—E. H. WILLIAMS, 22, St John's Avenue, Manchester.

"I was very bad with Toothache, but **HERBULINE** cured me **instantly.** A better remedy not known—a good cure."—F. TUCKER, 36, Rose Head, Liverpool.

"I could find nothing to excel this valuable remedy. I was cured of Toothache after suffering for a whole year, when nothing else would cure it."—LIZZIE CAMPBELL, 41, Burnside Street, Glasgow.

PRESS.

"There are certain home remedies which should always be kept at hand in every household, and one of these is **HERBULINE.** Wherever it is tried relief is quickly gained, especially in the cases of those suffering from rheumatism, lumbago, sprains, toothache, and other complaints of a like nature. A piece of cotton-wool, soaked in **HERBULINE** and placed in an aching tooth produces magical relief, as all who have used it when suffering from toothache have discovered to their satisfaction. Cyclists should always have a bottle in their possession, for a little rubbed in the back and front of the chest will prevent cold. Mothers should always keep it in the nursery, especially those who have children liable to croup. **HERBULINE,** not being an expensive remedy, comes within the reach of everybody's pocket, and it is one of the best external remedies that have yet been discovered."

PUBLIC.

"St. Kilda, August 15th.

"SIR,—Your note of 14th July found me on my return to my island home, which reminded me of my promise to you. Our supply of **HERBULINE** has been exhausted some time ago by the natives of St. Kilda, and, as a result of its virtues, I am never without a supply. Some of my people who were afflicted with Rheumatics found immediate relief from its application. Indeed, in every case to which it was applied, the result has proved **HERBULINE** to be a valuable remedy for removing pain. The St. Kildean's are loud in their praise of its virtues. You are at liberty to make what use you may of this. With kindest regards,

"(Signed), ANGUS FIDDES, Minister."

What Can It Do?

HERBULINE can and does cure. All that is necessary is to follow the instructions given with each bottle. Its merits are manifold. One trial convinces. Just try it.

HERBULINE.

A CERTAIN CURE FOR

Bronchitis,
Asthma,
Sciatica,
Inflammation,
Pleurisy,
Fever,
Ague,
Cramp,
Croup,
Lumbago,
Sprains and Bruises.

TESTIMONY.

"I certainly was very dubious about **HERBULINE** when I tried it, but I found it cured my Neuralgia in less than **thirty minutes.**"—C. E. STERMAN, 32, Perth Street, Belfast.

"A most valuable preparation and for want of knowledge of which many suffer cruelly from Neuralgia."—F. HARRISON, 67, Princes Street, Manchester.

"I have been under treatment for four years with three of the best professors in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and only found relief in trying **HERBULINE.** The cure was complete in **twenty-five minutes.**"—W. S. ROSS, Marchfield, Edinburgh.

ASK FOR!
SEE YOU GET
HERBULINE.

Sold by Chemists, Stores, and Patent Medicine Vendors everywhere, or post free, 1/4½.

THE HERBULINE COY., 54, Bow Lane, London. E.C., and at Glasgow.

ASK FOR!
SEE YOU GET
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Answers to Correspondents.

STUDENT.—Procure from your bookseller some handbooks on Bimetallism. The subject is too vast a one to be discussed here.

S.—The cheapest restaurants in the world are to be found in Germany. For threepence an individual may obtain a capital meal of meat, bread, and coffee. Perhaps, however, it may be well to mention that the meat consists of horse-flesh.

W. S. P.—The sunflower crop is one of the best paying in Russia, where the seeds are greatly valued by the peasants. They are sold at the rate of 12s. a pound.

BOB.—Your patent leather shoes will require very careful treatment if they are to last for any length of time. To keep the leather soft, rub it occasionally with sweet oil, and then wipe the boots thoroughly with chamois. When the glaze becomes cracked apply a little varnish; it will go a long way towards hiding the deficiency.

A. D.—The opal is the only gem that cannot be successfully counterfeited.

H. O. P.—The Suez Canal shortens the voyage between London and Bombay by 4,265 miles.

BAB.—As the Bank of England receives the interest on the National Debt paid, and transacts other Government business, practically it might be termed a national institution.

S. H.—It has been estimated that a shrimp will produce 6,800 eggs annually; a prawn, 8,800; a lobster, 21,600; a herring 36,960; and a mackerel 454,651.

W.—The Government always withhold the fractions of a penny in their periodical distribution of dividends on account of the National Debt. From this source the State has accumulated the sum of £150,000.

Q. is a diligent reader of magazines and periodicals, but he says that he never yet remembers reading an interview with the Prince or Princess of Wales. "How is this?" he asks ———Simply because members of the Royal Family make it a rule never to grant interviews for newspaper reproductions. It may interest you to know that some time ago a reporter was dispatched to this country by the proprietors of an American newspaper in order to secure, if possible, an interview with Her Royal Highness. If the enterprising reporter proved successful, his reward was to be £500. Unfortunately for him his mission proved, as might have been expected, an utter failure, and he was forced to return to the States copyless.

MUSIC.—The organ is certainly by far and away the finest of instruments. No music is so grand and inspiring as that produced by a good musician upon an equally good organ. No, the instrument to which you refer is not the largest in the world. This distinction belongs to the organ in the Town Hall, Sydney, N.S.W. It was built by a London firm, and took three years to complete.

SWEET NINETEEN is engaged to a young fellow who is everything that is good with one exception. His great failing is his thirst after drink, and although SWEET NINETEEN has done her best to reform him in this direction he still goes on in his wild career. He is in a good position, earning good wages, and my correspondent wonders whether it would be wise to marry him.———Do not think my advice unkind and unfeeling, but I certainly think you would be throwing your happiness completely away if you marry the young fellow you refer to whilst his intemperate habits exist. No matter how much you may love him you may be sure that if your influence is not sufficient to curb him now it will be even less when you are married.

J. G. was recently attracted to a certain place of amusement by a placard which was overflowing with the names of talented artists, but greatly to his chagrin not a single one appeared, their places on the programme being taken by what appeared to be only inferior amateurs. "Is there no law to stop such roguery?" J. G. asks wrathfully.———I am afraid not. It is quite a common thing for the managers of places of entertainment to lure visitors by these unscrupulous methods. We might well follow the example of Italy, where a manager is made liable to a fine of £100 if every act on his printed programme is not fully performed.

E. asks rather an interesting question: "Why are Londoners so unsociable?" ———This is a point rather difficult to answer. To the countryman born and bred, the unsociability of the metropolitan resident must be very marked, and I have heard of one family who lived in one particular house for over ten years without even knowing their next-door neighbour's name. Whilst I do not hold with the too forward party who wants to shake hands with you simply because he sends his shirts to the same laundry as you, I certainly think that Londoners might copy with advantage the social characteristics of their country cousins.

TENBY.—It is said to cost the railway companies thousands every year to keep down rats. It is not that the rodents relish railway travelling; the provisions to be conveyed by railway are more in their line of business.

CLERGYMAN.—The Archbishop of Canterbury receives £15,000 a year, and the Archbishops of York and London £10,000 each respectively.

E. V.—Nearly double the beef is consumed in England as compared with mutton.

B. R.—Curiously enough the Duke of Devonshire does not own a single acre of land in the county from which he takes his name, although his estates are scattered over fourteen counties and cover more than 198,000 acres.

A.—Which Newton do you mean? There are no fewer than ten places in Great Britain bearing this name.

MATER.—The biggest baby show ever held was probably promoted at Melbourne, some years ago, on which occasion no fewer than 300 little cherubs were on view, and 30,000 people were attracted to the exhibition hall to see them. I quite agree with you that such exhibitions ought not to be encouraged.

G. S.—There are twenty monarchies and twenty-five republics in the civilised world.

QUERY asks: "Where can the cheapest railway ride in Europe be had?"——In Hungary, where you can go from Buda-Pesth to Kronstadt, a distance of 457 miles, for which the fare, third class, is only six and eightpence, or at the rate of six miles a penny.

H. T.—Toothache is certainly one of the most racking pains the human frame is called upon to endure. There are heaps of alleged remedies, but none like having the tooth out. The nearest approach to a genuine salve is a little Herbuline. You should saturate a piece of cotton with it, and place it in the aching tooth. Moreover, I believe that Herbuline is quite excellent for cyclists to rub into the back and the chest. It will prevent cold if used after you get very wet. Don't drink it. The address of the company is 54, Bow Lane, E.C.

SINCE the introduction of the letter-card, a great deal of ingenuity has been expended in producing novelties in this line. Quite the most charming I have seen up till now are those sent me by Messrs. Langley and Sons, of 23, George Street, N.W. They are specially got up to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee. Some are named "the new valise shape," and others "the new saque shape."

POSTAL RATES.

SHORT STORIES will be sent direct from these offices, post free, to any country within the Postal Union, at the following rates, prepaid:

One Year	6s. 6d.
Half Year	3s. 3d.
Three Months	1s. 8d.

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THE NEW LEMONADE.

Many people suffer from extreme thirst during the hot weather. Messrs. Foster Clarke & Co. have supplied the want that has long been felt by making a concentrated lemonade. It is made from the finest lemons, and the great advantage is that it is partly manufactured in Italy, in the midst of the lemonade orchards. The lemons are taken direct from the trees to the factory to commence their transformation into the Eiffel Tower Concentrated Lemonade. You can get thirty-two tumblers (or two gallons) for fourpence halfpenny. If you cannot get it from your Grocer, send sixpence to G. Foster Clark & Co., 290, Eiffel Tower Factory, Maidstone.

"DRUNKENNESS"

CUR[illegible] [illegible] of intemperate habits, will gladly send particulars of the remedy, on receipt of stamped envelope.—Mrs. S. S. BARRINGTON, 4, Featherstone Bldgs., LONDON, W.C.

THE MOST NUTRITIOUS COCOA

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

WITH FULL NATURAL FLAVOUR.

PALATABLE SUBSTITUTE FOR COD LIVER OIL.

Devonshire Cream

(REALLY GENUINE.)

In Patent Air-tight Tins.

Quarter Pound	10d.
Half Pound...	1s. 4d.
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(including Tin and Postage).

MRS. CONYERS, MORCHARD BISHOP, DEVON.

JOLLY'S "DUCHESS" PILLS

For Pale Faces.

Anæmia, or Poverty of Blood, is the cause o the many pale faces we see at the present day Anæmia is usually accompanied or followed by Indigestion or Debility, Irregularity, Depression of Spirits, Fatigue, Faintness, Nausea, Headaches, Pains in the Side and Back, Palpitation and Coughs. If neglected, more serious affections frequently follow. Jolly's "Duchess" Pills will restore colour, health, strength, and beauty, and make the palest face clear and rosy, thus producing a lovely complexion. A box containing 60 doses, sufficient to cure any ordinary case, post free 2/6, or six boxes for 12/6, from

BRITISH DRUGGISTS Ltd.,
219, Oxford Street, London, W.

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If not, please get a post-card, and send it to THE

PEARSON POTTERY CO., HANLEY,

and you will get it by return, together with particulars of the most wonderful package of crockery the world has ever seen.

100 PIECES for £1 1s.

100 PIECES for £1 1s.

This is the Pattern of the Dinner Service.

THOUSANDS SOLD ALL OVER THE WORLD.

A Dinner Service of 50 pieces is included, which is guaranteed to be worth the guinea alone, and a China Tea Service of 28 pieces finished in gold, together with a lot of useful kitchen crockery.

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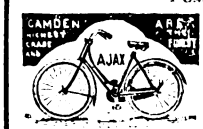

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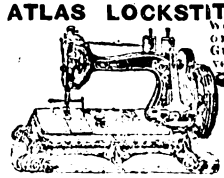

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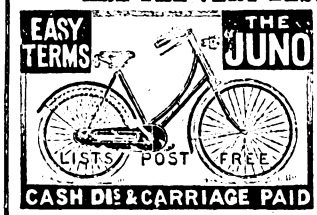

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KOKO

FOR THE HAIR

ROYAL TESTIMONIAL.

"Berlin, Alsenstrasse,
"February 25th, 1896.

"'KOKO' for the Hair is the best dressing I know. It keeps the head cool, promotes growth, and is in every way excellent.

"PRINCESS HOHENLOHE."

ORDER FROM ROYALTY.

"Detmold-Lippe, Germany.

"I beg you to forward by return 6 Bottles of 'KOKO.' It is for H.R.H. Princess Victoria of Schaumburg-Lippe"

(Grand-daughter of Queen Victoria and sister to the German Emperor.

MISS ELLEN TERRY,

The Great Actress, writes:

"I have used 'KOKO' for the Hair for years, and can assure my friends that it stops the hair from falling off, promotes growth of the hair, eradicates dandriff, and is the most pleasant dressing imaginable."

The Celebrated Authoress,

MRS. E. LYNN LINTON,

"Brougham House, Malvern.

"Dear Sir,—I have used your 'KOKO' now since June last, and I have not only stopped the falling out, which has been excessive after a severe illness, but I have an entirely new growth of hair, while the old hair is longer. As I am not a young woman, but an old one, I think this is a convincing test of the value of your preparation."

J. EDGHILL COLES, ESQ.,

A wealthy retired City merchant, writes:

Arundel House, Putney, July 9, 1896.

"Gentlemen,—I am now convinced that, without exception, 'KOKO' is the best preparation possible for restoring hair. I was quite bald on the front, top, and back of my head, and I have now a fine crop of hair. I am strongly of opinion that if the Duke of Cambridge, the Prince of Wales and his good brother knew your 'KOKO,' they would use it. . . I am willing to answer any question from anyone on the subject.

"P.S.—I enclose my photo, just taken, and I consider it a marvellous recovery of my hair, especially as I am over 60 years of age. It is also a splendid specific for headache, and an excellent tonic."

JOHN STRANCE WINTER,

Author of "Bootle's Baby," writes:

"Most decidedly use 'KOKO.' It will stop your hair from falling off. I happen to know, because I have tried it myself. It is a nice, clean, preparation — not sticky or greasy."

1s., 2/6, and 4/6, of all Chemists, Hairdressers, etc.

1s., 2/6, and 4/6, of all Chemists, Stores, etc.

"KOKO" is an invigorating preparation for the Hair. It eradicates scurf and dandriff, prevents the hair falling and turning grey, strengthens the roots, and acts as a stimulating tonic to the hair. It is delightfully cooling and refreshing, and contains no colouring matter or dye. Sold Everywhere, or sent post free by the Koko Maricopas Co. Ltd., 16, Bevis Marks, and 233, Regent St., London.

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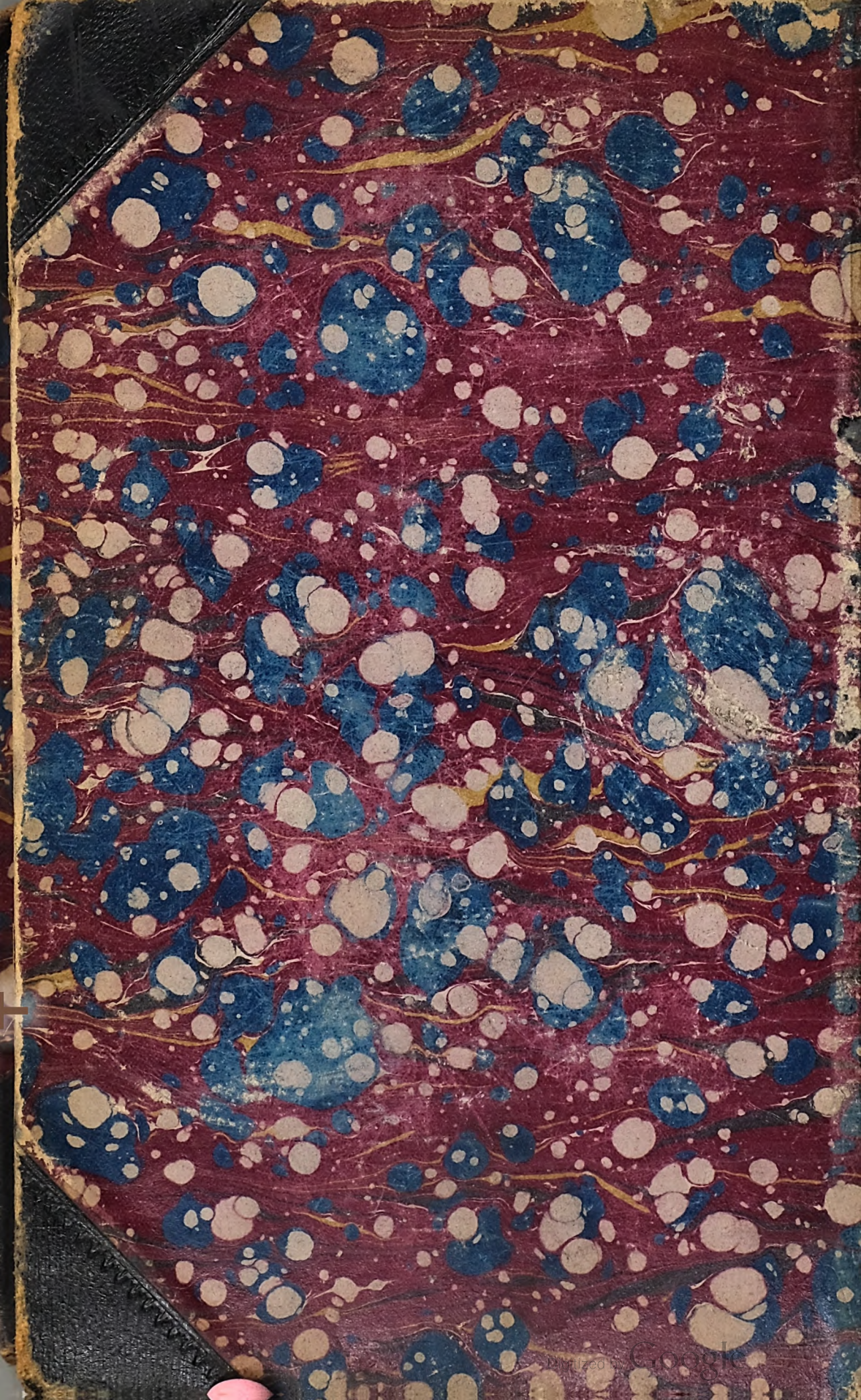
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